

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

HEARINGS

BEFORE A

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H.R. 4249/S. 2257

AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH FOR
THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Architect of the Capitol
Congressional Budget Office
Government Accountability Office
Government Publishing Office
Library of Congress
United States Capitol Police
United States Senate Sergeant at Arms

Printed for the use of the Committee on Appropriations



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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:01 a.m., in room SD-138, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Markwayne Mullin, (Chairman), presiding.

Present: Senators Fischer, Rounds, Heinrich, Murray, and Ossoff.

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARKWAYNE MULLIN

Senator MULLIN. Good morning, the subcommittee will come to order. Welcome to the fiscal year 2026 budget hearing for the agencies underneath the jurisdiction of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.

This is my first hearing with the Appropriations Committee, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as chairman of this subcommittee. I am also grateful for Chair Collins and Leader Thune for the commitment to bring appropriation bills to the Senate floor.

I would like to welcome Ranking Member Heinrich, who was kind enough to invite me onto CODEL over the break. And unfortunately, I wasn't able to make it, but thank you.

I am looking forward to working with him and other Members of this subcommittee in crafting responsible funding for Legislative and for the—to support Congress and the entire Legislative Branch needs.

Today, we will—with us we have with us Director of the Congressional Budget Office, Dr. Phil Swagel; the Head of the Government Accountability Office, Comptroller General Gene Dodaro, [Dodaro], thank you; and the Director of Government Publishing Office, Mr. Hugh Halpern. Thank you so much.

Before we get into the specific details of the budget request, I want to acknowledge that after years of significant spending, the Federal Government, as a whole, must show fiscal restraint. And the majority of the American people want to make sure that their tax dollars are being used efficiently and effectively. The Legislative Branch is no exception and must demonstrate that we are a good steward of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here today. I look forward to our discussion and to learn more about the agencies' priorities for the year.

Now I would like to turn it to the Ranking Member, Senator Heinrich, for remarks he would like to make.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to working with you this year to prepare a fiscally responsible bill that will meet the needs of the Congress and our support agencies, so that we can effectively carry out our constitutional responsibilities on behalf of the American people.

Thank you to the witnesses providing testimony today and to the folks at your agencies who work every day to facilitate the Congress' work.

Mr. Dodaro, the Government Accountability Office plays an important role in providing oversight of government spending. This year, the GAO is requesting nearly \$934 million to perform that critical work. I know your agency's workload is large. In fiscal year 2024, GAO received over 550 requests to perform work from 93 percent of the standing committees of the Congress. This is in addition to the thousands of products, recommendations, and adjudications you all completed.

However, with a flat budget in fiscal year 2025, GAO was required to shrink its staffing level and defer critical investments in the agency's operations. I look forward to your testimony about your fiscal year 2026 budget request and to hearing more about what resources you need to support Congress and our Government.

Dr. Swagel, the Congressional Budget Office has requested nearly \$76 million to perform your agency's critical work in support of Congress, an increase of almost \$6 million. Now, I understand that in fiscal year 2024, CBO published about 1,100 cost estimates for legislation, in addition to hundreds of reports and informational products to support Congress' work. The work of the CBO requires highly skilled subject matter experts to provide the quality analysis we need to do our job. So I look forward to hearing from you about the resources you need this fiscal year.

Mr. Halpern, the Government Publishing Office is requesting \$135 million to support personnel costs and resources necessary to carry out the work of your agency, a 2.6 percent increase. I know that your work is crucial to providing resources to the American people so that they can easily access information about their government.

And I understand that a portion of the requested increase in funding pays for the cost of providing a digital format of Federal Government publications to over a thousand Federal repository libraries nationwide.

So I look forward to hearing more about the resources you need to continue to get critical information into the hands of the American people. And again, thank you to all of our witnesses for being here today, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, Senator Heinrich.

I want to remind everybody that we do have a timer, and I will be strict on it. I will be strict for the Republicans, as much I will

be strict to our witnesses, and to our colleagues in the Democrat Party. Everybody's time is important, and so we have five minutes. I would kindly ask all of our witnesses, in your statement, when you notice you are about 20 seconds up, look for an ending, because at five minutes I will be starting to—I will begin to tap the gavel. Okay?

So with that, Mr. Swagel, you are up first.

STATEMENT OF HON. PHILLIP L. SWAGEL, PH.D., DIRECTOR

Dr. SWAGEL. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to present the CBO's budget request.

As you said, Mr. Chairman, CBO requests an appropriation of \$75.8 million for 2026. That is an increase of \$5.8 million, or 8.2 percent, from the amount that was provided in 2025, and the same amount that was provided in 2024. The request would address increased cost for pay and benefits, allow CBO to improve its IT infrastructure, and add staff in areas of especially intense legislative interest.

CBO's mission is to provide nonpartisan analysis to the Congress that is timely, rigorous, and transparent. When Legislation is heading to a vote, we provide cost estimates and real-time analysis of amendments, sometimes hundreds or even thousands of them, for bills such as the NDAA. We provide analysis and technical assistance as the legislation is being developed, such as is the case now with reconciliation.

We produce budget and economic projections that incorporate the effects of recent legislation, economic developments, and administrative actions. Those administrative actions have been an especially big part of our work in the last couple of months.

And we provide analysis of a broad range of policy issues confronting the Congress, bringing to bear data and research from a variety of sources, including experts who members tell us to go talk with.

With continuing strong interest in CBO's work, the additional resources I have asked for this year would enable us to do even better on both responsiveness and transparency.

In 2025, CBO will maintain its staffing at 270 employees, and we will focus on the highest priority efforts of preparing cost estimates, providing technical assistance for legislation, and analyzing the economic and dynamic budgetary effects of proposed policies. We are reducing our expenditures elsewhere. We have deferred some hiring and are waiting on some longer term improvements in our IT infrastructure.

For 2026, a little more than half of our requested increase, about \$3 million, would cover increases in current employees' salaries and benefits, and then would enable CBO to expand in key areas of congressional interest. The full request would allow CBO to add 15 employees, to go up to 285. I would add analysts first in healthcare, in dynamic analysis, national security, and homeland security.

The remaining 48 percent of CBO's increase, about \$2.8 million, would address increased costs to enhance our cybersecurity, and our IT infrastructure, including for some projects that are on hold

this year with—you know, with the resources we have. This spending is aimed at protecting sensitive data and improving the agency's computing power for analyzing complex data sets.

Our requested budget would support our goal to provide budgetary and economic information when it is most useful to the Congress. We will support the Appropriations committees by providing real-time, provision-by-provision estimates of the 12 annual appropriation bills and any supplemental appropriation bills or continuing resolutions.

We will also respond to thousands of requests for technical assistance and preliminary estimates, often on quick turnarounds, as committees craft legislation. We will provide hundreds of cost estimates as required by statute, and for nearly all of them, provide them before a floor vote. We will also publish dozens of statutory or requested reports on a wide variety of topics, from opioids, to immigration, Navy shipbuilding, wildfires, and many other things. And then we offer help in person, by phone, and video to member offices as you and your staff craft legislation.

In summary, to achieve our goal of being as responsive as possible, CBO requests an increase of \$5.8 million. With your support, we look forward to continuing to provide timely and high quality analysis to the Congress.

Thank you again. I am happy to answer questions.

[The statement follows:]



TESTIMONY

**The Congressional Budget Office's
Request for Appropriations for
Fiscal Year 2026**

Phillip L. Swagel
Director

Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

APRIL 29 | 2025

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Congressional Budget Office's budget request.¹ CBO requests appropriations of \$75.8 million for fiscal year 2026 (see Figure 1). Most of that amount—86.6 percent—would be for pay and benefits; 9.8 percent would be for information technology (IT); and 3.6 percent would be for training, expert consultant services, office supplies, and other items. The requested amount is an increase of \$5.8 million, or 8.2 percent, above the funding provided for this year.

Of the increase, 52 percent would primarily cover increases in current employees' salaries and benefits and would enable CBO to expand its staff in key areas of Congressional interest. The remaining 48 percent would address increased costs to enhance the agency's cybersecurity and IT infrastructure; such improvements are critical to protecting sensitive data and improving the agency's computing power for analyzing complex data sets. CBO is prioritizing advancements in a security strategy called zero trust architecture, which requires verification before allowing access to any user or device.

The requested budget is based on continued strong interest in CBO's work from the Congressional leadership, committees, and Members. In 2024, CBO published about 1,100 cost estimates for legislation and devoted significant resources to analyzing the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118-159); the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42); the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47); and H.R. 8467, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024. For those bills and many others, the agency also fulfilled thousands of requests for technical assistance. In addition, CBO prepared dozens of reports, many at the request of Chairs or Ranking Members of Congressional committees.

CBO will provide many estimates and a large amount of technical assistance to the 119th Congress as lawmakers consider significant legislative initiatives. With additional resources, the agency could provide even more. Under the funding provided for this year, CBO will maintain its staffing at about 270 employees and focus on the highest priority current needs, including preparing cost

estimates, providing technical assistance as the Congress crafts legislation, and analyzing the economic and dynamic budgetary effects of proposed policies. CBO will reduce expenditures elsewhere, by deferring hiring for some positions and deferring some activities, including not undertaking some longer-term improvements in its IT infrastructure.

The fiscal year 2026 request would allow CBO to grow to 285 employees. That number would allow the agency to better meet its responsibilities under the Congressional Budget Act. The request also would allow for IT enhancements, including some currently on hold.

Of the 15 additional staff members CBO would hire in 2026:

- 9 would improve CBO's capabilities to provide timely analysis of changes to health care programs, border security, credit programs (like student loans), and the U.S. population (particularly because of changes in immigration) and of dynamic policy effects (that is, determining how changes in fiscal policies would affect the economy and how those economic changes would, in turn, affect the federal budget);
- 2 would enhance CBO's responsiveness in producing cost estimates and providing technical assistance in the legislative process;
- 1 would be an addition to the agency's editing staff to enhance the readability and accessibility of CBO's materials;
- 1 would provide increased legal assistance;
- 1 would enhance CBO's IT security; and
- 1 would boost outreach to Congressional staff and the press.

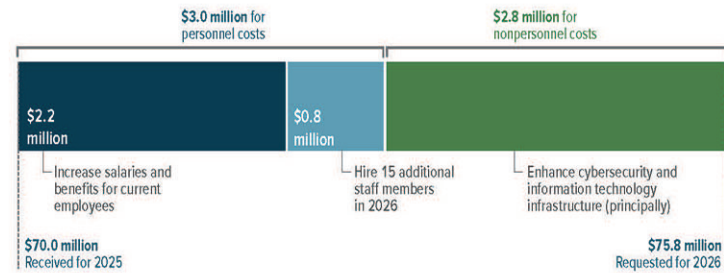
CBO plans to use expert consultants more than it has in the past—enabling the agency to shift to the Congress's key areas of focus more easily and to be more nimble in conducting facility management, work in IT, and financial management.

CBO's Budget Request and Its Consequences for Staffing and Output

In fiscal year 2026, CBO will continue its mission of providing objective, insightful, clearly presented, and timely budgetary and economic information to the

1. See Congressional Budget Office, *The Congressional Budget Office's Request for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2026* (April 2025), www.cbo.gov/publication/61161.

Figure 1.

Components of CBO's Requested \$5.8 Million Increase

Data source: Congressional Budget Office.

Congress. The \$75.8 million requested would be used mostly for salaries and benefits.

Funding Request for Personnel Costs and Consequences for Staffing

CBO requests \$65.6 million for salaries and benefits to support 285 employees by the end of fiscal year 2026, which equates to 278 full-time-equivalent positions for the year. That amount represents an increase in personnel costs of \$3.0 million, or 4.7 percent, from the \$62.6 million devoted to such costs in fiscal year 2025.

Of the total requested amount:

- \$47.4 million would cover salaries—an increase of \$2.3 million, or 5.2 percent, from the amount provided in 2025. That increase would primarily fund inflation adjustments and performance-based salary increases for current staff in 2026. Employees earning less than \$100,000 would receive an across-the-board increase of 3.8 percent, whereas employees earning \$100,000 or more (for whom more of their compensation is based on performance) would receive a 1.8 percent increase. The requested increase would also fund the hiring of 15 new staff members in 2026.
- \$18.2 million would fund benefits—an increase of \$0.6 million, or 3.6 percent, from the amount provided in 2025. The requested increase would cover growth in the cost of federal benefits and would fund benefits for the 15 new staff members in 2026.

All told, salaries and benefits for current employees would rise by \$2.2 million, and the costs of salaries and

benefits for the 15 additional employees would total \$0.8 million.

Funding Request for Nonpersonnel Costs

CBO requests \$10.1 million for nonpersonnel costs. That request is an increase of \$2.8 million, or 37.8 percent, from the amount provided in 2025. The requested nonpersonnel funds would cover IT operations—such as cybersecurity, software and hardware maintenance, software development, communications, and purchases of commercial data and equipment—and would pay for training, expert consultant services, office supplies, travel, interagency agreements, facilities support, editorial support, financial management operations (including auditing of the agency's financial statements), subscriptions to library services, and other items.

The requested increase would, among other things, allow CBO to improve its ability to detect, assess, and recover from cyberattacks and to expand its cloud infrastructure. Much of the agency's spending on cybersecurity is the cost of maintaining access to data that are essential to CBO's analyses.

Consequences for Output

The requested funding would allow CBO to produce more analysis for the Congress, including analysis in areas in which the agency anticipates additional legislative activity and oversight (see Table 1). It would also allow CBO to provide more technical assistance to committees and Members when they are crafting legislation and faster turnarounds when demand surges. In addition to providing major analytic products and assistance,

Table 1.

Products by the Congressional Budget Office, Calendar Years 2024 to 2026

Type of product	2024, actual	2025, estimate	2026, estimate
Fulfilled Requests for Technical Assistance. Such requests typically come from committees and Members of Congress seeking a clear picture of the budgetary effects of proposals before they introduce or formally consider legislation.	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
Cost Estimates for Authorizing Bills. CBO is required by law to produce a cost estimate for nearly every bill that is approved by a full committee of either the House or the Senate. The agency also publishes cost estimates at other stages of the legislative process if requested to do so by a relevant committee or by the Congressional leadership. In addition, CBO reviews bills scheduled to be considered under suspension of rules in the House.	1,079	900	900
Cost Estimates for Appropriation Bills. Those tabulations include account-level estimates for individual appropriation acts at all stages of the legislative process, as well as summary tables showing the status of discretionary appropriations (by appropriations subcommittee) and running totals on a year-to-date basis.	100	100	100
Reports, Working Papers, Testimonies, Slide Decks, Interactive Tools, and Infographics. CBO's publications are generally required by law, prepared in response to requests from the Chairs and Ranking Members of key committees, or aimed at enhancing the transparency of the agency's work. They examine the outlook for the budget and the economy, major issues affecting that outlook under current law, the budgetary effects of policy proposals that could change that outlook, the details of the federal budget process, and a broad range of related budgetary and economic topics in such areas as health care, defense policy, Social Security, and climate change.	103	100	100

Data source: Congressional Budget Office.

CBO would continue to produce other important material, such as presentations about the agency's work, letters in response to Members' questions, and blog posts.

CBO regularly consults with committees and the Congressional leadership to ensure that the agency's resources are focused on the work that is of highest priority to the Congress. The demands on the agency remain intense and strain its resources in many areas. Even with high productivity by a dedicated staff, CBO will not be able to produce as many estimates and other analyses as committees, the leadership, and individual Members request.

Requested Information and Authorities

In this section, CBO provides information about its challenges in accessing federal data and requests the authority to provide a childcare benefit.

CBO's Access to Data

The House Committee on Appropriations directed CBO to report to the committees of jurisdiction any challenges in accessing federal data and to identify whether the

Congress can take any actions to ensure continuous and real-time access.

CBO obtains from federal agencies a wide array of information, which it uses to produce baseline budget projections, economic projections, cost estimates, and reports. The agency works collaboratively with agencies to obtain the needed data through formal and informal means. The Congressional Budget Act provides CBO general authority to access data from a variety of sources. CBO also accesses data by using legal authorities applicable to specific types of data, such as federal tax information. CBO currently has more than 20 active data-use agreements with other federal agencies.

During the fall of 2024, two laws were enacted to improve CBO's access to data:

- The Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act (P.L. 118-89) clarifies and strengthens CBO's general authority for accessing executive branch data under the Congressional Budget Act.
- The Congressional Budget Office Data Access Act (P.L. 118-104) authorizes agencies to disclose to CBO information that is protected by the Privacy Act's



confidentiality requirements, providing CBO the same access to that information as the Government Accountability Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation have.

Enactment of the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act, which amends the Congressional Budget Act, highlights CBO's need for resources to maintain strong IT security measures. Because of the sensitive nature of the data the amendment provides access to, CBO needs to provide the same level of confidentiality as the law requires of the agency that provides the data. In addition, the legislation requires CBO to provide to the Congress within one year of enactment a report listing any formal requests for information made to executive branch agencies and any challenges faced.

CBO has identified other actions (previously mentioned in the fiscal year 2025 budget request) that the Congress can take to improve the agency's access to information:

- **Restoring access to student aid data.** CBO has lost access to information that is an important component of the agency's models of the Federal Pell Grant Program and student loan programs. A change to section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code would restore that access.

For many years, CBO received from the Department of Education data on the income of Pell grant and student loan recipients. In the summer of 2024, the department began receiving certain information about the income of student loan borrowers directly from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), newly making the data federal tax information (FTI) that CBO lacks statutory authority to access. CBO is seeking an amendment to section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code to allow the agency to again receive those data. CBO receives FTI under section 6103 for other purposes and is compliant with the IRS's security requirements.

The Department of Education's change in practice has not yet affected CBO's analyses because there is a lag between the department's collection of the information during an award year and transmittal to CBO. At some point, however, the change in practice will significantly diminish CBO's capability to analyze those student aid programs.

CBO has been working with the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Education and Treasury

Departments, as well as with several Congressional committees (the House Committee on Ways and Means; the House Committee on Education and Workforce; the Senate Committee on Finance; the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; and the House and Senate Budget Committees) regarding an amendment.

- **Allowing CBO to receive gifts.** CBO is seeking authority for fiscal year 2026 (and would renew its request for subsequent years) to accept gifts of property, including money and intangible property, or services to support the operation of the agency. Under current law, CBO often can obtain new data sets, services, and tools from private entities by procuring them using appropriated funds or negotiating no-cost contracts compliant with federal requirements. Gift authority would enable CBO to sometimes obtain such data and tools more quickly or without expense. CBO would include in its annual budget justification a description of any gifts accepted, the source of the gifts, and a description of the benefits to the taxpayers.

As the interests of the Congress change, CBO must develop the capacity to analyze new issues and policies. Consequently, the agency will need to obtain new sources of information and might require new specific authorities to do so. CBO will work with the committees of jurisdiction as new challenges arise.

Requested Authority for a Childcare Benefit

CBO renews its request for the following authority to provide a childcare benefit:

Sec. ____ The Director of the Congressional Budget Office may expend funds appropriated in fiscal year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter to reimburse employees of the Office for costs to improve the affordability of childcare if the Director determines that reimbursing such expenses is of sufficient benefit or value to the Office.

The Congressional Budget Act states that CBO employees shall have the same employment benefits and privileges as employees of the House of Representatives. Childcare is one of those benefits. Gaining access to the House of Representatives Childcare Center (HRCCC) is challenging for CBO staff members because they are given lower priority than employees of the House. That ranking stems from the statute that provides the House's childcare authority [2 U.S.C. § 2062(a)(1)]. As a result,

it is generally not possible for CBO employees to enroll their children in the HRCCC at the youngest ages, for which childcare is most needed. CBO staff are also given lower priority than Senate employees to access the Senate Employees Childcare Center. Those difficulties mean CBO employees cannot take advantage of the House and Senate centers, which offer high-quality childcare near their workplace and which can charge lower rates partly because they occupy government-provided space.

Included in CBO's fiscal year 2026 budget request is \$250,000 for the cost of those payments (embedded in various object classes for benefits). This benefit would enhance CBO's ability to recruit and retain a talented and competitive workforce.

Strengthening Responsiveness

CBO seeks to provide information when it is most useful to the Congress. Depending on its purpose, that information takes a variety of forms, such as cost estimates, background information, and technical assistance. In almost all cases, CBO completes a cost estimate before legislation comes to a floor vote. In addition, the agency works to provide technical assistance, reports, and other information to lawmakers and their staff during earlier stages of the legislative process.

Beginning in fiscal year 2019, CBO initiated a multiyear effort to strengthen its responsiveness to the Congress. To carry out that plan, CBO received additional resources to expand staffing in high-demand areas, such as health care and immigration. It has increased its use of assistant analysts, who can move from one topic to another to support more senior analysts when demand surges for analysis of a particular topic or when additional assistance is needed for a complicated estimate. In addition, CBO continues to engage expert consultants in complex areas, such as health policy, agricultural and nutrition programs, economic forecasting, and climate-related research. Finally, the agency is continuing to expand its use of team approaches for large and complicated projects. That approach has been particularly effective in enabling CBO to produce timely analyses of legislation involving health care.

CBO's goal is to increase the number of staff with overlapping skills within and across teams. In some cases, those skills will consist of expertise related to particular topics, such as defense or energy. In other cases, they will be technical, such as the ability to design and improve

simulation models. In a similar vein, CBO plans to invest additional resources in bolstering analysts' ability to coordinate work that requires expertise from across the agency. Another objective is to give additional senior analysts responsibility for projects that span multiple subject areas.

The budgetary increase that CBO is requesting would allow it to increase its efforts to be responsive. In 2026, CBO plans to hire additional staff to conduct more analysis of changes to health care programs, border security, credit programs (like student loans), and the U.S. population (particularly because of changes in immigration) and of dynamic policy effects (that is, determining how changes in fiscal policies would affect the economy and how those economic changes would, in turn, affect the budget)—areas in which CBO expects the Congress to have increased interest. It also plans to hire additional staff to produce more timely cost estimates and fulfill more Congressional requests for technical assistance, particularly in the areas that involve complicated modeling.

Enhancing Transparency

CBO works hard to make its analysis transparent and plans to strengthen those efforts, building on the increased emphasis that it has placed on the endeavor over the past several years. In 2025 and 2026, many of CBO's employees will spend part of their time on making the agency's analyses more transparent.

Testifying and Publishing Answers to Questions

In 2025 and 2026, CBO expects to testify about its baseline projections and other topics in response to requests by the Congress. That work will involve presenting oral remarks, answering questions at hearings, and presenting written statements, as well as publishing answers to Members' questions for the record. CBO will continue to address issues raised as part of the oversight provided by the House and Senate Budget Committees and the Congress generally.

Explaining Analytical Methods

CBO plans to publish material providing general information to help Members of Congress, their staff, and others better understand its work, including its general approach and particular applications of its methods. For example, a report will explain the agency's approach to modeling the effects of import tariffs and carbon border adjustments on trade in energy-intensive goods. Working papers, too, will provide such explanations for various

topics, and in some cases, CBO will be able to publish the computer code used in models. In addition, most cost estimates will include a section describing the basis of the estimate.

Releasing Data

In 2025 and 2026, CBO will maintain its practice of publishing extensive sets of data to accompany its major recurring reports, including detailed information about 10-year budget projections, historical budget outcomes, 10-year projections for federal trust funds, revenue projections by category, spending projections by budget account, tax parameters, effective marginal tax rates on labor and capital, and 10-year projections of economic variables, including the economy's potential (or sustainable) output.

The agency will also provide details about its baseline projections, for example, for the Federal Pell Grant Program, student loan programs, Medicare, military retirement, the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, Social Security Disability Insurance, Social Security Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, the Social Security trust funds, child nutrition programs, the Child Support Enforcement and Child Support Collections programs, foster care and adoption assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, unemployment compensation, the Department of Agriculture's mandatory farm programs, federal programs that guarantee mortgages, programs funded by the Highway Trust Fund, benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and veterans' disability compensation and pensions.

Other data will provide details about long-term budget projections, projections underlying Social Security estimates, more than a thousand expired or expiring authorizations of appropriations, and dozens of federal credit programs. When CBO analyzes the President's budget request, it will post a set of files providing estimates of the budgetary effects of specific proposals. The agency will also continue to post the data underlying various reports' charts and tables.

Analyzing the Accuracy of CBO's Estimates

In 2025 and 2026, CBO will continue to release reports analyzing the accuracy of its projections in comparison with actual outcomes, including a review of the accuracy of its outlay and revenue projections for the previous year, as well as some periodic reviews of the accuracy of

its projections of revenues, outlays, deficits, and debt over time. CBO will also look back at the accuracy of its cost estimates when the necessary data are available.

Comparing Current Estimates With Previous Ones

In several of its recurring publications—reports about the budget and economic outlook, federal subsidies for health insurance, and the long-term budget outlook—CBO will continue to explain the differences between the current year's projections and those produced in the previous year. In its cost estimates, CBO will continue to identify related legislative provisions for which it has provided recent estimates and explain the extent to which the provisions and estimates at hand are similar or different.

Comparing CBO's Estimates With Those of Other Organizations

CBO will compare its budget projections with the Administration's and its economic projections with those of private forecasters and other government agencies when possible. In addition, in various reports, the agency will include comparisons of its estimates with estimates made by other organizations. When time does not allow for publication but interest is great, analysts will discuss such comparisons with Congressional staff.

Estimating the Effects of Policy Alternatives

In 2025 and 2026, to assist policymakers and analysts who may hold differing views about the most useful benchmark for considering possible changes to laws (and to make the consequences of alternative policies more transparent), CBO will estimate the effects that some alternative assumptions about future policies would have on budgetary outcomes.

Characterizing the Uncertainty of Estimates

CBO's budget and economic estimates will continue to aim to be in the middle of a range of likely outcomes under a given set of policies. The agency's reports about the 10-year outlook for the budget and the economy, the long-term outlook for the budget, and federal subsidies for health insurance will contain substantial discussions of the uncertainty of CBO's projections (and the limitations of its analyses) to help policymakers understand the factors that might cause estimates or outcomes to differ in the future. In addition, in most cost estimates in which uncertainty is significant, CBO will include a discussion of the topic.

Creating Data Visualizations

In 2025 and 2026, CBO will provide information about its budget and economic projections in slide decks and create infographics about actual outlays and revenues. The agency will also produce more reports that rely principally on visual presentations.

Conducting Outreach

CBO will continue to communicate regularly with Congressional staff and others outside the agency to explain its findings and methods, respond to questions, and obtain feedback. The agency's Director will meet frequently with Members of Congress to do the same. After each set of baseline projections is published, CBO's staff will meet with Congressional staff to discuss the projections and answer questions.

CBO will continue its practice of routinely consulting with many outside experts who represent a variety of perspectives as it develops cost estimates and other analyses. In addition, CBO's staff will, as usual, give presentations on various topics to Congressional staff and outside experts to gain feedback on the agency's work. Many reports will benefit from outside experts' written comments on preliminary versions. For some recurring reports produced on compressed timetables, such as the one about CBO's long-term budget projections, the agency will solicit comments on previous editions and selected technical issues to incorporate improvements in future editions.

As it does each year, CBO will convene experts on its Panel of Economic Advisers (PEA) and Panel of Health Advisers (PHA), who provide feedback on many topics, including the agency's forecasting methods and models. The agency hosts meetings of the advisers—once a year with its PHA and twice with its PEA—and solicits their views between meetings as well. Congressional staff also attend the meetings. (Lists of the members of those panels and agendas for the meetings can be found on CBO's website.)

The topics discussed at the meetings usually reflect areas of sustained interest by the Congress and help improve CBO's relevant analysis. For example, CBO's September 2021 PHA meeting included a session on telehealth, an area for which CBO was working to improve its modeling capabilities so it could better estimate the effects of applicable legislation. To take another example, CBO's September 2024 PHA meeting included sessions on

new medical technology and the long-term effects of preventive health care, with the goal of improving and enhancing the agency's analysis of genetic testing for early detection of cancer, hepatitis-C, sickle-cell disease, and obesity—all topics on which CBO has recently published analyses in response to Congressional requests.

Similarly, meetings of the PEA cover areas of intense Congressional focus as well as CBO's pending economic forecast. For example, central to the discussion at CBO's November 2024 meeting were the budgetary and economic effects of the expiring provisions of the 2017 tax act—an area in which CBO continues to improve and refine its analysis.

In 2026, CBO will spend about \$33,000 on its PHA, similar to the amount it spent in 2024 and plans to spend in 2025. That amount provides for a small honorarium for members and costs associated with hosting a meeting at CBO. CBO plans to spend about \$59,000 on its PEA in 2026 to cover the costs of honoraria and two meetings.

CBO's staff will give presentations on Capitol Hill on CBO's budget and economic projections and on other topics. In those presentations, CBO will explain its work and answer questions. The agency will also give presentations about its findings and about work in progress in a variety of venues to offer explanations and gather feedback. It will also use blog posts to summarize and highlight various issues. In addition, it will work to answer questions from the press in a timely fashion and connect members of the media with CBO's products as they are published.

Finally, to keep the Congress informed of its work, CBO will continue its practice of sending emails to interested staff notifying them about recently released reports and cost estimates. The agency will also continue publishing a quarterly newsletter, *CBO's Quarter in Review*, which is a roundup of the agency's most recent publications and cost estimates. The newsletter is a companion to quarterly reports listing recent publications and work in progress, which may include reports, working papers, testimonies, interactive tools, infographics, and cost estimates.

This testimony summarizes information in the Congressional Budget Office's budget request for fiscal year 2026. That budget request was prepared by Leigh Angres, Tracy L. Henry, Joyce Shin, and Kamna Virmani (formerly of CBO) with assistance from Dana Ealey, Kevin Laden, and Damon Whitley and with guidance from Mark Smith. It is available at www.cbo.gov/publication/61161.

Mark Hadley reviewed the testimony. John Skeen edited it, and Jorge Salazar created the graphics and prepared the text for publication. The testimony is available at www.cbo.gov/publication/61333.

CBO seeks feedback to make its work as useful as possible. Please send comments to communications@cbo.gov.



Phillip L. Swagel
Director



Senator MULLIN. Thank you, sir. And thanks for being efficient with your time, too. I guess that is what CBO is supposed to be. Appreciate you setting the standard.

Sir, I am going to say this one right this time. So don't correct me, let me do it right.

Mr. DODARO. Okay?

Senator MULLIN. [Do-ra-do]—[Do-da-ro], Dodaro, correct?

Mr. DODARO. That is correct, sir.

Senator MULLIN. Okay.

Mr. DODARO. Mr. Chairman, yes.

Senator MULLIN. You are up. Thank you.

Mr. DODARO. Absolutely.

Senator MULLIN. I am going to call you Gene by the time this is over with, by the way.

Mr. DODARO. Gene is fine.

Senator MULLIN. And then if I say Gene, you can call me Markwayne. We are good.

Mr. DODARO. All right. That is a deal.

Senator MULLIN. All right.

Mr. DODARO. That is a deal.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

STATEMENT OF HON. GENE L. DODARO, COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Mr. DODARO. Mr. Chairman, good morning to you, Ranking Member Heinrich, Senator Rounds. It is a pleasure to be here to talk about our request.

We appreciate the support that we have received from this subcommittee over the years and this Congress as a whole. We give a good return on that investment. Last year, as a result of Congress and the agencies implementing our recommendations, there was over \$67 billion in financial benefits to the government. In the last 6 years, we have averaged \$123 in financial benefits back to the government for every dollar invested in GAO.

This year we updated our high-risk list, which we do at the beginning of each new Congress. There are over 38 areas on that list, ranging from Medicare, Medicaid, to defense weapons systems, to the tax administration system. This year we added improvements needed in the delivery of disaster assistance to individuals. FEMA is stretched way too thin, too many agencies are involved, and recoveries drag out too long. Reform is needed in that area.

On average, \$40 billion of financial benefits each year come from improvements in implementing our recommendations on the high-risk areas. We also do an annual report on overlap, duplication, and fragmentation in the Federal Government. So far, over the past 14 years, we have made 2,000 recommendations, of which 73 percent have been fully or partially implemented. That has led to over \$667 billion in financial benefits to the Federal Government. So both the high-risk and overlap, duplication, fragmentation reports are very important work that lead to government efficiency and effectiveness, and we need to continue to have the resources necessary to continue those efforts.

As Senator Heinrich mentioned, demand for our work is high. We receive hundreds of requests each year. We have about 150 re-

curing mandates. The NDAA last year had 95 specific requests for GAO studies. The Water Resources Act, another 26, and the most recent FAA reauthorization, another 36 requirements. Most major pieces of legislation have mandated reporting requirements for GAO.

Because of the continuing resolution for this year, we will have about 126 less people at the end of the fiscal year than we had at the beginning. The request that I put forward for next year is for an increase, but even that will not take us back to fully replacing those 126 people. As the auditor of the Federal Government's financial statements, I know too well that the Federal Government is on an unsustainable long-term fiscal path and there needs to be efficiencies and effectiveness.

I am trying to be respectful of that need in our request going forward, recognizing that GAO has tremendous value that helps the government solve that problem as well. And we do work for over 93 percent of the standing committees of the Congress. One of the areas that I want to make sure GAO continues to invest in is national security. As I mentioned, we do a lot of work for the Armed Services Committees, and it is important because of the efforts of our government to try to increase our military readiness and to remain the superior military force in the world.

Also, another priority area for us is health care. Health care continues to be the fastest-growing component of the Federal budget, except for interest on the debt. Another priority area is cybersecurity, including both Federal and private sector systems. We do work looking at critical infrastructure systems including water systems, the electricity grid, and telecommunications. The other priority area for us is science and technology.

Congress has specifically asked us to increase our capacity to conduct science technology assessments, and we have done work in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, hypersonic weapons, et cetera. These are the main priority areas that our budget request will support.

I want to also publicly recognize the GAO workforce, which is one of the most talented and dedicated workforces in the world. This is the last year of my term as Comptroller General. I have been in this job now for 17 years. I have been in GAO over 52 years. But I can tell you that the GAO workforce will continue doing the work that we have been known for.

Thank you very much for your attention. I know you will give careful consideration to our budget requests.

[The statement follows:]

United States Government Accountability Office



Testimony
Before the Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch, Committee on
Appropriations, United States Senate

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 10:00a.m. ET
Tuesday, April 29, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET REQUEST

U.S. Government
Accountability Office

Statement of Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States

GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-25-108440, a testimony before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate

Background

GAO's mission is to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. GAO's work spans the full breadth and scope of the federal government's responsibilities.

Congress relies on GAO's nonpartisan, objective, and high-quality work to help inform congressional deliberations as well as oversight of the executive branch. GAO routinely conducts work for the Chairs or Ranking Members of over 90 percent of all standing committees.

Since fiscal year 2002, GAO's work has resulted in over:

- \$1.45 trillion dollars in financial benefits; and
- Over 29,000 program and operational benefits that helped to change laws, improve public safety, and promote sound management throughout government.

For more information, contact A. Nicole Clowers at ClowersA@gao.gov.

April 29, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET REQUEST

U.S. Government Accountability Office

In fiscal year 2024, GAO's work yielded over \$67.5 billion in financial benefits. Our average return on investment for the past 6 years is \$123 for every dollar invested in GAO. In fiscal year 2024, GAO also identified 1,232 programmatic and operational benefits that led to improved services to the American people, strengthened public safety, and spurred improvements across government. Congress routinely uses GAO's work to inform key legislative decisions. For example, based on GAO recommendations, Congress:

- directed DOD to establish minimum standards for military housing to address poor conditions;
- required the FAA to develop a strategy to safely integrate drones into the national airspace; and
- directed the National Nuclear Security Administration to improve cybersecurity practices.

By the Numbers: A look at our FY 2024 accomplishments



Source: GAO. | GAO-25-108440

GAO's fiscal year 2026 request reflects continued high demand for GAO services. Over the past 4 years, GAO has received, on average, 627 new congressional requests for studies each year, which includes requests from committee leadership and mandates (provisions in legislation and related reports). For example, the latest National Defense Authorization Act and related reports included 95 mandates for GAO; the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 included 26 mandates; and the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2024 included 36 mandates. In addition to conducting work for new mandates, GAO has over 150 mandates that have recurring reporting requirements. For example, GAO performs annual financial audits of the SEC, FDIC, and IRS, among others. GAO also provides an increasing amount of technical assistance to Members and committees. In fiscal year 2024, GAO provided over 1,100 instances of this informal, quick-turnaround assistance.

GAO's fiscal year 2026 budget request is for \$933.9 million in appropriated funds and \$72.2 million in offsetting receipts. GAO's workforce is projected to shrink by 126 employees in fiscal year 2025 due to the full-year continuing resolution. The fiscal year 2026 budget request would allow GAO to build back some, but not all, of this loss. These resources will enable GAO to meet the priority needs of the Congress, including five key areas of importance to the nation and Congress:

United States Government Accountability Office

- **National Security Enterprise.** GAO evaluates an array of national security efforts in areas such as military readiness, major weapons systems acquisitions, space programs, and the U.S. nuclear complex. The size and complexity of these efforts continue to grow; the fiscal year 2025 continuing resolution increased defense spending by \$6 billion over fiscal year 2024 enacted levels.
- **Science and Technology.** There is growing demand for GAO's science and technology work. GAO has focused on enhancing this area to meet increased demands from Congress. GAO's science and technology team, for example, provided over 90 technical consultations to Congress in 2024 alone. GAO's portfolio of ongoing and future work includes many aspects of artificial intelligence, medical research and applications, critical minerals recovery, and quantum computing.
- **Fraud Prevention.** GAO examines government efforts to safeguard programs from fraud by focusing agencies more on prevention. In 2024, GAO estimated the federal government lost between \$233 billion and \$521 billion annually between fiscal years 2018-2022. Similarly, GAO reported that agencies estimated \$162 billion in improper payments in 2024, but this does not represent the full extent of this problem.
- **Cybersecurity.** GAO assesses the development and execution of a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, the cybersecurity of 16 critical infrastructure sectors across the U.S., and the security of federal information systems.
- **Health Care Costs.** GAO examines the sustainability and integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, Veterans Affairs, DOD, and Indian Health Service health care services.

The fiscal year 2026 budget request will also allow GAO to address internal operational needs as well as critical projects and initiatives deferred in fiscal year 2025. Specifically, GAO will advance ongoing IT modernization, cloud management, and storage solutions initiatives while also enhancing internal cyber security controls. Additionally, GAO will continue space optimization projects at both our headquarters building and field offices to increase leasable space and address critical building infrastructure enhancements to improve safety, strengthen reliability, and reduce costs.

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee,

I would like to express my appreciation for the support this Subcommittee has shown GAO in the past few years. With your help we have made great progress in saving federal funds and achieving our mission of improving government efficiency, performance, and accountability. Our average return on investment for the past 6 years is \$123 for every dollar invested in GAO. In addition, GAO achieved over 7,700 government-wide program and operational benefits across government.

The fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget request will allow GAO to continue to meet the priority needs of Congress and contribute to a more efficient and accountable government.

GAO's Work Improves Government Efficiency and Effectiveness

GAO continues to demonstrate its value. In FY 2024 alone, our work generated over \$67.5 billion in financial benefits and 1,232 other program and operational benefits. We issued 718 reports, over 550 legal decisions, and handled about 1,800 bid protests. GAO experts testified 60 times before 39 separate committees or subcommittees on topics including improving veterans' access to healthcare in rural areas, F-35 costs and engine modernization, challenges related to preventing and recovering disability insurance overpayments, and defense and civilian applications of artificial intelligence.

Agencies use our work to improve their operations and performance, and Congress uses it to inform key legislative decisions. For example, consistent with our recommendation, the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the most recent National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) prohibits the Navy from obligating or expending any funds authorized for FY 2025 for the construction of a Constellation-class frigate until approval of a high level of design completion by the designated technical authority.

In FY 2024, we also made 1,484 new recommendations. On average, over 75 percent of recommendations that we make are implemented within 4 years. We achieve this high implementation rate because our reports provide evidence-based, convincing findings and constructive recommendations. After we issue the report, we also regularly follow-up with the agency leaders and the Congress to spur implementation.

Addressing our recommendations improves government efficiency and effectiveness. For example, as we reported in March 2025, efforts to

address issues on our [High-Risk List](#) have led to nearly \$759 billion in financial benefits—an average of \$40 billion per year. Similarly, agency and congressional efforts to address issues that we have identified in our annual [Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication](#) report have yielded about \$667 billion in financial benefits.

Addressing all remaining open recommendations would generate tens of billions of additional financial benefits for the government¹. For example, GAO has recommended that Congress consider equalizing the rates Medicare pays for certain health care services, which often vary depending on whether the service is performed in hospital or office settings. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that equalizing payment rates could result in \$156.9 billion in financial benefits from fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

FY 2026 Budget Request

For FY 2026, GAO is requesting \$933.9 million in appropriated funds. This is a 15.0 percent increase over the FY 2025 full year Continuing Resolution (CR) level and uses \$72.2 million in offsetting receipts, reimbursements, and collections. (See appendix I, Table 1) As a result of operating at full-year CR funding levels in FY 2025, critical GAO mission-related activities have been halted or slowed and on-board staffing levels are projected to drop from 3,571 to 3,445 employees. (See appendix 1, Table 2) The reduction in staffing levels is impacting operations across the agency. Our FY 2026 budget request will allow us to build back some of this loss of staff and expertise. As a knowledge-based, professional services organization, our people are our greatest assets.

The FY 2026 budget request will allow GAO to continue to meet the high demand for our work. Over the past four years GAO averaged 627 requests and mandates per year from over 90 percent of the standing committees of the Congress, supporting a broad range of congressional interests. For example, the 2024 NDAA included 95 mandates; the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 included 26 mandates; and the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 included 36 mandates. In addition to conducting work for new mandates, we have over 150 mandates that have recurring reporting requirements; for example, we perform annual financial audits of the SEC, FDIC, and IRS, among others.

¹GAO, Open GAO Recommendations: Financial Benefits Could Be Between \$106 Billion and \$208 Billion [GAO-24-107146](#), Jul 11, 2024

This demand has continued in FY 2025. Through March 31, 2025, we have received 190 requests and mandates. Bills pending before Congress include additional mandates. For example, the Senate bill for the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act includes 12 mandates and the House bill for the Homeland Security Improvement Act includes 7 mandates. We have also testified 21 times so far this fiscal year on topics of national importance. These include modernizing the air traffic control system, improving navy shipbuilding acquisition practices, combatting fraud and improper payments, and improving the federal approach to disaster assistance. Our expert witnesses are frequently praised by committee leadership for their breadth and depth of knowledge.

In addition to our reports and testimonies, we use our in-depth knowledge of federal programs to provide technical assistance to committees and Members. Technical assistance is informal, quick turnaround assistance, such as data analysis, hearing prep assistance, and draft legislation review. In FY 2024, the first year we began tracking these services, we provided over 1,100 instances of technical assistance. For the first half of FY 2025, we have provided 560 instances of this assistance.

The FY 2026 budget request will allow GAO to continue to provide Congress with fact-based, nonpartisan information and analysis that address both longstanding and emerging national interests. Specifically, our request will enable GAO to review the most important national and international issues facing our nation. These include:

- National Security. The latest U.S. National Security Strategy emphasized the importance of a more modern U.S. military in the face of threats from global strategic competition, among other policy priorities. The size and complexity of these efforts continue to grow; the FY 2025 continuing resolution increased defense spending by \$6 billion over FY 2024 enacted levels. GAO evaluates federal efforts across the spectrum of global national security activities, including military readiness, major weapons system acquisitions, space programs, and the modernization of our nuclear complex.
- Science and Technology. Demand for our science and technology work continues to grow. Accordingly, GAO has focused on enhancing its capabilities in this area of continuously evolving rapid developments in our society affecting both the public and private sectors. In committee reports, Committees have frequently indicated they are pleased with our science and technology work and encouraged us to continue to expand our capabilities in this area.

In response to provisions in the FY 2025 House and Senate committee reports, we issued a [report](#) that details our efforts to meet congressional needs for science and technology research and analysis. We reported that our science and technology team has published 32 in-depth technology assessments, 53 2-page Spotlights explaining key emerging technologies and their implications, and dozens of other products on a range of issues. These include the use of artificial intelligence in defense and civilian applications, quantum computing, regenerative medicine, and medical research, along with critical mineral recovery and technology transfer. The team also regularly provides support to Congress on impromptu, real-time advice and consultation, providing over 90 technical consultations to Congress in 2024 alone.

- **Fraud Prevention.** The unprecedented amount of fraud in pandemic programs highlighted the urgent need for better implementation of leading practices for fraud risk management. GAO's *A Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in Federal Programs* is now embedded in legislation and OMB circulars. In 2024, we issued our first estimate of government-wide fraud. GAO estimated the federal government lost between \$233 billion and \$521 billion annually during FYs 2018-2022. During that period, GAO made about 130 recommendations and Matters for Congressional Consideration to address fraud-related issues and to improve fraud risk management. Much more needs to be done to safeguard federal spending.
- **Cybersecurity.** Escalating threats, including new and more destructive attacks from around the globe, highlight the critical and persistent need for effective cybersecurity. Our work will continue to assess multiple priorities, such as the development and execution of a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, the security of the 16 critical infrastructure sections identified by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency², and the security of federal information systems.
- **Health Care Costs.** GAO continues to examine the sustainability and integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and oversee VA, DOD, and Indian Health Service health care services. Health care spending now accounts for around 27 percent of the federal budget and is one of the fastest growing federal expenditures. Future growth will be driven, in

²The 16 sections include Agriculture and Food, Chemical, Commercial Facilities, Communications, Critical Manufacturing, Dams, Defense Industrial Base, Emergency Services, Energy, Financial Services, Government Facilities, Public Health, Information Technology, Nuclear Reactors and Materials, Transportation Systems, and Water and Wastewater Systems.

part, by the aging of the population and the increasing cost of health care.

GAO carries out sophisticated and in-depth work on these and other issues of national importance. Because our work spans the full range of government programs and spending, we must hire and retain a multidisciplinary staff. GAO staff have wide-ranging expertise from many academic fields, including engineering, biology, computer science, cybersecurity, public policy, accounting, law, physics, economics, criminal justice, finance, business, and nursing, among others.

About 72 percent of GAO analysts have advanced degrees in their field of study. GAO attracts and retains this talent by offering a compelling mission and a positive working environment. In March 2025, for the fifth straight year, the Partnership for Public Service ranked GAO as first among mid-size federal agencies as the "best place to work".

Finally, the budget request will also allow us to address internal operational needs. These requirements include IT modernization, cloud data management and storage, and enhancing cyber security controls. In addition, GAO is continuing space optimization projects for both the headquarters building and field offices. We are also pursuing critical physical infrastructure enhancements to improve safety, strengthen reliability, and save costs.

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions.

Appendix I: Summary of Resources and Staffing

Table 1: FY 2024–2026 Summary of Resources by Program

Dollars in thousands

Program	Fiscal Year 2024 Actual		Fiscal Year 2025 Full Year CR ^a		Fiscal Year 2026 Request		Net Change Fiscal Year 2025 / 2026	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
Human capital	3,564	\$730,139	3,543	\$757,834	3,505	\$793,380	(38)	\$35,546
Engagement support		11,625		7,500		12,900		5,400
Infrastructure operations		145,276		112,857		188,350		75,493
Office of Inspector General	12	2,746	17	4,677	23	6,808	6	2,131
Center for Audit Excellence		4,498		4,500		4,730		230
IIJA FY 2024 No-Year Direct Carry Over		917		0		0		0
Lapse		556		0		0		0
Total budget authority	3,576	\$895,757	3,560	\$887,368	3,528	\$1,006,168	(32)	\$118,800
Offsets ^b		(\$83,863)		(\$75,474)		(\$72,189)		\$3,285
Appropriation^c		\$811,894		\$811,894		\$933,979	(32)	\$122,085

Source: GAO. | GAO-25-108440

^aFY 2025 Full Year CR column represents GAO's implemented Operating Plan. We anticipate updating the plan in May without impacting the FY 2026 request.

^bIncludes offsetting receipts and reimbursements from program and financial audits; rental income; training fees; collection of bid protest system user fees; supplemental funds for specific program oversight and pandemic related audits.

^cSalaries and Expenses Appropriation includes \$5.0 million in no-year funding to evaluate program spending pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58). FY 2025 offsets include \$917 thousand of these funds carried forward from FY 2024.

Table 2: FY 2024–FY 2026 Staffing Summary

	Fiscal Year 2024 Actual	Fiscal Year 2025 Full Year CR ^a	Net Change Fiscal Year 2024/ 2025	Fiscal Year 2026 Request	Net Change Fiscal Year 2025/ 2026
Salaries and Benefits					
<i>Number of full-time equivalents (FTEs)</i>	3,576	3,560	(16)	3,528	(32)
<i>Number of staff on board at year end</i>	3,571	3,445	(126)	3,567	122

Source: GAO. | GAO-25-108440

^aStaffing estimates are revised as data on actual onboarding and attrition is collected.

GAO's Mission

The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

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Senator MULLIN. Thank you so much.
Mr. Halpern.

THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

STATEMENT OF HON. HUGH N. HALPERN, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Heinrich and Senator Rounds. Thank you so much for the opportunity to present GPO's fiscal year 2026 request.

On behalf of my 1,653 teammates, I am requesting appropriations of \$135.4 million for fiscal year 2026, which is an increase of about \$3.4 million over our fiscal year 2025 appropriation. This request incorporates increased labor and material costs while accommodating certain important initiatives for Congress and the rest of the Legislative Branch.

This is a 2.6 percent increase, which I would note is lower than the CPI rate over the last 12 months. Many of you are new to GPO and may not realize that we operate as a business enterprise, and directly appropriated funds represent only about 9 percent of our total revenue.

In fiscal year 2024, the remainder of our nearly \$1.3 billion in revenue came from GPO's billings to its other Federal customers, such as the Department of State, National Archives, Department of Defense, and countless others.

We sell products and services to those customers, and we adjust pricing based on the cost of materials, labor, and overhead. As most of GPO's appropriations requests are based on funding for Congress' own publishing needs and the agency's operation of the Federal Depository Library Program, we have also had to increase our appropriations' request when faced with increased costs.

Our model continues to deliver results. We closed our books for fiscal year 2024 with a net positive income of \$57.5 million, enabling us to continue investing in our team, equipment, and campus. It is also important to note that, given the conditions with our customers and increased materials costs, I expect our net income to be lower in fiscal year 2025, although still positive.

Our fiscal year 2026 request includes \$83 million for congressional publishing, which is the same amount as our fiscal year 2025 appropriation. It is based on our estimate of Congress's likely needs, informed by historical trends and available unexpended balances. For this account, we can offset our increased labor and materials costs through efficiency.

Our request for the Public Information Programs account, through which we administer the FDLP, is about \$42.9 million. This represents an increase of about \$5 million over fiscal year 2025, and that is due largely to rising labor costs.

Our final request is for \$9.5 million for GPO's revolving fund to support key technology upgrades, and that is about \$2 million less than the amount appropriated in fiscal year 2025. About 40 percent of that amount will support continued development of XPub, our next-generation composition engine.

We are continuing to push forward with the final stages of development for XPub for bills, resolutions, and amendments.

To date, we are on track with the first phase of user acceptance testing with the Senate, and the House began testing last month. While I do not have a firm deployment date, we are continuing to make significant progress with our customers toward deploying this critical piece of software soon.

The remainder of our revolving fund request is for funds to support GovInfo, our online trusted digital repository. The data in that system supports the Library of Congress, Congress' own bulk data efforts, and dozens of other Federal agencies, enabling Americans to access government information digitally rather than in print.

The system receives more than 142 million requests a month, and the subcommittee's past support has allowed us to add 260,000 document packages during the last fiscal year.

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Senator Rounds, thank you for this opportunity to present our fiscal year 2026 request, and for the support you and your staff have extended us in the past.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



THE HONORABLE HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN
Director
United States Government Publishing Office

**Prepared Statement before the
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate**

**United States Government Publishing Office
FY 2026 Budget Hearing**

April 29, 2025
10:00 AM
Room 138
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

732 North Capitol Street, NW | Washington, DC 20401-0001

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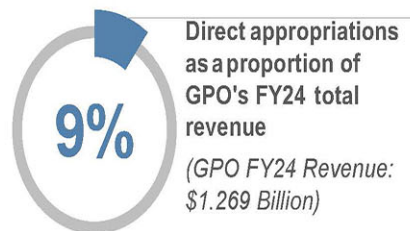
Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to appear before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations to present the Government Publishing Office's (GPO's) fiscal year 2026 appropriations request. Thank you for your past support of GPO, and I look forward to working closely with you and your staff in the coming year.

I am requesting appropriations of \$135,377,000 for fiscal year 2026, an increase of \$3,378,000 over our FY 2025 appropriation.

This request incorporates increased labor and material costs while accommodating certain initiatives of importance to Congress and the rest of the legislative branch. Our FY 2026 request represents a 2.6 percent increase over FY 2025. It is also 8.2 percent lower than the Agency's all-time high appropriation of \$147.5 million in FY 2010.

GPO operates as a business enterprise, and directly appropriated funds represent only about nine percent of GPO's revenue. In FY 2024, the remainder of our nearly \$1.3 billion in revenue came from GPO's billings to its other Federal customers, such as the Department of State, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Department of Defense, and countless others (*See figure 1*).

Figure 1



Those customers pay for products with pricing based on GPO's statutory requirement to recover its costs, meaning that we adjust pricing based on the cost of materials, labor, and overhead. As most of GPO's appropriations requests are based on funding for Congress' publishing needs and the Agency's operation of the Federal Depository Library Program, we have also had to increase our appropriations requests when faced with increased costs.

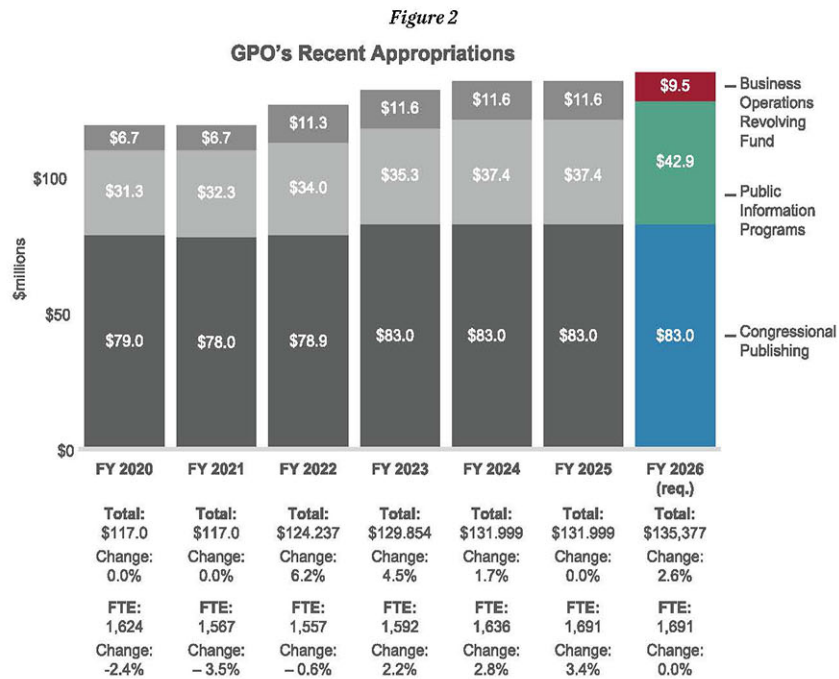
Our model continues to deliver results. For the 28th consecutive year, GPO received an unmodified, or "clean," opinion on its financial statements, showing that we closed our books for fiscal year 2024 with a net positive income of \$57.5 million. That is our fourth consecutive positive result and will enable us to continue investing in our team, equipment, and campus. It is also important to note that, given the conditions with our customers and increased materials costs, I expect our net income to be lower in FY 2025, though still positive.



GPO'S FY 2026 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST

GPO requests a total FY 2026 appropriation of \$135,377,000, a \$3,378,000 increase over our FY 2025 appropriation. This increase will account for changes in our labor and raw materials costs and fund ongoing projects important to our congressional customers.

Increased productivity through adopting new technologies has been key to keeping GPO's appropriations needs down, providing new and improved services at lower costs, and reducing overall headcounts. *Figure 2* shows GPO's recent appropriations amounts and requests. Currently, we have 1,644 GPO teammates, compared to 2,284 in FY 2010 when GPO's direct appropriations were 8.2 percent higher.



We prefer repurposing prior-year unexpended balances to keep our appropriations requests as low as possible. We appreciate the willingness of this Subcommittee and the Full Committee to allow GPO to use those balances in support of programs and capital investments that benefit the original purpose of the appropriated funds.

However, as I have mentioned previously, those balances are declining, forcing GPO to request additional funds to continue our current pace of development and innovation.



Our FY 2026 request includes \$83,000,000 for congressional publishing, the same amount as our FY 2025 appropriation. It is based on our estimate of Congress' likely needs, informed by historical trends and available unexpended balances, and includes increased raw materials and labor costs. In constant-dollar terms, it represents a 38 percent reduction since FY 2010.

Our request for the Public Information Programs (PIP) account, through which we administer the nationwide Federal Depository Library Program, is \$42,852,000. This represents an increase of \$5,464,000—or 14.6 percent—over FY 2025 and will cover the costs of providing Federal Government publications in digital and tangible formats to 1,100 Federal depository libraries nationwide, cataloging and indexing, and distributing documents to recipients designated by law and international exchanges. Rising labor and materials costs drive this increase in our FY 2026 PIP appropriation request. With this proposed increase, the PIP appropriation will be just 4.74 percent higher than the amount appropriated in FY 2010 but still 27 percent lower in constant-dollar terms.

The final component of our overall appropriations request is for a total of \$9,525,000 for GPO's revolving fund to support capital investments and information technology upgrades, which is \$2,086,000 less than the amounts appropriated in FY 2025.

This component of our request is critical to ensuring that GPO can make the capital investments in equipment and technology needed to continue providing Congress and our Federal agency customers with the high level of service they expect. It will support two specific longstanding priority capital investment projects listed below that will be familiar to the Subcommittee.

► XPub

First, in FY 2026 we seek \$4,075,000 in direct appropriations support for our continued development of the XPub composition system, which is intended to fully replace our more than 40-year-old proprietary MicroComp composition system.

XPub is a transformational project for GPO. It will enable GPO and our customers to move to an all XML-composition workflow, simplifying authoring and production while also providing data in a format where it can easily be posted on the web, delivered to mobile devices, and repurposed into e-books, mobile web applications, or other forms of content delivery which contribute to openness and transparency in Government.

XPub is being deployed on a product-by-product basis. In FY 2019, GPO took a major step forward by publishing the 2018 Main Edition of the United States Code, a nearly 60,000-page publication, through XPub. Since then, GPO has continued to work on bringing additional publications into XPub production, with a focus on congressional bills, resolutions, amendments, public laws, Statutes at Large, House and Senate calendars, the Congressional Record, and the Federal Register.

In FY 2022, GPO obtained the internal authority to operate for the production release of congressional bills and public laws, which is currently in testing with our House and Senate customers. Its features include integrating House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills and a new responsive HTML format for displaying congressional bills and public laws once fully deployed.



Much of the initial development of XPub had been funded through the annual reprogramming of unexpended appropriations with the Subcommittee's support, but given GPO's mostly static appropriations requests in recent years, those prior-year funds have been largely expended. We appreciate the Subcommittee's support for more than \$21 million in direct appropriations for this project since FY 2022.

If approved, our \$4,075,000 appropriation request will keep XPub development and deployment on track in FY 2026. Once development is complete, we hope to provide XPub to our customers as a software-as-a-service (SAAS) application, ensuring that there is a dedicated stream of income to support the continued development of the platform without the need for separate recurring appropriations.

► GovInfo

The second component of GPO's request for increased capital investment appropriations in FY 2026 relates to the continued development of our peerless GovInfo online portal, the only ISO-certified trusted digital repository in the U.S. In recent years, the Subcommittee directly appropriated funds to refresh GovInfo's infrastructure and further develop its content collections. This year's request of \$5,450,000 for GovInfo is the same amount the Subcommittee provided in FY 2025, and it would be divided between infrastructure investments (\$1,800,000) and development investments (\$3,650,000), including development required to support the digitization of historical content.

Investments in GovInfo support the distribution of much of the legislative data that supports the Library of Congress' Congress.gov site and the bulk data made available for other public uses. In addition, GovInfo helps keep the costs of administering the Federal Depository Library Program down by making hundreds of thousands of critical Government publications available online free of charge, obviating the need to print and distribute thousands of volumes annually.

With the Subcommittee's sustained support, GPO has been able to add hundreds of thousands of additional documents and publications to the GovInfo online repository each year—over 260 thousand content packages in FY 2024—and the public's usage of GovInfo continues to grow, with nearly 142 million information retrievals a month from GovInfo throughout FY 2024.

OIG REQUEST

Lastly, before I conclude, I want to add that, as required by section 1604(c) of the Legislative Branch Inspectors General Independence Act, we have forwarded our Inspector General's request for \$7,708,000 in budget authority for FY 2026 as part of our FY 2026 Budget Submission. Currently, that request is funded as part of GPO's agency overhead—a component of the prices and rates GPO charges its agency customers and Congress—and not as a separate appropriation.

CONCLUSION

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present GPO's FY 2026 appropriations request, and for all the support you and your staff have extended to us during these challenging past two years. This completes my prepared statement, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you so much. Since I am here until the end, no matter what, I am going to defer my questions at the beginning, and I will turn it over to Senator Rounds.

Senator ROUNDS. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the courtesy. I most certainly appreciate it. And I will be brief with my Q&As as well today.

First, thank you all for being here today and preparing the testimony for us to review.

Comptroller Dodaro, first of all, thank you for your extended service to our country, your contributions have been noted, and they are appreciated.

We have seen an explosion in Federal agencies experimenting with artificial intelligence, often without clear oversight frameworks in place. Recognizing that it is a moving target and that there is no way that it is going away, it is going to be here, and our government will be using it just like the private entities in our country will be using it, and our adversaries will be using it.

I am just curious, sir, has GAO conducted or planned a comprehensive review of how agencies are adopting AI tools, particularly to guard against waste, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, or mission drift? And if so, when can Congress expect any report or an analysis of findings?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. Since 2018, we have issued over 50 reports dealing with artificial intelligence, its use in the defense arena, its potential in accelerating drug development, for medical diagnostic purposes, and other areas. We have done the first inventory across the Federal Government of all the use cases that have been put in place, we just issued a report on generative AI, its use in health care, its human effects, and its potential effects on the workforce. We are constantly doing new work in the AI area.

I think it is very important to note that we have also developed a framework for how to audit artificial intelligence algorithms in terms of the data governance structure and other areas. As you mentioned, it is a moving target. So you are not auditing anything static, particularly in a generative, machine learning environment.

We have a robust program. We have tripled the number of people we had, at Congress' urging, in the science and technology area, so we have experts in AI now in larger numbers, and I am very pleased with the development of our program. I would be happy to provide our plans to the committee as well as, for the record, the reports that we have issued in these areas.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. I am going to turn to Director Swagel now. Given the rapid advances in technology and the economy, is CBO developing internal capabilities to model how emerging technologies, like AI, could impact Federal spending and revenues over the next decade?

And if I could, between the two of you, explain to me the differences between your missions, specifically with regard to how we look at AI, and the development and analysis of AI, and whether or not we are being effective in its use within the government.

Dr. SWAGEL. Okay. Sure. So we are looking at technology and AI, and the biggest direct impact on the Federal budget would be through the overall size of the economy. If the technology improves, if AI contributes to increased productivity, that will make all work-

ers more productive. It will mean the capital we have is more productive. There will be more GDP, and more revenue, and a lower deficit. And we have done lots of work on the effects of increased productivity on the deficit.

The challenge is understanding where exactly AI fits into the economy and the payoff, and there is lots of analysis for us still. It is a little bit too soon to say: Okay, there is this bonus from AI, or the economy is bigger as a result of AI. So we are watching that, but we are not there yet.

I will just say two last things and then I will stop. We are looking at the impacts within the economy, what it means for workers and in different parts of the country. In terms of us versus GAO, in a sense, we look forward, we are looking at what is the projection over the ten-year window, what does AI mean for legislation. And GAO would tend to evaluate backwards not in a negative sense, but what has happened, and they would make recommendations, whereas we would not.

Senator ROUNDS. But what you are saying is they deal in facts, and you deal in projections?

Dr. SWAGEL. There is a sense in which that is right. I mean, we try to judge what the facts are and what they mean for the future, but there is a sense in which that is right.

Mr. DODARO. I think, a slight modification to Phil's response, it is not just evaluating the past, it is also the present. We are doing real-time auditing of what is going on right now. Now, in AI, a big role that we are going to play is the quality of the data that the agencies are using. From our auditing on an ongoing basis across the spectrum of Federal Government's operations, I can tell you the quality of the data is not good.

If you don't have good data going into these systems, you need to worry about bias, you need to worry about accuracy, you need to worry about what unintended consequences might occur. So that will be a big focus of our efforts—that is, are these investments actually paying off in producing reliable outcomes that lead effectively to carrying out their program objectives?

Senator MURRAY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Senator Heinrich.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Dodaro, GAO receives more than 100 new report mandates a year, plus another 150 recurring mandates. In addition, GAO is responsible for informal technical assistance and resolving bid protests. Add to that oversight and auditing of Federal programs within the Federal agencies. How does GAO's budget request help the agency handle its current workload, and any new mandates that are coming down the road currently?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. We maintain active conversations with all the committees across the Congress on what their highest priorities are. We have a good sense of their priorities, and we reprioritize as events occur, such as when administrations start new initiatives, or there is a major event like a natural disaster, global conflict or pandemic.

Our request is based upon our experience dealing with the committees, and only if we receive the requested budget can I guarantee that we will get to all the priority requests from various com-

mittees across the Congress. We are stretched thin. Our budget has not grown as the Federal Government has grown over the years. In inflationary terms, the Federal Government's spending has increased 116 percent. GAO's budget has decreased 1.4 percent. So we need this budget request just to stay abreast.

Senator HEINRICH. You spoke about data. How has the access that DOGE has had in the modifications of government IT systems impacted GAO's ability to conduct oversight and audits of Federal programs on behalf of the Congress?

Mr. DODARO. Right now we are auditing the DOGE access. We are looking at the digital footprint within each of these major systems across government, whether it is Social Security, Treasury, OPM, or others. And so we will have a better idea about what impact DOGE's accesses had on the data systems and whether there has been any information added to the system, or taken out of the system.

We spend a lot of time on data reliability before we do any assessment at GAO. This has added another element of complexity to that work.

Senator HEINRICH. How is that information then communicated back to us?

Mr. DODARO. We will issue public reports to the Congress.

Senator HEINRICH. What is the timeframe, do you think?

Mr. DODARO. We are just getting started across government, and I do not have a timeframe right now. We are going to try to provide iterative reports. In other words, we will release them as they are available for each agency. I am not going to wait until we complete this work across the government, and so that will give some indications.

Now, on a positive side, I mean, they have opened up some data barriers that had been preventing the Federal Government from detecting improper payments and fraud. So there are some benefits. I don't want to imply that there are just concerns. We are looking at the benefits as well.

Senator HEINRICH. Talk to me about the data validation. How does GAO make sure the information it gets from agencies is valid, authentic, accurate?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. Well, a lot these data——

Senator HEINRICH. You will also need the active——

Mr. DODARO. A lot of these databases we work with year in and year out over time. So first we will look at what the agency does itself to validate the information. What kind of checks they put in place? We will do some testing. We will do some data edits to see if there are any anomalies in the data. We have a whole set of methodologies and procedures. I have experts in this area who assist each of the audit teams.

We also audit the Federal Government's financial statements. So we are doing our own sampling and testing of the accuracy of the Federal financial information.

Senator HEINRICH. I can imagine that has probably never been more important than it is right now.

Switching to you for a moment, Mr. Halpern, talk to us a little bit more about the digitization of the publications at the Federal repository libraries and what you are looking at there?

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. Most documents today begin life as digital documents, so when you drop a bill, that manuscript comes to GPO and we turn that into electrons. Most of the time, if you go to Senate Legislative Counsel, we are getting a good file that we can work with. But if you write something on the back of a napkin, our folks will input that data, and then we produce a good document, both in PDF and as structured data in a machine-readable format.

And that is really key to the future. We don't produce nearly as many tangible documents as we used to, and that is why we have really moved the Federal Depository Library Program to a more digital format. And that is something that our library partners wanted as well.

Senator HEINRICH. Got you. Thank you.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, gentlemen. It is good to see you here today.

Mr. Dodaro, as I am sure you are aware, GAO recently issued observations regarding EPA's submission of notices of decision on Clean Air Act preemption waivers as rules under the Congressional Review Act.

In 2020, GAO wrote in a legal decision, quote, "When an agency submits a document to our office under CRA, we consider that to be the agency's determination that the document is a rule under CRA. When a rule is submitted to Congress, Congress has an opportunity to review the rule and pass a joint resolution of disapproval to void the rule."

Do you believe that that statement is true?

Mr. DODARO. It is generally true.

Senator FISCHER. If it is true, why then did GAO not consider these three Clean Air Act waivers to be rules when EPA submitted them to your office under CRAs?

Mr. DODARO. Well, first, there was confusion. When EPA first submitted them to us on February 19, they said they were orders, not rules, meaning they are not subject to CRA, which is consistent with the decision that we made in 2023. They even cited our decision in the first submission. Then, a week or so later, they submitted them as if they were rules. And so we asked EPA why there was this inconsistency. We never got a response from them.

Now, when you quoted that decision, the GAO language is true. We said we do not issue legal opinions once they have submitted it. In this case, this was not a legal opinion, it was observations, because we had issued the previous opinion in 2023. Now, we didn't change that opinion—

Senator FISCHER. Well, in 2023, EPA did not submit the action to GAO as a rule, which meant that GAO was called upon to decide whether that waiver constituted a rule. But in 2025, EPA did submit the three waivers to GAO and to Congress under CRA. In this case, precedent would dictate that you consider the document a rule once it was submitted to your office under CRA. So, sir, it is a rule.

Mr. DODARO. Well, EPA asserts it is a rule, but the issue is the same as what we—

Senator FISCHER. But under your own precedent, it would be a rule?

Mr. DODARO. Not necessarily. We have prior case law on this issue, which we relied on in this case. It is the same issue. In 2023, Congress asked us: Shouldn't EPA have submitted it as a rule? And we said, no. It is an order under the Administrative Procedures Act, and it remains an order. The President can make changes on this—

Senator FISCHER. But in 2025, though, they did submit the three waivers.

Mr. DODARO. Well, after they submitted it saying it wasn't the rule, they submitted it both ways, and on the—

Senator FISCHER. And most recently they submitted it as a rule. So if you have a precedent saying that agencies have the primary responsibility to determine which agency actions meet CRA definition of a rule, and additional precedent that says: That when an agency submits a document to our office under CRA, we consider that to be the agency's determination that the document is a rule under CRA.

Doesn't that make it pretty clear that Congress should decide when using the CRA is appropriate after an agency submits that document?

Mr. DODARO. Well, in this case, certain Members of Congress had questions about it in terms of our case law. So we have an obligation to inform Congress of our views on these particular issues. I would also clarify that our decisions are not dispositive on the Congress. They are advisory. Congress can overrule our legal decisions.

Senator FISCHER. Well, I just believe that we are looking at a completely different scenario than 2023, when you are dealing with an agency action that was not submitted to your agency.

Mr. DODARO. It was submitted to us, twice, as I said, once as an order and then once as a rule. I can understand—

Senator FISCHER. And then again—and then again this year, sir.

Mr. DODARO. Yes. Well, again, this year it was submitted twice as an order and a rule by EPA within a week of one another. I am not talking about 2023. I am talking about twice in 2025. I can understand why Congress had questions about it and asked us: Well, what do you think? We are in business to help the Congress and inform them based upon our work. That is all we did in this case.

Senator FISCHER. I would disagree with you. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you for your time.

Sir, we will stay with you. I just have a couple questions, if you don't mind. How many employees right now work for you?

Mr. DODARO. A little over 3,500.

Senator MULLIN. 3,500, and what do you feel like the need is?

Mr. DODARO. I think we need to be at least at 3,600 to 3,700 staff. GAO used to be over 5,000 people that was downsized in the 1990s, and since then—

Senator MULLIN. And we also did not have the same technology we have today, I mean, that is—

Mr. DODARO. Yes, that is true. But the government was a lot smaller then, too, than it is now.

Senator MULLIN. And you have a request of how much increase, 122 million?

Mr. DODARO. That is correct.

Senator MULLIN. And what is your total budget?

Mr. DODARO. The total budget right now is \$811 million, almost \$812.

Senator MULLIN. So you are going to be approaching a billion dollars?

Mr. DODARO. That is correct.

Senator MULLIN. Is that correct?

Mr. DODARO. Right.

Senator MULLIN. At the same time we are trying to shrink the Federal Government, we are trying to use efficiencies. I mean, one of the things we try to do is be more efficient. What type of technology are you using to try to offset this? And I use this from the—you know, let us just use real world, right? Our Payables and Receivables Office doesn't have near as many people in it as it used to. Our Payroll Department doesn't have near as many people in it as it used to because of the new technology that is available to us.

Mr. DODARO. Right.

Senator MULLIN. And I would say most of the research and accounting offices around the country have shrunk considerably. So what type of technology have you changed to be able to absorb that, to be able to help your efficiencies? Because we are cutting all the cost to government, so it is hard for us to justify \$122 billion—\$122 million increase, which is roughly 15 percent for GAO.

Mr. DODARO. Right. Well, I think the first justification for our request comes from the fact that we return to the government \$123 back for every dollar invested. Now, in terms of our—

Senator MULLIN. How many people in your office do you have that is specifically, because I have heard you quote that now three times—

Mr. DODARO. Yes.

Senator MULLIN [continuing]. Work on that specific issue to tell us how much money you spend—you return back to us?

Mr. DODARO. Well, we actually use estimates from CBO and the Congress as well as from the agency.

Senator MULLIN. But how many people do you have on your staff that is designated just to provide that number to us?

Mr. DODARO. Every team does it based upon their own audit work. It is not any central group that does it. They compile it. There is one, maybe one person there that compiles the numbers as part of a lot of other responsibilities. But it is everybody, and GAO's job to try to be more—

Senator MULLIN. I do hear what you are—I do hear what you are saying. The issue that we are having here is, is that we are not going to be able to increase it.

Mr. DODARO. Yes.

Senator MULLIN. And so we have got to get more efficient, and that goes for every agency. We have got to get more efficient.

Mr. DODARO. Right.

Senator MULLIN. And we are asking the Executive Branch to be more efficient. The Executive Branch is becoming more efficient. We have to do the same.

Mr. DODARO. Yes. One thing that this Committee could do to help us in our efficiency is to have the agencies that we audit provide the information more quickly, and reliably to us.

Senator MULLIN. Right.

Mr. DODARO. And because we can then do work a lot faster if the agencies are cooperative.

Senator MULLIN. Sure. Mr. Halpern, quickly, can you explain to us what you are doing to become more efficient with the taxpayer dollars as funding?

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. We are trying to automate processes where we can. Some of our requirements are that we support older processes. So for instance, as I was explaining to Senator Heinrich, if you write a bill on a legal pad, I have to be able to take that and turn that into good legislative text. That requires people to do it.

We are getting more efficient when it comes to the actual printing. For instance, we have changed from conventional offset printing for our daily publications to digital inkjet printing, which means I have much smaller crews manning those printing presses.

Senator MULLIN. Now, you mentioned multiple times in your statement that you operate as a business.

Mr. HALPERN. We do.

Senator MULLIN. And you have customers?

Mr. HALPERN. We do.

Senator MULLIN. And those customers, are they competitive bids, or are you kind of assumed the one and only supplier for the needs for printing?

Mr. HALPERN. It depends. So for instance, the U.S. passport, our single largest product, we have one customer, that is the Department of State, and—

Senator MULLIN. But I mean, you are not bidding against outside private groups to do this?

Mr. HALPERN. We are not, because the security requirements for that document are significant—

Senator MULLIN. And I say that because you operate like a business, but yet you have an appropriation request, plus an increase on it. What keeps you from just adjusting your prices to actually cover your cost, because if you are operating as a business, then you should have the ability to adjust your cost to be able to make sure it is not costing the taxpayers any extra funding, other than to the agency?

Mr. HALPERN. The Appropriations' request covers three things. It covers Congress' own printing needs. Congress decided that it is easier to appropriate those dollars to us directly than to have us bill them per page.

Senator MULLIN. Okay.

Mr. HALPERN. So that is \$83 million of that request.

Senator MULLIN. Because I am over time, I will come back.

Mr. HALPERN. Sure.

Senator MULLIN. I want to be respectful of my time, just like everybody else's. I will turn the question over to Senator Murray.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to you and Senator Heinrich for holding this hearing, really important for our ability to be able to write our appropriations bills, so I appreciate it.

And I want to thank each of you and all your staff at your agencies for your really excellent support that you provide to this Committee and to Congress.

You know, from day one, President Trump has unilaterally frozen or contravened critical funding provided in our bipartisan laws. Those actions by Trump and Russ Vought have really wreaked havoc for our families and communities across the country. That is really not what the Constitution envisioned. Congress has the power of the purse. Period. Our presidents cannot pick and choose which parts of a law they can follow.

So Comptroller Dodaro, I want to ask you. You have testified that GAO is investigating the Trump's administration's efforts to block Federal funds as potential violations of the Impoundment Control Act. What is the status of those investigations?

Mr. DODARO. We have right now 39 different investigations underway. We are trying to get the information from the agencies about what their legal position is for not expending the money. I am looking forward to what I understand to be a submission by the administration of a rescission package, which is the process outlined in the Impoundment Control Act.

So we will look at that. We are also monitoring all the litigation surrounding these areas that we are investigating. Only three agencies so far have given us the information that we require. OMB has not been responsive, nor EPA. A number of other agencies are due to get us information this week or next week.

I would imagine starting next month, after we look to see what is in the rescission package—

Senator MURRAY. Next month, as in May?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. They won't all come at once, they will come as we collect and analyze all the information.

Senator MURRAY. What options do you have if you don't get timely or responsive information from the Federal agencies?

Mr. DODARO. Well, we will have to make decisions then on our own, based upon the available information. Some of it will be in the lawsuit filings that we are following right now, and then we will have to go forward with the information that we have. We've had to do this in the past, for example with the Interior Department, which didn't respond for a long period of time.

Congress put in language then, after that experience, in the Appropriations Act, requiring Interior to give us information within a certain period of time. I would suggest, respectfully, that a requirement be included in this year's Appropriations Bill, specifically as it relates to Impoundment Control Act decisions, that requires agencies to be timely in responding to GAO. We can give you a reasonable timeframe to include. It would also be helpful to also include a provision of general cooperation giving GAO access to the information we need in our audits. This would also address the Chairman's question about GAO being more efficient. We can only be as efficient as allowed by the timeliness and quality of the information from the agencies.

Senator MURRAY. Right.

Mr. DODARO. We give agencies up to 30 days to respond to our draft reports, sometimes they take longer.

Senator MURRAY. Okay. Well, I appreciate that, and we, Congress, really rely on GAO's expertise as a nonpartisan expert watchdog. So we appreciate your work, and I am going to stay on top of this. Look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. Swagel, Republicans are, as you know, moving full speed ahead with the reconciliation package, promising to deliver more than \$5.3 trillion in new tax breaks for billionaires and large corporations. And at the same time, some Republicans have promised that Medicaid, which is a lifeline for our kids and seniors, is safe. But the reality is, Republicans can't keep both of those promises.

I want to examine this with you. The Republican reconciliation instruction directs \$880 billion in cuts within the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. You responded to a question from House Ranking Member Brendan Boyle and Frank Pallone in March regarding spending within the House Energy and Commerce Committee's jurisdiction, excluding Medicare, which Republicans say is off the table.

In your response, you said over 10 years Medicaid outlays will account for 93 percent of baseline budget projections for Energy and Commerce; is that correct?

Dr. SWAGEL. Yes, that is correct.

Senator MURRAY. And if you add in CHIP, is it fair to say you are now talking north of 95 percent?

Dr. SWAGEL. That is right. Once you take out Medicaid and CHIP, there is only \$381 billion still in the current baseline.

Senator MURRAY. Okay. So looking at table one in that March 5th letter, is it fair to say the remainder is nowhere close to that \$880 billion?

Dr. SWAGEL. That is correct. In the letter that we sent to Mr. Boyle and Mr. Pallone, the dollars after Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP, are much smaller than the instruction.

Senator MURRAY. Yes. Okay. So just for the record, I just want to say it would appear to me to be impossible for Energy and Commerce, the committee with jurisdiction, to reach the spending cuts required under the Republican Reconciliation instructions without cutting Medicaid or putting Medicare back on the table.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Mr. Heinrich, I understand you have got a couple more questions?

Senator HEINRICH. Mr. Dodaro, what was the ratio again of dollars invested in GAO to dollars saved?

Mr. DODARO. For the last 6 years, it is \$123 back for every dollar invested in GAO.

Senator HEINRICH. Do we have any data at this time to suggest what the ratio might be from the activities associated with DOGE?

Mr. DODARO. Not at this time. We will have to take a look at it. They have used some of our reports and have said that they are working to implement some of our open recommendations. We estimate that our open recommendations that Congress or the agencies have not addressed yet could save up to \$208 billion. We issue about 1,400 new recommendations every year. We always follow up on our recommendations. But how much in savings relates specifically to DOGE, I am not sure yet.

Senator HEINRICH. How can we facilitate that information? How do we go about that?

Mr. DODARO. I expect that we would receive a request from Congress asking us to look at their claims for savings. We have not yet received that, but I would imagine that would come at some point. We are tracking it now in terms of how they are using our open recommendations so that we can show the results of our work and the impact our work has. If what they are doing goes beyond implementing our recommendations, we would have to look at it and validate their estimate.

Senator HEINRICH. So for example, if you have a buyout of a Federal employee, you have to back that value out of the so-called savings, right?

Mr. DODARO. Absolutely. And also, if the person becomes unemployed, the Federal Government has to pay unemployment benefits.

Senator HEINRICH. And then—yes.

Mr. DODARO. There are a lot of puts and takes in these estimates that you have to look at, because at the end of the day, you want to know what is the net cost.

Senator HEINRICH. Exactly. I am looking forward to the GAO's analysis of that. What three, you said three agencies have been responsive with respect to the Empowerment Control Act issues. What three agencies are those?

Mr. DODARO. State and Transportation, but one of them had two requests, bringing it to three responses, so far.

Senator HEINRICH. All right. So EPA has not been responsive?

Mr. DODARO. No.

Senator HEINRICH. How about Department of Energy?

Mr. DODARO. They are working on it. I am also outreaching, as I normally do, with all new Cabinet officials and the leadership of agencies. I am due to meet with Secretary McMahon this week. I will talk to her about responsiveness to GAO. I had problems with the last administration, regarding the Education Department. They weren't very cooperative, so I am hopeful that that will change.

Senator HEINRICH. What about Interior?

Mr. DODARO. Interior, so far has not responded, but I am going to outreach to Secretary Burgum. I met with Secretary Collins at VA already, and I have meetings set with Secretary Wright at the Energy Department. And I will meet with all the leaders across government. I always do that.

Senator HEINRICH. I look forward to learning the results of that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. And Mr. Swagel, I didn't have time to ask you any questions the first time. So if you do not mind, how many CBO—or how has CBO been able to absorb the significant increase in cost estimate workload? If you could, explain the operational improvements that have helped with that, and the employment—and employees that you have there.

Dr. SWAGEL. Okay. Yes. I know, thank you. And the number of requests, both the formal cost estimates and the informal technical assistance has gone up. We have done it really in two ways. One is by focusing on the prioritization, and we take our prioritization from the budget committees and the leadership, and the commit-

tees of jurisdiction. And we look to them to say: What should we do first?

Within the agency, we have shifted to more flexibility within our staff. So we will have staff who will cover multiple areas, that we can shift people around when there is something that is especially urgent. We have done that also, in part, by shifting to younger staff, and hiring staff right out of college, who are in more—instances more agile than some of our older staff.

Senator MULLIN. So that might answer my second question. You know, Congress is always changing, and we are changing rapidly, really, it depends on the flavor of the month, what is in the news cycle. How do you adjust for that?

Dr. SWAGEL. You know, we try in a sense to get there before you do, to figure out what is coming, and have our analysis ready. Sometimes we do it, sometimes we don't get there. There are some things that are perennials. So health care is our biggest substantive area. As an example, we have been working on Medicaid now for months to be ready, so it is that kind of mix of getting guidance and then using our judgment to see where the Congress is going.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Mr. Dodaro, I guess I have more of a comment than a question. There is a concern, especially on our side of the aisle, that some—or the CRA response looked political, especially since you made the opinion in about eight days. And then the last time, you know, the EPA submitted to you, they submitted it to you as a rule.

I just would throw this out, and I throw this out to all the agencies. We don't want you to be political. We don't want you to make a political decision. This is the fastest way to get myself or my ranking member upset. I want to run this committee in a very bipartisan way, because what we are talking about is bipartisan stuff. There is nothing that comes in front of this Committee that should be political at all.

But if I perceive it to be, you will hear from me. And I will make adjustments as needed. And we, as a committee, will make adjustments as needed. So when you are making a decision and when you are responding to us, just give us the facts, not your political opinion and your political bias. We deal with that every single day on both sides of the aisle. As I say it again, I do not want that in this committee at all. And I will hold the members accountable, and I will hold myself accountable to do it the same. So with that being said, thank you a lot—

Mr. DODARO. Might I respond?

Senator MULLIN. Yes, sir.

Mr. DODARO. Mr. Chairman, I can assure you that decision on EPA was not political. It was routine business, we got a question about a prior decision that we made. We did not change the prior decision. We gave a summary. I know there are appearance issues, but I can assure you I have been in this job now, as I said, for 17 years. I took the oath to keep this job as a nonpartisan job. I have approached it always that way.

Senator MULLIN. I will take your word for it today. But as I say, the proof is in the pudding. And so for now, I will take your word for it.

Mr. DODARO. I appreciate that.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator MULLIN. All right then. Guys, I appreciate you allowing me to entertain you a little bit as I stumble through my very first hearing. I appreciate your time.

Senator Heinrich, appreciate your time too. Look forward to working with everybody, and hopefully have a close relationship as we go forward.

With that, the committee is closed.

[Whereupon, at 10:55 a.m., Tuesday, April 29, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:04 a.m., in room SD-138, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Markwayne Mullin (Chairman), presiding.

Present: Senators Mullin, and Heinrich.

U.S. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARKWAYNE MULLIN

Senator MULLIN. The committee will come to order. I want to thank everybody for being here. I would like to let everybody know that, you know, obviously this is our second of our fiscal year 2026 budget Hearing for the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.

Today we will have Dr. Hayden, the Library of Congress; and Mr. Austin, the Architect of the Capitol. I appreciate the willingness of the witnesses to appear before the subcommittee today, and I look forward to their testimony.

Before we turn to the specifics of our budget request, I want to comment on the overall outlook for the fiscal year of 2026. We are looking at a significant decrease in discretionary spending across the Federal Government, and we must do our part to make responsible decisions in the bill on how we allocate our limited funds.

Now, we begin this year's appropriations process not knowing what kind of increase, if any, we will be able to accommodate, which makes it even more important that we fully understand your agency's greatest needs and how these requests position you to continue to provide support for Congress.

This year, the total budget request for the Library of Congress is \$946.2 million, which includes an offset of collections and an appropriation of \$9 million and \$100.3 million. This represents the increase of \$48.4 million, or a 5.4 increase above the enacted level. I support the funding—I understand the funding would support continued investments in IT modernization, including improvements to Congress.gov and other Library websites and applications, and additional investments in the Library's digital capacity and accessibility.

The Architect of the Capitol request for fiscal year 2026 is over \$1.3 billion, an increase of \$506.3 million, or a 61 percent increase above the level provided for the full-year CR. This significant increase is primarily for project requests, which reflects the fact that important infrastructure projects have been delayed or phase-funded. I would like to hear the impact of delaying some of this work year after year in terms of increasing deterioration of these historic buildings and the growing cost and risk to operate them.

And thank you again to the witnesses for being here today, I look forward to a productive discussion and understanding your agency's priorities for this year.

Now, I would like to turn it over to our Ranking Member, Senator Heinrich, for any remarks you would like to make.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Chairman. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses as we continue our work to prepare a fiscally responsible bill that meets the needs of the Legislative Branch as a separate but equal branch of Government.

Thank you to the witnesses providing testimony today, and to the folks at your agencies who work every day to facilitate the Congress' work.

Mr. Austin, the Architect of the Capitol, plays an important role in keeping the Capitol Complex fully functional. As the newly appointed Architect, you are the caretaker of the building that embodies our democracy, and it is because of the dedication of you and your staff that Congress can perform its work effectively, and that millions of people each year can access and experience the seat of American Government.

This year the AOC is requesting \$1.3 billion to carry out its mission, a \$506 million increase over the fiscal year 2025 enacted level. Now, I understand that this increase addresses both salaries and infrastructure requirements. I also understand that you are finalizing a Capitol Complex Master Plan that will help inform project priorities for the AOC for the next several years. And I look forward to your testimony about the status of the Master Plan and the resources your team needs to do its job.

Dr. Hayden, you bring both a deep commitment to public access and a modern vision for preserving and sharing knowledge of the Library of Congress. You have requested \$900 million to support Library operations, the Congressional Research Service, the Copyright Office, and the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled.

While your request is a \$49 million increase over the fiscal year 2025 enacted level, I understand that the Trump administration recently froze funding for library service programs and that this freeze may have indirect impacts on your programs. So I look forward to hearing about how this impacts your work and about the resources that you need for your programming in the coming year. I would also like to hear about the Library's ongoing Visitor Experience Project and your work with the Architect on this effort.

Again, thank you to both of our witnesses for being here today. And thank you, Chairman, for the time.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. And with that, we will let our witnesses have a five-minute opening.

We will start with Ms. Hayden, if you want to start.

U.S. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

STATEMENT OF HON. CARLA HAYDEN, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

Dr. HAYDEN. Thank you, Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich. And this is an opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2026 budget request.

The mission of the Library is to engage, inspire, and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity. Above all, the Library exists to serve. Service to Congress remains the foundation for the Library's mission every day with analysis, policy consultations, briefings, programs, and constituent engagement.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and extraordinary support that this Committee and Congress give to the Library. I especially appreciate the funding you have provided for major information technology (IT), investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools.

Also, special thanks for your continued support for the Library's Visitor Experience Initiative. The Library's Treasures Gallery opened to the public in June of 2024, and we are excited to open the Library's new education center, The Source, by the end of 2025, in time for the Nation's America 250 Celebrations. And I am pleased to report that construction and fabrication for the Orientation Gallery, the third element, is now underway too.

Staff are the heart of the Library of Congress, bringing unparalleled knowledge, expertise, and experience to bear for the benefit of Congress and the American people, while modernization and automation have allowed us to expand productivity in some areas and to do more with less, it is worth noting that the Library's staffing level has remained largely unchanged since fiscal 2015, and indeed, the Library's permanent workforce steadily declined from over 5,000 employees in the early 1990s to its current level of approximately 3,300. It is critical that this relatively low staff level be adequately supported.

The Library's fiscal 2026 appropriations request does include \$30.9 million in mandatory pay and price level increases. And as a result of the Continuing Resolution, the Library has had to absorb the cost of mandatory pay and high inflationary price level increases in fiscal 2025.

The need to absorb these expenses threatens our ability to execute the Library's full range of programs and services. As a result, the Library has three modest programmatic requests for fiscal 2026 that, if funded, would provide the resources we need to develop strategic initiatives that deliver greater access and enhanced services, strengthen our capacity, and still foster innovation.

These requests would also help us to keep pace with digital advancements and continue to deliver exceptional service to Congress and the American people.

These requests are: Preservation object storage upgrade, web application delivery and management improvements, continuous development of the Enterprise Copyright System, ECS. The Library is also resubmitting three requests that were not funded in fiscal 2025. These would support CRS's data and analytics capacity, digital collections processing capacity, and digital accessibility. We also revised these resubmissions to reduce overall funding and eliminate permanent staff hires where possible.

So we thank you again for supporting the Library, Congress, and for your consideration of the Library's 2026 budget request. The staff of the Library of Congress, many of whom are here today, remain dedicated to our number one mission of service to the Members and staff of the U.S. Congress and the people it serves.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARLA HAYDEN, THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2026 budget request.

The mission of the Library of Congress is to "Engage, inspire and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity." Above all, the Library exists to serve. Service to the Congress remains the foundation for the Library's mission every day with analysis, policy consultations, briefings, programs and constituent engagement.

The Library's resources are authoritative, expansive, and evergreen. In a time of rapidly evolving technology in a fast-changing world, the Library of Congress stands as it has for over two hundred and twenty-five years (225) as the steward of the largest collection of information and resources ever assembled—not as a memorial but as a living source of knowledge and creativity for Congress and the betterment of the nation. The Library meets its responsibility to collect, preserve and share these treasures every day by constantly renewing the collections and the services it provides to the Congress and the American people. With congressional support, the Library is extensively modernizing and optimizing its systems, processes, and staff. Throughout, the Library never stops its drive to engage, inspire and inform, increasingly through digital means.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and extraordinary support that this committee and the Congress gives to the Library. I especially appreciate the funding you have provided for major Information Technology (IT) investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools.

These investments include the Copyright Office's Enterprise Copyright System (ECS); CRS's IT Modernization; the National Library Service's Braille and Audio Reading Download service (BARD) and next generation devices; the Library Collections Access Platform (LCAP); Congress.gov; and the Library's core IT infrastructure and IT security. Across the Library there's been great progress in modernization and information technology security, but we are not yet finished. Pulling back now will jeopardize our efforts, and we must maintain this momentum and continue building upon these investments to leverage their true potential for all Americans.

I would also like to give special thanks for your continued support of the Library's Visitor Experience initiative. The Library's Treasures Gallery opened to the public in June 2024, and we are excited to open the Library's new education center—The Source—by the end of 2025, in time for the Nation's Semiquincentennial celebrations. I am pleased to report that construction and fabrication for the Orientation Gallery is now underway, too.

I come before you today to discuss the Library's fiscal 2026 appropriations request of \$946.2 million, which represents a 5.4 percent increase over the Library's current funding, which has been set at fiscal 2024 appropriation levels as we operate under a continuing resolution (CR). Given current economic conditions, we have revised programmatic increases and minimized out-year costs, deferring all but the most time-critical requests.

The Library's fiscal 2026 appropriations request aligns with the strategic goals set forth in our fiscal 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, A Library for All—expand access, enhance services, strengthen capacity, and foster innovation. It affirms the Library's

user-centered mission of service. It builds on multiyear strategic efforts to rebuild the Library's information technology foundation and to optimize advanced IT systems and business processes, while at the same time enhancing access and customer service. And it invests in the future, ensuring that the Library can safeguard and support its collections, services, and workforce in person and online.

Staff are the heart of the Library of Congress. Our employees represent the apex of their professions, bringing unparalleled knowledge, expertise, and experience to bear for the benefit of Congress and the American people.

We are providing more programs and services than ever before, and while modernization and automation have allowed us to expand productivity in some areas and to do more with less, it is worth noting that the Library's staffing level has remained largely unchanged since fiscal 2015. Indeed, the Library's permanent workforce steadily declined from over 5,000 employees in the early 1990s to its current level of approximately 3,300. It is critical that this relatively low staff level be adequately supported.

With that said, the Library's fiscal 2026 appropriations request does include \$30.9 million in mandatory pay and price-level increases. As a result of the continuing resolution, the Library has had to absorb the cost of mandatory pay and high inflationary price-level increases in fiscal 2025. The need to absorb these expenses threatens our ability to execute the Library's full range of programs and services. It also has an outsized negative impact on the Library of Congress, Salaries & Expenses appropriation, which funds centralized support services across the entire agency.

The Library has three new programmatic requests for fiscal 2026 that, if funded, would provide the resources we need to develop strategic initiatives that deliver greater access and enhanced services, strengthen our capacity, and foster innovation. These requests would also help us to keep pace with digital advancements and deliver exceptional service to the Congress and the American people.

PRESERVATION OBJECT STORAGE UPGRADE

The Library is requesting \$5.4 million to replace and upgrade the decades-old digital preservation system at the Library's on-premises sites with Object Storage technology to achieve compatibility with cloud-native technologies and storage.

The Library is responsible for preserving and securing the world's largest collection of knowledge. To meet this responsibility with digital collections and data, the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has established specific strategies for preservation data (preserved for future generations) and presentation data (available on Library web sites). Both strategies require multiple copies of data stored securely on-premises and in the cloud.

The Library currently maintains two digital preservation tape libraries that are now over twenty years old. The requested funding will allow OCIO to replace and upgrade this decades-old digital preservation system with the industry standard Object Storage format, which is required to support the applications developed by the Library within the cloud including: the digital collections platform; NLS's Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) application; the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), and the Audio-Visual Content Management System (AVCMS). Each of these cloud-native applications depends on access to Library data to deliver content and provide important services to the public.

This upgrade will establish parity between the Library's on-premises and cloud storage environments and best support current and future cloud-native technologies.

WEB APPLICATION DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

The Library is requesting \$2.5 million annually to better serve the millions of users who access the Library's data, collections, and services through its primary public websites by transitioning web development activities and hosting to the cloud. In fiscal year 2024, nearly 120 million people viewed more than a half a billion pages of websites managed by the Library.

In recent years, however, keeping up with the sites' higher usage and the fast-growing scope and scale of the sites' content has led to challenges maintaining a high level of scalability, reliability, and performance.

The technical and financial limitations of physical data centers leave us unable to provide needed capacity during periods of high demand from individual users and impact a growing number of data partners and research institutions using bulk-data services such as Application Program Interfaces (APIs).

This request will enable OCIO to update the Congress.gov, loc.gov, and copyright.gov websites and applications to utilize elastic technology available from commercial cloud providers. Elastic technology is a cloud feature that allows for the

quick adjustment of resources like memory, storage, and processing power based on demand. This allows users to scale resources up or down to meet changing demands, without having concerns about capacity planning or peak usage.

This request invests in upgrading how the Library makes content and service available to the Congress and the American people and supports the access of collections in connection with the Preservation Object Storage Upgrade request.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENTERPRISE COPYRIGHT SYSTEM (ECS)

The Library is requesting an appropriation of \$6.8 million for the U.S. Copyright Office for 3 years to accelerate development and delivery of the Registration component of the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), reducing the time to completion by approximately 2 years.

Recent stakeholder concerns, evolving technological demands, and congressional focus make it imperative to more quickly address the limitations of the existing online registration system, eCO, which has been used to support copyright registrations for over 15 years. There have been growing demands to accelerate the pace of IT development and delivery of the ECS Registration component to include the capabilities to support the entire registration process.

Registration acceleration will include all types of registration and methods of deposit (electronic and/or physical) presently available in eCO. Increasing resources devoted to registration will meet the demands of stakeholders for a new, enhanced and efficient registration system, allowing the Copyright Office to quickly sunset the legacy eCO system and other workflows that rely on legacy platforms.

FISCAL 2025 RE-SUBMISSIONS

In keeping with the Library's strategic goals, the Library is re-submitting the following three requests that were not funded in fiscal 2025. Given current economic conditions, these requests have been revised to reduce overall funding and eliminate permanent staff hires where possible.

Digital Collections Processing Capacity and Infrastructure (Expanding Access) will enable the Library to invest in end-to-end modernization of IT infrastructure to support the centrality of digital collecting and to upskill staff capacity to process digital content and support the associated IT systems.

This request is essential as the Library increasingly moves toward digital as the preferred format for acquiring items for the collections that were born digital or converted from analog form.

Transitioning from an almost exclusively physical collections to increasingly digital collections is a multi-year undertaking. Existing digital systems that support most digital collections were developed iteratively more than a decade ago and are in need of investment to better standardize, integrate, and modernize to accommodate the scale of digital collections growth. These resources allow the Library to manage the actual digital collections ingest, processing, and access.

The request supports ongoing work to digitize and manage materials from the collections, and the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format. To achieve this, the request will provide resources critical to upgrading and improving the IT systems, workflows, and processes necessary to support ongoing work to digitize and manage digital materials from our collections, and to support the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format.

CRS: Expanding Data Analytics Capacity (Strengthening Capacity & Fostering Innovation) will enable the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to expand capabilities in quantitative data analysis and policy simulation capacity. It will expand CRS' ability to perform quantitative analysis of both research and operational "big data" for congressional clients, establishing a base process and increased capacity for in-depth data analysis. In alignment with Congressional Members and Committees expressed interest, CRS is investigating how artificial intelligence (AI) technologies could enhance its work for the Congress.

CRS is working to make information more readily discoverable and accessible. It is also working to make finding reports and experts easier on CRS.gov and exploring AI and machine learning for analyzing legislative bills and text to expedite summaries and searches. CRS divisions are developing interactive tools for Members, so that Members can determine more easily and immediately how multiple policy approaches might impact specific constituencies.

Ensuring Access through a Digital Accessibility Program (Expanding Access) will enable the Library to fully meet its mission in the information age. The Library's digital products, materials, and services must be accessible to all, including veterans and those with disabilities. Direct patron and staff feedback, along with preliminary

expert assessments, point to a large gap between the Library's products, materials, and services and Federal/international accessibility standards.

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for supporting the Library of Congress and for your consideration of our fiscal 2026 budget request. The staff of the Library of Congress remain dedicated to our number one mission of service to the members and staff of the U.S. Congress.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHIRA PERLMUTTER, REGISTER OF COPYRIGHTS AND
DIRECTOR, U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the U.S. Copyright Office's fiscal 2026 budget request. The Copyright Office is charged with overseeing the national copyright registration and recordation systems, advising Congress on copyright policy and legislation, working with the Department of Justice and other Federal agencies on copyright litigation and international matters, conducting targeted regulatory activity, administering certain statutory licenses, and educating the public about copyright.¹ With approximately 470 full time staff and a modest budget, we have provided these valuable services for over 125 years since Congress recognized the Office as a separate organization in the Library.

Processing times for our core services of registration and recordation stand at historic lows. We continue to make significant progress on IT modernization of our new Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), with three of the four components already in production and used by the public and our staff. We are nearing the three-year anniversary of the new small claims tribunal created by Congress. We are actively engaged in administrative oversight of the designation of the entities established by the Music Modernization Act (MMA). In the past year, we completed the ninth triennial Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) Section 1201 rulemaking and issued two reports on artificial intelligence and copyright. We have expanded our public outreach through educational events and other programs for a variety of audiences.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

Administration of the Copyright Act.—The Office is charged with administering the Copyright Act, which involves providing several core services to the public. Much of this work is involved in our ongoing IT modernization initiative, discussed further below.

Registration.—In fiscal 2024, we registered 424,155 copyright claims involving millions of works. Over the past 3 years, we have markedly improved registration processing times: the average time for examining all copyright claims stands at 2.1 months for the first half of fiscal 2025. For fully electronic claims that do not require correspondence, the average is just 1.5 months.² Electronic applications with physical deposits without correspondence average 2.7 months, while paper applications have remained at an average of 3.8 months for claims without correspondence. Approximately 99% of all applications are now submitted electronically through our electronic Copyright Office (eCO) portal, which we are in the process of replacing as part of our modernization.

Recordation.—In fiscal 2024, the Office recorded 16,971 documents containing titles of 1,738,530 works.³ Our online Section 205 recordation pilot, launched in April 2020, has significantly shortened processing times, with the average time from submission to generation of the public record now measured in weeks rather than months. On August 1, 2022, we opened the pilot to all members of the public and

¹ 17 U.S.C. § 701 (general responsibilities and organization), § 702 (authority to establish regulations).

² Registration processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/registration/docs/processing-times-faqs.pdf>. For the October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 timeframe, 87% of all registration claims were eService claims (online claims and electronic deposits); 12% were deposit ticket claims (online claims with separately mailed physical deposit materials); and about 1% were mail claims (paper claim forms and physical deposits).

³ There are three primary types of documents that may be submitted for recordation: transfers of copyright ownership, other documents pertaining to a copyright, and notices of termination. The pilot and newly released system are currently focused on the first category (section 205 documents).

have seen an increase in users; nearly 90% of all recordings now come in electronically.⁴

Public Records.—The Office is the custodian of records related to registration and recordation, many going back more than a hundred years, which we are working to make available online. In fiscal 2024, we continued development of the new Copyright Public Records System (CPRS) (which includes both recordation and registration records). To date, 3.6 million physical records have been made available in CPRS.

Licensing.—The Office maintained our effective stewardship of \$1.6 billion in statutory licensing funds as of the end of fiscal 2024.⁵ For the seventh consecutive year, we received an unmodified or “clean” audit opinion of the fiscal 2023 statutory licensing fiduciary asset financial statements.

Additional Major Activities.—The Copyright Office is engaged in other significant activities, such as implementing legislation, issuing rulemakings, and conducting economic research and public outreach.

Copyright Claims Board (CCB).—This June, the CCB will complete 3 years of operations. As of the end of March 2025, 1,222 claims had been filed, and the CCB had issued 35 final determinations. CCB officers have successfully facilitated 94 agreements by holding settlement conferences. Staff have participated in scores of public events to promote the CCB’s use and have reached nationwide audiences in-person and virtually.⁶ Claims have come from forty-eight states, D.C. and Puerto Rico, and forty other countries. As required by the Copyright Alternative in Small Claims Enforcement (CASE) Act of 2020, the Office has begun a review of the CCB’s operations to be completed in February 2026.

DMCA Section 1201 and the Music Modernization Act (MMA).—Over the past few years, the Office has conducted numerous rulemakings.⁷ For example, in October 2024, we completed the ninth triennial proceeding under section 1201 of Title 17 regarding temporary exemptions to section 1201’s prohibition against the circumvention of technological measures that control access to copyrighted works. Under the MMA, the Office maintains an oversight role as directed by the statute and engages in education and outreach activities. In January 2024, we issued a notice of inquiry seeking public comments regarding the periodic review of our designations of the mechanical licensing collective (MLC) and digital licensee coordinator (DLC).

Additional Regulatory Work.—The Office’s additional regulatory work includes a rulemaking to provide a group registration for frequently updated news websites. Last September, we issued clarifications to regulations involving termination rights and the MMA’s blanket license. We have several rulemakings underway, including a proposed group registration option for two-dimensional artwork and an update to our existing regulation regarding the selection of electronic deposits of published works for addition to the collections of the Library of Congress.

Initiative on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence.—The Copyright Office also provides impartial advice and expertise to Congress, the courts, and government agencies, and information to the public. For example, the Office has been active in taking forward a comprehensive initiative to examine the copyright law and policy issues raised by generative AI. We issued initial registration guidance for applicants in March 2023. In 2024, we reviewed the 10,000 comments received in response to a public notice of inquiry. We are issuing our Report in several parts, with *Part 1: Digital Replicas* published on July 31, 2024, and *Part 2: Copyrightability* on January 29, 2025. The next Part will address the legal implications of training AI models on copyrighted works, including licensing considerations.⁸ This year, we plan to update the March 2023 Registration Guidance and initiate a request for public comments on relevant revisions to the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*.

⁴Recordation processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/recordation/>. Regardless of the processing time, the effective date of recordation is the date the Copyright Office receives the complete submission in acceptable form.

⁵The Licensing Section is responsible for helping to administer the Copyright Act’s various statutory licenses, including secondary transmissions of radio and television programs by cable and satellite systems; and from digital audio recording devices or media. The Licensing Section collects and distributes royalties to copyright holders based on orders from the Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJ), a three-judge board which is part of the Library of Congress, not located in the Copyright Office.

⁶For more details on the work of the CCB, see Nora Scheland, “How the Copyright Claims Board Can Lighten the Federal Court Docket,” Blog: Creativity At Work (Dec. 20, 2024), at <https://blogs.loc.gov/copyright/2024/12/how-the-copyright-claims-board-can-lighten-the-federal-court-docket/>.

⁷U.S. Copyright Office, Rulemakings webpage, <https://copyright.gov/rulemaking>.

⁸For more information on our AI initiative, visit www.copyright.gov/ai.

The Office recognizes that Congress continues to consider multiple important issues related to AI, and we are available to provide technical assistance.

Working with Other Agencies.—The Office regularly provides legal advice and assistance across the government regarding complex areas of copyright law and policy. We participate in Supreme Court and appellate litigation with the Department of Justice and engage in interagency collaboration and consultation on international matters and trade that impact copyright.

Economic Work.—The Office's first Chief Economist has released several economic reports, including two in the past year, with additional research projects underway.⁹ The economic team also has worked to provide easy public access to decades of copyright registration and recordation data in bulk format.

Public Outreach and Education.—The Office engages in numerous outreach activities to provide information on copyright law and to raise awareness of the CCB and other Office resources and programs. In fiscal 2024, we hosted or participated in 209 public events and speaking engagements, continuing an upward trend. We engaged with many audiences, from stakeholders to lawyers to academics, including well-attended public webinars for users of our systems to gather feedback. Our Public Information Office and our new reading room provide in-person services by appointment.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The modernization of the Office's information technology (IT) continues to be a top priority as well as a strategic goal. We are, however, facing an uncertain fiscal environment as we plan for fiscal 2026, which may impact the timeline for this work. The Office is committed to making regular updates and improvements to avoid repeating the experience of having to overhaul severely outdated legacy systems.¹⁰ Our Enterprise Copyright System development includes four main components (registration, recordation, public records, and licensing). We also collaborate with OCIO on other business priorities enabled by technology, such as improving online access to historical public records and the operation of our new Contact Center.

Recordation.—Our online recordation system was the first ECS component to be released to the public, enabling recordation of documents under section 205 of Title 17. In August 2022, full access was provided to all members of the public. We are now incorporating user feedback to make iterative improvements and to build new functionality for processing notices of termination.

Copyright Public Records System (CPRS).—The second ECS component to be publicly released was a pilot for the new CPRS, which provides access to registration and recordation data with advanced search capabilities, filters, and improved interfaces. The CPRS has expanded online access and research options by adding 3,676,970 card catalog records. It will become the Office's sole source of authoritative online copyright information by summer 2025.

Licensing.—The Office completed the development and design of the licensing component and initial automated workflows to replace outdated systems and processes. We implemented the statement of account examination processes in ECS and transitioned royalty accounting processes onto the Library's Financial System to streamline and enhance operations. On March 13, 2025, we activated this component into production.

Registration.—Registration is the largest and most complex of the Office's services and the focus of the greatest public attention. In response to strong demand from stakeholders, the current focus of ECS development is on accelerating the replacement of the existing online system, which is almost 20 years old. We have expanded the staff working on ECS Registration to comprise three teams: one dedicated to the external (public facing) component, one to the internal (staff) component, and one

⁹U.S. Copyright Office, Economic Research webpage, at <https://copyright.gov/economic-research/>, which also points to the reports, *The Geography of Copyright Registrations* (September 2024), *The Resilience of Creativity: An Examination of the COVID-19 Impact on Copyright-Reliant Industries and Their Subsequent Recovery* (May 2024). In 2024, our team also convened a group of academic scholars to discuss economic issues related to copyright and AI and published a document summarizing a structured framework for evaluating relevant economic evidence. See Lutes, Brent A. ed., *Identifying the Economic Implications of Artificial Intelligence for Copyright Policy: Context and Direction for Economic Research*, U.S. Copyright Office (Feb. 2025).

¹⁰Under the Library of Congress's centralized IT structure, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is leading work on user experience design and platform services—that is, the design and architecture capabilities underpinning the ECS. Years ago, the Library transitioned to an agile IT development model that emphasizes continuous development as well as rapid delivery of new functions and features that optimize the stakeholder experience. We have seen the benefits of this model for meeting evolving changes in technology, providing secure and interconnected systems, and managing contract cost increases.

to electronic deposit (eDeposit) development (which will provide enhanced upload and rendering capabilities to support the submission of large numbers of files in one group application, such as photographs, and very large files, such as feature-length motion pictures and television episodes).

In late 2024, we initiated a limited pilot of both the eDeposit upload functionality and the new interface and functionality of the most commonly used registration form, the Standard Application (currently representing approximately 72% of all claims). During January and February 2025, we conducted 50 in-depth pilot test sessions with 57 participants representing individual and organizational users. The reaction has been uniformly positive, with comments noting that the difference between our current eCO system and the proposed model is “like night and day.” This feedback will inform future development steps and functionalities.

Historical Public Records.—As part of the Office’s commitment to the preservation of and access to historical records, we are digitizing print and microfilm records and making them available online.¹¹ This includes the old card catalog, the Catalog of Copyright Entries (CCEs), microfilm, and the internal record books.¹² Digitization is the first step, to be followed by metadata capture to enhance searchability, with all records eventually available through the new CPRS. Great progress has been made to digitize and make available the Office’s record books: the first 500 were published on the Library’s website in February 2022,¹³ and now 16,874 record books—well over half of the 26,142 total—are available online.

New Contact Center.—The Office’s modernization of customer contact routing and reporting recently achieved a major milestone. Working with the GSA Centers of Excellence, we implemented a best-in-class customer relationship management (CRM) solution. This CRM enhances the public’s experience, enables robust data analytics, and provides centralized knowledge management capabilities to track and route customers’ calls and emails more effectively.

Copyright Public Modernization Committee.—In January 2021, the Librarian of Congress appointed a Copyright Public Modernization Committee (CPMC) to enhance communication with external stakeholders about the technology-related aspects of the ECS. The CPMC was originally established for a three-year term, with thirteen members from a range of interested sectors; it held public online meetings twice a year with hundreds of virtual attendees, as well as several informal briefings.¹⁴ Last year, the Librarian reauthorized the CPMC for another three-year term, and a new set of thirteen members were selected (including some returning members).¹⁵ The first public meeting of the new CPMC was held online on October 10, 2024, and the most recent one was held on April 3, 2025.

FUNDING AND UPDATE TO THE FISCAL 2026 BUDGET REQUEST

The Copyright Office performs all of its work on a modest budget, composed of three separate budgets allocated by program areas:

- (1) *Basic Budget.*—This funds most of the Office’s operations and initiatives, including the majority of payroll and related expenses and the operations of the CCB. Historically, the Basic Budget has been composed of a combination of appropriated dollars and offsetting fee collection authority, with fees constituting less than one half of the total.
- (2) *Licensing Division Budget.*—This is derived entirely from collections of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licensees pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office.
- (3) *Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJ) Budget.*—Although the CRJ program is not part of the Office, we provide it with budget, financial management, and administrative support on behalf of the Library. CRJ appropriated funding sup-

¹¹For details on our Historical Public Records program, visit <https://www.copyright.gov/historic-records/>.

¹²The Office already digitized and made available online our physical card catalog, which is available in the Virtual Card Catalog (VCC), as well as the CCEs. See <https://copyright.gov/vcc/>.

¹³See U.S. Copyright Office, NewsNet 947, Copyright Office Launches Digitized Copyright Historical Record Books Collection (Feb. 7, 2022), <https://www.copyright.gov/newsnet/2022/947.html>. The scans are posted at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/copyright-historical-record-books-1870-to-1977/about-this-collection/>.

¹⁴Video and related material from CPMC public meetings can be found on the U.S. Copyright Office webpage at <https://www.copyright.gov/copyright-modernization/#modernization-committee>.

¹⁵Library of Congress, Library of Congress Announces New Members of Copyright Public Modernization Committee, Sept. 24, 2024, at <https://newsroom.loc.gov/news/library-of-congress-announces-new-members-of-copyright-public-modernization-committee/s/2d289494-93b4-4404-98a1-452cb791571d>.

ports payroll and partially funds other expenses not supported by fees and royalty payments.

Request in Fiscal 2025.—For fiscal 2025, the Office requested an overall budget of \$107 million in funding and 478 FTEs, of which \$45.9 million would be funded through offsetting fees collected in fiscal 2023 and prior years. That budget request would have covered mandatory pay increases, price level increases, and nothing more. We did not request additional appropriations for IT development, as we are now completing the last year of prior Congressional funding. With the fiscal 2025 basic budget now final, the impact of a full year Continuing Resolution on the Office's programs amounted to an effective \$4 million reduction.

Request for Fiscal 2026.—Given that work to modernize our IT systems and services is still underway and accelerating, further support through an increase in appropriated funds will be needed. In our fiscal 2025 budget statement, we previewed that both the Copyright Office and OCIO anticipated the need for greater financial resources for IT modernization in fiscal 2026.¹⁶ The request for additional funds in fiscal 2026 will support work on IT-related initiatives to meet user demands for ECS functionality and continuous development for components already in use by the public. Stakeholders have praised the work we have done so far on modernizing IT systems, and maintaining momentum is essential to deliver a timely ECS Registration component. To summarize, our fiscal 2026 requests are as follows:

- Basic Budget.*—\$97.763 million and 445 FTEs, to include a net \$4.791 million for mandatory pay-related and price level increases, a program decrease for non-recurring Searchable Historic Records costs, and a program increase for Continuous Development of the ECS. This budget comprises \$37.025 million in offsetting fee collections (40%) and \$60.738 million (60%) in appropriated dollars.
- Licensing Division Budget.*—\$6.712 million and 26 FTEs, all of which are to be funded from collection of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licenses pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office. The net decrease includes a mandatory pay-related and price level increases of \$0.231 million and an adjustment for the Copyright Royalty Judges.
- Copyright Royalty Judges Budget.*—\$3.801 million and 7 FTEs include the mandatory pay-related and price level increase and a net program increase of \$0.608 million from Copyright Licensing. Of this total, royalties and participation fees offset \$1.112 million (for non-personnel-related expenses). The remainder, \$2.689 million in appropriated dollars, is to cover the personnel and other related expenses of the three judges and their staff.

For fiscal 2026, the Office is requesting an appropriation increase of \$6.8 million each year for the next 3 years to accelerate development and delivery to the public of the Registration component of ECS. These funds will allow the Office to increase IT development team capacity and meet sharply rising costs within the industry. In fiscal 2029, \$4.1 million will non-recur, leaving base funding of \$2.7 million for ongoing continuous development.

Drawing on the feedback from the limited pilot described above, the Copyright Office and OCIO plan to deliver the full ECS Registration component in fiscal 2028 and then transition to continuous development in fiscal 2029. Between now and then, planned steps include the following. In fiscal 2026, we will continue work on the Standard Application and the integration of the ECS Registration applicant-facing module, the examination module, the eDeposit uploader and examination renderer, and the message center. In fiscal 2027, we aim to complete the development of the group applications and digital registration certificates. In fiscal 2028, we will focus on integration with financial systems, including unified deposit accounts, and the workflow for physical deposits. Throughout, the Office will conduct user pilots to validate the system's evolving functionality.

Without the annual increase of funding over the next 3 years as proposed in our fiscal 2026 request, our plans to accelerate the ECS Registration system are at risk. That risk will likely escalate over time, as funds will have to be used to operate and maintain existing systems that are already beyond their useful life. The deliv-

¹⁶ Statement of Register of Copyrights Shira Perlmuter Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch of the Committee on Appropriations of the U.S. Senate, May 15, 2024, at page 6, at <https://www.copyright.gov/laws/hearings/USCO-Senate-FY25-Appropriations-Testimony-May-16-2024.pdf>. Recall that the initial financial support for our modernization initiative, funded for 5 years as part of the fiscal 2019 budget, ended in fiscal 2023. The other segment of authorized Historical Public Records funding from fiscal 2019 was provided for 7 years and ends in fiscal 2025.

ery timeline will significantly increase for the fully operational registration system demanded by stakeholders with the required components, workflows, and integrations. Looking ahead, after ECS Registration is made available to the public, the Copyright Office anticipates submitting a fiscal 2029 request to fund the necessary integration with other copyright functions (such as APIs, service request processing, content management capabilities, and a warehouse and records management system for copyright records and deposits that are submitted as part of registration).

In conclusion, the Copyright Office appreciates the Subcommittee's and Committee's continued support of our work to benefit the users of our services and the public, and to further our Constitutional mission of "promot[ing] the progress of science and useful arts."¹⁷

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KAREN DONFRIED DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the fiscal 2026 budget request on behalf of the Congressional Research Service (CRS). In addition to outlining CRS's budget requirements for the upcoming fiscal year, my testimony will provide a brief overview of CRS's work in support of Congress during fiscal 2024, and bring you up to date on the Service's progress with respect to several strategic initiatives.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Robert Newlen, whose steady leadership was instrumental in guiding the Service through a period of transition and moving forward the many important initiatives that CRS has underway.

CRS SERVICE TO CONGRESS IN FISCAL 2024

As in previous years, CRS provided support to virtually every Member and committee office in fiscal 2024. The Service provided research and analysis to Congress at every stage of the legislative process and across all public policy issues on its agenda. CRS experts handled over 75,000 congressional requests, published over 1,000 new products, and updated over 1,700 existing products. In addition, CRS bolstered its growing library of multimedia products, posting 146 new videos and podcasts to CRS.gov on a variety of topics including: Federal administrative law after the Supreme Court's Loper Bright decision; Federal standards and guidelines for voting systems; critical minerals for energy; U.S. trade policy and the role of Congress; expiring tax provisions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act; Federal economic development programs; and tracking Federal programs and funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act.

CRS hosted a variety of seminars and programs for Members and staff including series on financial services, disruptive technology, and immigration. In addition, CRS held its annual Issues and Policies seminar; the Legislative and Budget Process Institute; the twice-yearly scheduled Federal Law Update series; as well as several CRS Defense Institute sessions throughout the year. In total, the Service conducted 350 programs that were attended by over 12,500 congressional participants in fiscal 2024.

FISCAL 2026 BUDGET REQUEST AND PROGRAM INCREASE

CRS's budget request for fiscal 2026 is 144.568 million dollars, an increase of 8.488 million dollars (or 6.2 percent) over the amount appropriated in the Full Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025. The requested increase includes 5.013 million dollars for mandatory pay related and price level increases and a programmatic increase of 3.475 million dollars to support continued enhancement of CRS's data analytic and artificial intelligence capabilities. As in previous fiscal years, staff pay and benefits account for approximately 90 percent of CRS's budget request. Thus, operating

under the appropriated fiscal 2024 level in fiscal 2025 has led to significant cuts to research materials and training, as we preserve our most important asset, our people.

In addition to our budget request to enhance data analytic capabilities, CRS priorities for fiscal 2026 include exploring artificial intelligence applications, developing innovative products, improving Congress.gov, and modernizing CRS IT infrastructure. Underlying each of these initiatives will be CRS's focus on the delivery of time-

¹⁷U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 8.

ly, authoritative, nonpartisan, and objective products and services tailored to meet the needs of Congress for research and analysis.

Strengthening Data Analysis Capabilities, Including an AI Component

CRS's requested program increase for fiscal 2026 includes approximately 3.5 million dollars to continue enhancement of the Service's capacity to perform quantitative data analysis and policy simulation, including the modeling of "big data" sets, for congressional clients. In recent years, CRS has observed an increasing demand from Members and committees to provide this type of analytical support. While CRS has conducted some limited quantitative analysis and policy simulation, it lacks the capacity to provide this service on a broader scale.

In the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Congress encouraged CRS "to explore ways to expand its ability to perform quantitative analysis of research data" and directed the Service to "engage with an external entity to produce a report detailing the feasibility of CRS engaging in the analysis and modeling of big data sets by highlighting the information technology infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain such a capability." In response to the direction provided in the Joint Statement, CRS contracted with a company in fiscal 2022, to conduct a study identifying the IT infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain a greater data analytics capability. In September 2023, CRS procured a vendor to pilot a small set of cloud based quantitative data models consistent with the recommendations in the study. Additional resources are required to continue supporting these and future data models in the cloud.

Enhancing its ability to perform quantitative data analysis would enable CRS to more precisely assess, and communicate to congressional requestors, the impact of legislative proposals on various demographic groups, as well as the interaction of such policies with other programs.

CRS would allocate 1.076 million dollars of the requested amount to contract two teams of data personnel (data scientists, programmers, and digital interface designers) in its research divisions, to develop and maintain data models and projects in a cloud-based environment. An additional 1.466 million dollars would be invested in the tools required to setup and maintain a secure cloud computing environment and the datasets necessary to expand CRS's data analytic capacity.

In addition, CRS would utilize 560,000 dollars to acquire modeling tools, AI software and associated user training resources. In the first instance, these AI tools or software would support data analysis, but CRS would look for these tools to be as flexible as possible to enable us to address a range of use cases and maximize the impact of our investment.

The remaining 373,000 dollars would be expended on training and contractual support for IT security services to support Security Assessment & Authorization (SA&A) efforts, to obtain/maintain system Authority-To-Operate (ATO), and to support system development and operations through designing, testing, and deploying cloud native software.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

As the requested program increase illustrates, CRS is continually exploring opportunities to enhance its products, services, and operational capabilities to meet the evolving needs of Congress. Of note recently, in April 2025, CRS implemented a realignment of several offices and sections that will optimize the use of resources and staff expertise. These changes, which are focused on the infrastructure side of CRS, will increase synergies throughout the Service, improve efficiency, and buttress CRS staff's many efforts to provide excellent products and services to Congress.

The following is a brief summary of CRS's progress with respect to other initiatives focused on achieving this important objective.

Product Innovation: Interactive Graphics and Other Visually Based Products

CRS continues to focus on the development of new, visually based products through the efforts of its Visualization and GIS Section. This past year, CRS has worked to streamline the production of interactive graphics within written products, address technical issues that arise, facilitate innovation in interactive displays, and expand interactive visual options. In addition, CRS has explored adaptation of content into interactive infographics within short reports, assessed additional chart options for creating interactive graphic formats, and worked closely with OCIO to ensure that CRS's IT infrastructure is more compatible with its interactive graphic needs.

As of April 2025, CRS's product line includes 72 infographics, 85 interactive graphics, and 1 interactive report. CRS is also piloting and has published a new

interactive report product (also known as “storymap”), a next-generation platform that integrates interactive, multimedia, and visual elements to create a narrative. These innovative products represent CRS’s focus on presenting its research, analysis, and information to Congress in new, accessible, and user-friendly formats.

Recruitment and Retention of a Skilled and Productive Workforce

CRS continued its efforts to recruit, retain, and professionally develop a highly skilled and collaborative workforce. During fiscal 2024, the Service submitted postings for 62 merit selection positions and attended 10 recruiting events. Attendance at these events allowed CRS to engage with a variety of prospective candidates, increase awareness of CRS’s brand, and highlight available employment and internship opportunities. These efforts were part of a broader multi-year recruiting campaign which has succeeded in returning CRS staffing to pre-pandemic levels.

CRS offered training opportunities for staff professional development, including to enhance leadership, writing, and presentation skills. Staff also attended sessions on technology topics, such as statistics and visualization in excel, R programming, data management, and a series of forums discussing various artificial intelligence applications. Further, CRS has encouraged staff engagement through a series of listening sessions.

Exploring Artificial Intelligence Applications

CRS continues to evaluate the potential of AI technologies to enhance support for Congress consistent with the Service’s mission and core values. CRS is actively engaging with AI developers, legislative and parliamentary research organizations, and national libraries to share information and identify additional AI technologies for potential CRS use cases.

Under the guidance of the CRS Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG), CRS has tested and evaluated a number of AI tools and models for legal research and analysis, editing and writing assistance, and drafting CRS bill summaries. In the case of bill summaries, CRS, in collaboration with OCIO, tested multiple AI approaches using six different Large Language Models (LLMs). Unfortunately, these summaries failed to meet CRS standards for accuracy, coherence, relevance, and objectivity (less than 3% of 3000 summaries were acceptable). These results have identified some opportunities to explore the use of AI at different stages of the bill summary workflow (research, analysis, and writing and review).

Evaluation of AI tools for use in various parts of the CRS workflow involves assessing their relative utility in assisting CRS staff to provide timely support for Congress, while confirming adequate safeguards are present to ensure the authoritativeness and/or confidentiality of CRS’s work product. Notably, as a product of ongoing efforts to evaluate AI tools and models, CRS has approved its first AI tool for use by CRS staff. The tool is a commercial subscription product that provides java script coding assistance to CRS Visual Information Specialists to assist them with the production of interactive graphics in CRS products.

IT Modernization

CRS continues to work closely with the Library’s Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to modernize its core IT systems and move toward full migration into the cloud-based M365 platform. In partnership with OCIO, the Service has implemented more than 100 improvements to its congressional relationship management system (“Minerva”) since initial deployment in 2023; many suggested by CRS staff, as part of the continuous development approach implemented by OCIO. In addition, CRS continued the migration of its authoring and publishing and content management systems into the M365 environment.

In fiscal 2024, CRS accomplished the rollout of a new and improved Text Analysis Program (TAP 2.0) that uses Natural Language Processing to research, analyze, compare, and summarize bills and supports the “Related Bills” feature on Congress.gov. In addition, CRS launched the newly redesigned CRS.gov website, which includes an enhanced taxonomy and a new search capability, one week ago, on April 28.

Congress.gov

CRS continues active engagement with Senate, House, and GPO data partners in support of multiple initiatives to improve the interoperability of data sources aggregated by Congress.gov. Fiscal year 2024 marked an historic, behind-the-scenes accomplishment for authoritative information produced by our Senate and House data partners. Senate and House data partners collaborated with the Library to retire first generation, 30–40-year-old out-of-date data sources for Congress.gov. Modernizing behind-the-scenes workflows advances our legislative data partnerships in

support of better tracking legislative information and Member contributions through Congress.gov.

CRS is deeply appreciative for our data partners' efforts to improve data quality by standardizing formats for legislative documents. The United States Legislative Markup, or USLM, is a legislative branch-wide standard that is integral to future editing and publishing interoperability within the legislative ecosystem. We look forward to integrating USLM into Congress.gov which will improve the user experience.

Continuous engagement with users, and continuous collaboration among specialized staff across all legislative branch data partners is key to our collective progress. During fiscal 2025, we continue to deliver user-focused enhancements, including the recent release of HTML for CRS products in Congress.gov and through the Congress.gov API (Application Programming Interface). We are also working with Secretary of the Senate colleagues to improve the Days in Session calendar and provide comprehensive full-text searching of Senate amendment texts dating back to previous years.

To date, researchers can access more than 3.5 million historical and contemporary items from Congress.gov. We remain committed to working with our data partners, including Secretary of the Senate and Sergeant at Arms partners, to continually improve accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of legislative information available from Congress.gov, the official website for U.S. Federal legislative information.

(CONAN) Modernization

Known officially as the "Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation," CONAN serves as the official record of the U.S. Constitution for Congress. In 2019, CRS collaborated with OCIO and the Law Library to introduce a website for CONAN: constitution.congress.gov. This site features hundreds of pages of updated constitutional analysis and content. During fiscal 2024, CRS's CONAN attorneys continued to provide comprehensive analysis of the Supreme Court's jurisprudence as it relates to every provision of the U.S. Constitution, including the implications of recently decided cases. To make CONAN more accessible to online users, content has been drafted and revised in the form of short, granular essays that focus on specific, discrete topics. CRS has also been preparing the printed pocket-part supplements to the decennial 2022 edition of CONAN. Since the launch of the public website in 2019, CONAN has received more than seventy million views and remains the most up-to-date source of constitutional analysis.

As part of the Library of Congress's Legislative and Appropriations Request to the 118th Congress, CRS requested elimination of the statutory requirement to publish CONAN and its supplements in hardbound copy. On March 8, 2024, Representative Bice introduced H.R.7592, a bill "To direct the Librarian of Congress to promote the more cost-effective, efficient, and expanded availability of the Annotated Constitution and pocket-part supplements by replacing the hardbound versions with digital versions." The bill was approved by the House on September 9, 2024 and referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration on September 10th. In the 119th Congress, similar legislation, H.R. 1234, was introduced by Representative Bice on February 12, 2025 and referred to the Committee on House Administration; the bill was approved by the House on March 31, and, on April 1, was referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

Outreach to Members and Committees

In fiscal 2024, CRS engaged in a variety of efforts to target its outreach to Senators and Senate Committee offices. The Service offered twice monthly introductory briefings to Senate staff, as well as a series of congressional programs to highlight the legislative research and analysis that CRS provides to all Members. CRS contacted Chiefs of Staff and State Directors to offer briefings on the products and services available to DC and state offices. In addition, CRS's research divisions engaged with the relevant committees of jurisdiction to inform Senate Committee staff of the products and expertise available to support their legislative and oversight activities. Interim Director Newlen also personally engaged Members of Congress at Library events and solicited direct feedback regarding CRS service, which I have continued in fiscal 2025.

Knowledge Management

CRS continues to develop and implement strategies to capture, manage, preserve, and distribute institutional knowledge that it relies upon to provide exceptional service to Congress. Utilizing robust cloud-based environments that foster better knowledge sharing with colleagues, CRS staff leverage a unique collection of resources, leading to greater efficiencies in everyday work, as well as employee on- and offboarding. At the end of fiscal 2024, the Service maintained 54 research portal

sites and collaborative online spaces that contained topical content curated by experts across disciplines. CRS fosters collaboration by sharing knowledge and best practices through monthly meetings for communities of practice, a quarterly Knowledge Café, and an annual Summer Series on emerging technologies. For fiscal 2024, the summer series focused on knowledge management fundamentals and featured speakers from across the Library of Congress. In fiscal 2025, the knowledge management team is facilitating the agency's effort to migrate its intranet and research portal sites to SharePoint online.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, CRS is honored to serve as a trusted and reliable resource for Congress. The initiatives outlined above represent the Service's ongoing commitment to provide exceptional research, analysis, and information to meet the needs of every Member and committee. I look forward to the Committee's input on how CRS can improve its products and services and strengthen operational capabilities. On behalf of my colleagues at CRS, I would like to express my appreciation to the Committee for your continued support and your consideration of our fiscal 2026 request.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, and thanks for yielding back extra time. We will be efficient with our time today.

Mr. Austin, you are recognized for five minutes.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

STATEMENT OF MR. THOMAS E. AUSTIN, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Mr. AUSTIN. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich. I am honored to make my first appearance before you to represent the men and women of the Architect of the Capitol and discuss our budget request for fiscal year 2026.

I would like to thank the Members of your staff, particularly Molly McCarty and Richard Braddock, for their expertise and consistent professionalism.

I welcome this opportunity to share more about the agency's work in preserving the historic buildings and grounds that inspire our Nation while serving the 20,000 daily occupants and the three million annual visitors to the Capital Campus. In fact, I am happy to report that the Capitol Visitor Center just welcomed their 30-millionth visitor since it opened in 2008.

Before I go further, I would like to acknowledge and express my deepest gratitude to the 2,500 dedicated Architect of the Capitol employees for all of their hard work, which makes it possible for this agency to successfully carry out its mission to serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America's Capitol, and inspire memorable experiences, all of which require around-the-clock care for the 18.5 million square feet of historic facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art that make up our historic Campus.

As you know, I began my tenure in June of 2024. It is the greatest honor of my professional career to serve as the 13th Architect of the Capitol. Thank you for entrusting me to serve as a steward of the historic and vital buildings that make up the U.S. Capital Campus, ensuring their preservation, functionality, and safety for generations to come.

One of my top priorities is consistent communication with the Architect of the Capitol staff, which I believe is essential to building and maintaining faith and confidence in our agency's leadership. Whether discussing the particulars of everyday operations, or our

broader visions for the future of the agency, I am equally committed to practicing clear and timely communication that ensures accountability and coordination with this Committee, Congress, and our internal entities.

For fiscal year 2026, the Architect of the Capitol is requesting a combined total of \$1.3 billion. This request is focused on three key priorities: life safety, physical security, and the critical infrastructure needs of the Campus. Additionally, this budget request ensures adequate funding is available for the staffing levels necessary to oversee our planning and project management needs and to deliver quality services to Congress.

Because our people are the heart and hands of this agency, over the past year, the AOC aggressively recruited to fill our existing staffing shortfalls, which resulted in a reduction of our overall vacancy rate from 11 percent to 8 percent. And our team has certainly been busy. Over the past year, the AOC has responded to 77,000 work orders for the Senate community, with a 96 percent on-time completion rate.

Across the entire Campus, a total of over 495,000 work orders were executed in fiscal year 2024. Across the agency, we dedicate time and attention to safety training, procedures, and operations. I am proud to report that our employee injury rate is significantly less than that of the private sector. We are equally committed to the safety and functionality of the Campus for all those who work here and visit.

This involves proactively addressing the entire range of safety challenges, big and small, everything from trimming tree limbs before they become a safety hazard, to ensuring the compliance of life and safety code, to long-range master planning for the future of this Campus. Security is also a key priority, with the support of this Committee and in coordination with U.S. Capitol Police, we have made significant progress over the past few years and will continue to improve the security posture across the Campus.

Another top priority for the agency is the critical infrastructure needs of this historic Capital Campus. To assist in addressing challenges of aging infrastructure, we are developing the Enterprise Asset Management System. This robust system will enhance data-driven decisions and help prioritize projects aimed at reducing our very significant and growing maintenance backlog.

I recognize the importance of a well-coordinated, holistic, multi-year approach to the facilities management, and we are committed to working closely with you and your staff, as well as the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, to ensure the Architect of the Capitol meets the needs and expectations of the U.S. Senate and the American people.

With the support of Congress and an incredibly talented and skillful team, I am proud that we have accomplished much over the past year, and I look forward to the success of future projects.

The fiscal year 2026 budget request is not only critical to facing the challenges posed by our aging infrastructure, but also ensuring we account for the future needs of this Campus.

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of this Committee, thank you again for your continued support and

consideration of the Architect of the Capitol's budget request. I am honored to be here, and look forward to your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS AUSTIN, ARCHITECT, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC) budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. We are committed to working closely with you and your staff to ensure the AOC meets the needs and expectations of the U.S. Senate in service to Congress and the American people.

It is an honor to serve as the 13th Architect of the Capitol and as a steward of the historic and vital buildings that make up the Capitol complex, ensuring their preservation, functionality, and safety for Members of Congress, staff, and visitors. As you know, I began my tenure in June of 2024 and I feel privileged, day in and day out, to be entrusted to lead this amazing agency.

I speak on behalf of the entire AOC leadership team when I say we are enormously grateful for the 2,500 hardworking, devoted AOC employees who tirelessly carry out their duties in support of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress (Library), and the many other AOC-managed facilities.

One of my top priorities is close communication with AOC staff, which I believe is essential to building and maintaining faith and confidence in our agency's leadership. Whether discussing the particulars of daily operations or our broader visions for the future of the campus, I am equally committed to practicing clear and timely communication that ensures accountability and coordination with this Committee, Congress and AOC-internal entities.

I. OVERVIEW

The AOC plays a vital role in supporting the operations of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Library. Our staff works around-the-clock to preserve and maintain over 18.5 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds and thousands of works of art. This 24-hour, seven-days-per-week operation works in concert to preserve our historic assets and improve aging infrastructure. Beyond these preservation and maintenance priorities, our team is also responsible for hosting many key events and seasonal traditions that bring together thousands of visitors each year. From preparations for the annual Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, to a multi-month effort in constructing the Presidential Inauguration platform, the AOC continually delivers with professionalism and expertise.

For FY 2026, the AOC is requesting \$1.3 billion in appropriations to address critical infrastructure repairs/revitalization as well as safety, security, and modernization efforts across the Capitol complex. This request reflects our commitment to ensuring the safety, preservation and operational efficiency of the Capitol complex while being responsible stewards of taxpayer funds. Over the past year, the agency navigated significant budget adjustments, including a 12 percent reduction from the FY 2024 enacted budget to the FY 2025 Full Year Continuing Resolution (CR) level, which resulted in the deferment of critical projects to future fiscal years.

The FY 2025 CR funding level required budget adjustments resulting in temporary spending limitations, deprioritized projects and operational constraints.

While the AOC adjusted to the FY 2025 CR constraints, it is critical to restore funding in FY 2026 to maintain the integrity and functionality of the Capitol complex. This includes, among other things, restoration of deferred maintenance and Capitol projects, critical security enhancements, workforce investments, and emergent critical mission requirements. The requested increase is a strategic investment in long-term efficiency, resiliency, safety and preservation.

II. PRIORITIZING PHYSICAL SECURITY & LIFE SAFETY

Ensuring physical security and life safety is paramount. Thanks to your support, the AOC has made significant strides in enhancing security measures across the campus. Collaboration with internal and external partners has strengthened emergency planning and bolstered security for events at the Capitol complex. The FY 2026 budget request aligns with our coordinated approach to address security projects, consisting of significant construction or system replacement requirements to support the United States Capitol Police and House and Senate Sergeant at Arms' missions.

The agency also remains committed to staff safety, dedicating time and attention to training, processes, procedures and operations. These efforts ensure staff are well

trained to assist visitors during emergencies. This budget request recognizes these essential measures with projects and requests that focus on supporting our concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks and interruptions.

III. SUPPORTING THE SENATE COMMUNITY

The AOC's FY 2026 budget request highlights significant priorities for the Senate office buildings and Senate operations. These critical needs can be addressed through close collaboration with this Committee and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

This budget requests also helps us continue to address each facility's deferred maintenance, systems and capital renewal requirements. Maintaining and modernizing critical infrastructure such as hearing rooms and elevators is fundamental to the daily and future operations of the Senate. Additionally, the AOC is continually looking forward to ensure future Senate requirements and modernization of the campus are accounted for in our long-term planning.

IV. MODERN MANAGEMENT OF AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

The AOC is dedicated to a long-term strategy for facilities management that emphasizes the maintenance and preservation of the Capitol complex while also modernizing these spaces. The aging infrastructure and facilities of the campus present ongoing challenges which are further compounded by inflationary increases, uninterrupted operations and unforeseen emergency repairs. For example, in FY 2024, the AOC successfully completed nearly half a million work orders across the Capitol campus including nearly 80,000 in direct support of the Senate community. These work orders range from paint touch-ups and mounting pictures on the wall to ruptured pipes and power outages. This number will keep rising due to aging infrastructure.

The AOC's FY 2026 budget request focuses on critical priorities such as upgrading hearing rooms, addressing aging elevators, replacing mechanical systems, and needed renovations of fire alarms and sprinkler systems.

Additionally, the AOC is developing an Enterprise Asset Management system to create an enhanced, organized method for managing, coordinating and overseeing asset-related activities throughout their respective lifecycles. A well-developed asset management system will offer more detailed insights to enhance data-driven financial decisions and prioritization of projects, while also addressing backlog and deferred maintenance issues.

V. WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS & MEETING MISSION REQUIREMENTS

Our workforce is a top priority at the AOC. The agency must ensure it retains a skilled workforce capable of maintaining and modernizing the complex. Our Human Capital Strategy revolves around three pillars: talent acquisition, talent development, and engagement and retention of employees. Over the past year, the AOC aggressively recruited to fill our staffing shortfalls which resulted in a reduction of our overall vacancy rate from 11% to 8%. The AOC recently completed a study on wage-grade salaries, which contribute to retention and attrition. One important thing we learned was that pay for our Wage Graded staff was not on par with other Federal agencies. The FY 2026 budget request will help us appropriately compensate and retain a skilled workforce to meet the needs of Congress.

VI. CONCLUSION

On behalf of the men and women at the AOC, I extend our gratitude to this Committee for your ongoing support. Your dedication and partnership in service to the American people is integral to our daily operations and mission accomplishment. Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Committee, thank you for your time and support in consideration of the AOC's FY 2026 budget request.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, to you both. Thanks for being brief with your remarks.

I will start with answering question—or asking questions. Typically, I usually let someone else go in front of me because they have to leave, but the Ranking Member and myself, we are going to be here either way, yes, so we are not going anywhere. So we will probably go back and forth until we run out of questions, if you don't mind.

SPACE UTILIZATION AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Dr. HAYDEN, first of all, let me ask you, could you tell us how the Library utilizes its space across these three buildings? And by the way, just for—I know people in this room probably know—our three buildings are the Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and James Madison Memorial Buildings. Could you explain how those are utilized, and the space is utilized?

Dr. HAYDEN. The three buildings on the Capital Campus are not simply office buildings. They have mission-essential functional facilities that have been technically designed and outfitted to preserve the collections. And the estimate is that nearly one-fifth of the space serves for those permanent collections and the storage. And the buildings also, all three, have public and congressional reading rooms, and meeting rooms that also serve the general public. We have a number of high—level—

Senator MULLIN. All three of them have meeting rooms?

Dr. HAYDEN. Yes, to varying degrees.

Senator MULLIN. And I just say that because, I mean, I have been here for 13 years, and I have only been to one building for meetings.

Dr. HAYDEN. Well, the other buildings, the Adams Building that is directly behind the Jefferson Building that opened in 1939 after they ran out of space in the Jefferson Building, has meeting capacity.

Senator MULLIN. Are they utilized all the time?

Dr. HAYDEN. Not all the time.

Senator MULLIN. Or are they underutilized?

Dr. HAYDEN. You can book them. And so we are looking at, and we are working—

Senator MULLIN. How often are you at 100 percent capacity in those meeting rooms through all three buildings?

Dr. HAYDEN. Pardon? I didn't hear that one?

Senator MULLIN. How often are you at 100 percent capacity at all three buildings?

Dr. HAYDEN. At the same time?

Senator MULLIN. At the same time.

Dr. HAYDEN. I am not sure, and we would have to look at putting that together.

Senator MULLIN. Are they ever all fully booked?

Dr. HAYDEN. I can't say that they are all of that—

Senator MULLIN. I think that I—now, mind you, this is the first time I chair the Committee, but this is—it is the first time I heard there was meeting spaces at the other two buildings, other than the main building.

Dr. HAYDEN. Yes. There are meeting spaces, and in the Madison Building in particular, that opened in 1980, the meeting spaces are used regularly, especially on the sixth floor by Members of Congress and committees, and there are all types of things, and they have audiovisual capacity as well. I would like to get back to you on the percentage of occupancy of all of the meeting rooms and to give a listing of all the meeting rooms, at that time, that would be very helpful.

Senator MULLIN. Yes, that would be helpful to know exactly how much square footage—

Dr. HAYDEN. Yes. I can—

Senator MULLIN [continuing]. Is dedicated two meeting rooms for the Members of Congress, what is utilized, how underutilized it is, because obviously we are hurting for space everywhere. I mean, we are constantly rotating meeting rooms, looking for additional places to have hearings. And I just—my mindset is I think we underutilize the Library of Congress and the proximity it is to the Capitol, the proximity it is to our office buildings. And so I would like to know if there is—if it is being underutilized, how we can—how we can help use that.

Dr. HAYDEN. Good. And our Congressional Relations Office makes sure that that is part of their orientation and their communication with member offices, that these rooms are available. And we are part of an AOC study that is going on in terms of space utilization, so that is going to yield additional information. So immediately we can get the meeting room information to you and also attendance, because we have a meeting schedule, and we can get that to you.

STATUS OF COPYRIGHT ROYALTY FEE DISTRIBUTION

Senator MULLIN. And switching gears here. I understand there is more than \$1.4 billion in royalty fees that come back as of 2014; is that right? Undistributed, is that correct?

Dr. HAYDEN. For the copyright royalty?

Senator MULLIN. For the copyright.

Dr. HAYDEN. Yes. And that has been something that we are working with the Copyright Royalty Board, and also would like to work with Congress on how the processes could be accelerated. There are some things that might be necessary by statute, or changing things so that the distribution could happen quicker.

Senator MULLIN. All right. My time is almost up. When we get back another round, I want to dig into this a little bit more—

Dr. HAYDEN. Sure.

Senator MULLIN. To figure out exactly what we can do.

Dr. HAYDEN. Thank you.

Senator MULLIN. Because, I mean, that is a lot of royalty sitting there for consumers.

With that, I will yield to the Ranking Member.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. Austin, in May of 2024, as you noted, you became the 13th Architect of the Capitol. You took over an agency that had undergone significant leadership changes, and frankly needed a new leadership direction. What are your general observations about the Architect of the Capitol and its observations at this point?

Mr. AUSTIN. Senator, thank you for the question. I would say that one of the biggest ones that jumps out is the breadth of this agency. I am continually amazed by the breadth of our mission and the skills of our workforce that service that mission. There are so many tasks, big and small. I mentioned in my opening remarks that, over the—across Capital Campus, we did close to half a million work orders just this past year. You break it down by day that

is more than 1,300 per day that we are executing. And that is 365 days a year.

And the workforce that services those work orders is an extremely dedicated and talented team. The breadth of our talent of the agency is also something that really, I am continually amazed by. They really enjoy their jobs. They feel connected to the mission. They know that this is more than just a job. This is a career. This is a vocation. This is a calling. You know, and I look at that, especially the folks at the Capitol Visitor Center and the Botanic Gardens, kind of that first public face for our visitors when they come and see these great spaces, and the enthusiasm that they present, the collections, and tell the history of our buildings, which probably should bring my next observation about our buildings, because we do have an amazing Campus, but it is aging.

We have too much deferred maintenance, and some of our facilities are in desperate need of a full renovation. The daily maintenance I spoke about just a moment ago, I think we do very well with that. I think we have good responsiveness rate. We had a 96 percent on-time completion rate for the Senate community. But it does take a lot of day-to-day band-aid type repairs in order to keep the Capital Campus functioning for the needs of Congress.

And communicating those issues is something that I have noticed since I have been, as far as the agencies; I don't think we did a great job of in the past. I don't think we have been able to communicate our facility conditions, assessments, and indexes to the members in a way that they can understand the fine line we walk between functionality, and budget, and the appropriation cycle.

So when we are talking about building revitalization and a holistic approach to facilities management, I don't think we have done a good job of messaging that. And that is why I am trying to address that, as you alluded to in your remarks, Senator, about the master plan. Is that we are taking a look at the long-term issues for this Campus over the next 20 to 50 years.

The last master plan update was in 2012. Normally these are done in every 5-year cycle, so we are very, very far behind. And I think I understand why. It was not just the leadership turnover you mentioned, Senator, but it is also just because this is a hard problem to get your arms around. It is pricey, as we have a lot of stakeholders in Congress that we are trying to address their needs. And there are a lot of things where you are trying to compare apples to oranges across the Campus, and that is difficult—especially when we have gone beyond, say, the facility life that we expected to have these buildings, and where we are right now.

So as we are communicating that to Congress, that is something that we are making a focus of over the next year, to communicate with this committee and others to understand the full needs of Congress.

Senator HEINRICH. Does the Architect of the Capitol's fiscal year 2026 budget request begin to address your vision for the agency, and how does that dovetail with the master plan?

Mr. AUSTIN. Yes. The short answer to your question is yes, and I will explain how that is. We have a couple different things that are addressed in the budget request. Certain items in there are for the initial pre-design work for some of these long-term facility

needs that we are talking about, such as the Rayburn renovation on the House side, but also things like the SCIF, that we have received signals in fiscal year 2022 and 2021, as well as inquiries from this Committee, and the Committee of Rules referenced the need for a SCIF.

So we have some pre-design work in there. We also have work to address some of those immediate infrastructure needs, try to offset some of the risk that we have with our HVAC system and some of our plumbing systems on both sides of the Campus, as well as working with our chief security officer for some of the security projects.

So we are addressing that. We also have some of our personnel we are looking to bring on board, whether it be a chief artificial intelligence officer, or additional planners and architects.

STATUS OF THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROJECT

Senator HEINRICH. Great. Dr. Hayden, the Visitor Experience Project has been underway for several years, includes several enhancements to the Jefferson Building to improve the visitor experience there. During this time, the project has experienced some challenges. What is the current status of that project?

Dr. HAYDEN. I am very excited, actually, about the progress of the Visitor Experience Project and grateful to Congress for its support. The first-ever permanent Treasures Gallery opened in June of 2024, and there is a continuing rotating display of our collections in that. And then the Youth Center, which is the second component, there are three components as you know, the Youth Center is scheduled to open in late December of this year. And we have been very pleased to have the advice of a number of Congressional children and grandchildren who have been part of an advisory committee. They have named it The Source.

And the last component, the orientation space, is anticipated to open in late 2026 and early 2027, possibly. And, AOC has begun construction. And, I just want to take this opportunity to say that we have been working very closely with AOC, including the relationship with Mr. Austin and me as the head of the Library, our Chiefs of Staff, and our bi-weekly meetings. And so in the last year, there has been so much more communication and progress, and we are very excited about what can happen.

Senator MULLIN. We are playing ping-pong.

Senator HEINRICH. Are you sure?

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR COPYRIGHT ROYALTY FEE DISTRIBUTION

Senator MULLIN. Yes. Thank you again. Let us dig back in to the \$1.4 billion in royalty fees that is all the way back to 2014. You mentioned that you might need some help with Congress on getting this problem resolved. As you can imagine, this is probably an extremely frustrating sticking point, and I am having a hard time wrapping my head around it, why it is so hard to get these fees out the door and back in the hands where they belong. And I am interested to see why Congress would have to do something additional when it was originally set up for the Library of Congress to handle?

Dr. HAYDEN. The Library of Congress, through the Copyright Royalty Board, we are the administrators of that process.

Senator MULLIN. Right.

Dr. HAYDEN. And there are many formal proceedings there that are involved. So people, for instance, or companies can litigate, they can appeal, and so that process is one that the Copyright Royalty Board is really looking at, about setting for instance things like a time limit, saying that you have to resolve this by a certain time. And that could be something that would help quite—

Senator MULLIN. How long have you been looking at that? It does not seem like—I don't think Congress needs—we don't have to give you the authority to do that. You can set that yourselves—

Dr. HAYDEN. Some of the aspects, and we can provide more detail on this, for the record, and would like to engage on this, of what solutions might help move the process along. So that would be very helpful.

Senator MULLIN. Could you please get back to us on that?

Dr. HAYDEN. Oh. Yes.

Senator MULLIN. And the reason why I say that is because, you know, with the way we structure our fees right now—and if I am misunderstanding this—the way that we structure our fees right now for copyrights is that we charge a certain fee, but really Congress is offsetting some of that. And if I am not mistaken, you would have noted that the Copyright Office lists one of their priorities for this fiscal year is to conclude a fee study of copyright services and prepare an adjusted fee schedule for submission to Congress.

And if we are going to raise the fee, which I would like to do that, because that way it would more reflect what it actually costs Congress to do, rather than taxpayers paying for a copyright to be put through, we would be able to have the person asking the copyright to actually pay for that fully. If we are able to do that and offset the cost, then we probably need to be better at getting the royalty fees out.

Dr. HAYDEN. Those are two separate processes, and it is up—and so—

Senator MULLIN. I get it. I understand they are two separate processes, but it is still through the same overall: Do you know?

Dr. HAYDEN. Yes. I do know.

Senator MULLIN. No. I just saw a head shake back here and—

Dr. HAYDEN. And that is the Register of Copyrights, Shira Perlmutter so—

Senator MULLIN. Right. But I mean, if I understand it—

Dr. HAYDEN [continuing]. So copyright would—

Senator MULLIN [continuing]. We pay for the fees, or we charge the fees to come in to—

Dr. HAYDEN. We charge.

Senator MULLIN. Right.

Dr. HAYDEN. And copyright protection is automatic under the law.

Senator MULLIN. Right.

Dr. HAYDEN. Unlike a patent.

Senator MULLIN. But we are in charge of both?

Dr. HAYDEN. Copyright registration is voluntary, and people pay for that, and companies pay for that. And what that gives them is some legal support.

Senator MULLIN. I understood that. But we are responsible for both.

Dr. HAYDEN. 40 percent of—

Senator MULLIN. Are we not—sorry—are we not responsible for both?

Dr. HAYDEN. Yes.

Senator MULLIN. Okay, and so we take the fee—

Dr. HAYDEN. For Copyright Royalty Board, which manages the output of royalties.

Senator MULLIN. Sure. But we charge to register it?

Dr. HAYDEN. For copyright registration.

Senator MULLIN. Right. We charge for that, and we accept the money. But we are having a hard time giving the royalty fees out.

Dr. HAYDEN. And the Register of Copyright is actually helping me to differentiate those two processes.

Senator MULLIN. I understand there are two separate processes. I am not arguing that. I understand there are two separate processes, two separate processes between walking forward and walking backwards too. I understand that. I am saying is, if we are able to charge money to register, and we are able to accept the funds, when we go out to give the royalties out, it should also be a smooth process exiting as it is entering, even though those are two separate processes. I am just, I am trying to figure out how we can become more efficient, and then also offset the cost if we need to do a fee structure?

Dr. HAYDEN. The fee structure for the Copyright Royalty Board is for cable and satellite royalties.

Senator MULLIN. Okay.

Dr. HAYDEN. Not individual authors, and artists, and even companies. So copyright registration fees are separate from the cable and the satellite royalties, that is why we really would like to work with the Committee on ways that the copyright, cable, and satellite royalty funds could be distributed in a more timely fashion with some changes in—

Senator MULLIN. How far behind are we on it?

COPYRIGHT ROYALTY LITIGATION

Dr. HAYDEN. It depends on the different cases, I mean, and so—

Senator MULLIN. How long does a case typically last?

Dr. HAYDEN. That I would have to get back to you on, in terms of a typical case, because there are not typical cases. It could be depending on if there is litigation or—

Senator MULLIN. Average, how long does the average case take?

Dr. HAYDEN. I would have to get back to you on that.

Senator MULLIN. And I would like suggestions on how to streamline that.

Dr. HAYDEN. We have been working with the Copyright Royalty Board on that and we—

Senator MULLIN. How long have you been working with them?

Dr. HAYDEN. Personally, as librarian, I have been working with them for definitely the last three or 4 years on that particular one.

Senator MULLIN. To make a decision?

Dr. HAYDEN. Not to make a decision to look at possibilities.

Senator MULLIN. So we haven't even got to the point of the—I am sorry.

Dr. HAYDEN. It is okay.

Senator MULLIN. That is absurd to think we have been looking at a solution for 3 years and we have not come up with a solution to actually come up—I am just——

Dr. HAYDEN. There are recommendations, sir.

Senator MULLIN [continuing]. As a business owner, I don't understand that.

Dr. HAYDEN. Well, there are recommendations, and I have been in——

Senator MULLIN. How long does it take to submit those recommendations to us?

Dr. HAYDEN. The Copyright Royalty Board is working to work with the Committee, so.

Senator MULLIN. I am sorry. I don't know how long I am going to chair this board or this, you know, Committee, but I know I am here for the next 2 years. I can't tell you what is going to happen after the midterm, but I suggest us—I suggest that we really work hard to get more efficient. That is unacceptable taking 3 years to just come with a suggestion. I don't know how many times the board has to look at something to figure out how we can do it better, now that is——

Dr. HAYDEN. That was not in terms of what the board has been doing. This was referring to my active involvement with the Copyright Royalty Board, so that is——

Senator MULLIN. Okay. Well, let us put a—let us put a time limit on this thing.

Dr. HAYDEN. Yes.

Senator MULLIN. Okay. So let us put a time limit on it. Come to me within a couple weeks, because you have plenty of time to look at it. Give me some suggestions. The Committee will look at it, see if there are things for us to do. Let us make a decision and get off center. I mean, because the definition of insanity is doing the same thing, expecting different results. And we are doing the same thing, expecting different results. There is plenty of stuff out there we can look at to get more efficient.

Dr. HAYDEN. And I am sure the Copyright Royalty Board and the Register, who is here with me today, would be very pleased to present this.

Senator MULLIN. All right. Well, let us set up a meeting in two weeks.

Dr. HAYDEN. Great, thank you.

Senator MULLIN. Let us sit down and come to the meeting with suggestions.

Dr. HAYDEN. Thank you.

Senator MULLIN. And Ranking Member, if you would like to be there, we would set it up. We don't have to have a hearing on it. We just sit there and we will have a conversation.

Dr. HAYDEN. That would be very, very helpful. Thank you.

Senator MULLIN. Senator.

Senator HEINRICH. Mr. Austin, obviously the requested increase for fiscal year 2026 encompasses a number of additional positions. Can you talk about what those positions are required for and what unmet need you would be able to accomplish with the additional positions?

Mr. AUSTIN. Yes, thank you, Senator. Yes, we are requesting 57 more positions in the fiscal year 2026 budget, we obviously had none in the CR, and there was almost none in the 2024, so some of this is a bit of pent-up request over the last several years. It kind of runs the full gamut, I spoke about the breadth of the agency earlier. We have everything from electricians, and plumbers, additional electricians and plumbers, and the electricians, the high-voltage electricians, will allow us to have a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week response in case of any electrical emergency on Campus.

Currently, that is an on-call response if it is after hours. We have HR specialists that are in there to help us work on our vacancy backlog. Right now, we are trying to get our time to hire down to 80 days. We have made some great progress in there, but some of it is just the capacity of our HR team. There is more visitor guides. We are seeing increased tourism since the—you know, COVID is over, and we are seeing an upswing in tourism.

In fact, the day after inauguration was our largest retail day that we have ever had in the agency, just that one day. But that would also include five visitor guides to help with that workload, so it kind of runs again. We also have—we are trying to take some contractors that we have on our chief security office, and bring them in to be government employees, so it is shifting that from a contract over to a regular employment.

Overall, those FTE increases are just under \$10 million that adds to the total agency budget. So the impact, if we don't get those, some of those issues I spoke about as far as the time to hire, and the on-call request versus on-site request would remain, and that would have potential issues that we have.

Like for instance, on the House side, we have a 24-hour response in case of an elevator outage, but sometimes it is not an elevator technician that responds to it, and we have to call that person in from home. And that creates a lag in that time, and we are trying to remedy those types of issues. But they kind of run the full gamut, but overall, it is a fairly minor number in the overall scheme of the budget, but it is close to \$10 million, so I am not going to downplay it either.

Senator HEINRICH. I am curious. Let me just say, I am always amazed at the quality of work that your staff does. It is remarkable. How do you hire and find the skill sets to be able to do the kind of work that you do supporting the Capitol?

Mr. AUSTIN. Thank you again for that question. This is another one of those. It kind of depends on where we are going with this, because we have such a breadth of skill sets in the agency. We do things, we have done partnership with some professional associations, some trade schools, to get the word out. Obviously, we use USA Jobs just like everyone does, but some of our skill sets are pretty niche.

Senator HEINRICH. Yes.

Mr. AUSTIN. You know, decorative plasters, decorative painters, some of that we grow internally. We take someone that has come from, say, a labor or custodial role. They come and do an apprenticeship in our paint shop, or our carpentry shop, and then they work to gather those skills. When it comes to like electricians and plumbers, we work with the—you know, we advertise with the unions and some of the trade groups out there.

Engineers and architects the same way, partnership with SAME or AIA, depending on what skill set we are looking for, we advertise with them, going to job fairs, it really runs the gamut. But because our skill sets, many of them are very niche, some of those we grow internally.

Senator HEINRICH. Talk to me about the process that you went through to decide what infrastructure projects would be included in the fiscal year 2026 budget initiative.

Mr. AUSTIN. So project prioritization, we look at three driving factors. Number one, you can break down to risk, importance, and how it affects our deferred maintenance. When we look at risk, it is the risk of the system failing and what impact that would have on our congressional stakeholders. So some of our components are quite old, many are well beyond their design life and we are putting them together with minor repairs, and they need a major repair—or major renovation or refurbishment like I talked about with the master plan earlier.

Senator HEINRICH. Give us an example or two of that category?

Mr. AUSTIN. Sure. So the air-handling units in the Rayburn Building, they are the originals, 60 years old. Originally were designed for probably, I would have to check on this, but somewhere around 30 years is typical in those homes, 20 to 30 years. So we are well beyond those—that design threshold. Some of our components we have to custom-make because they don't make those parts anymore. So we have to fabricate those internally, or we have to hire it out, which has long lead times to get those pieces back. So that would be an example, a specific one.

But it really does run the gamut. We have, you know, painting that is tearing, plaster that is flaking. We have great people who are working on it, but it is—I spoke to some plasterers the other day, you have definite job guarantees because we have so much of it around here for them to do.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Chairman.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. I will switch to Mr. Austin. How many employees do you have right now?

Mr. AUSTIN. We are a little over 2,500 at the moment, Senator. It varies a bit seasonally. We hire more people, visitor guides and visitor assistants for the summer months because of increased visitorship in the CVC. We have more employees at the moment on the Senate side to effect the Senate moves, but it varies seasonally, but it is a little over 2,500.

Senator MULLIN. How many of those are for maintenance purposes?

Mr. AUSTIN. Sure. I think it is kind of a good question. I am glad you asked it. Because of our team, about 70 percent are what we consider trades people, hourly workers, wage grade, wage supervisors, wage leaders. That runs the gamut from things like custo-

dial laborers, plumbers, carpenters, sheet metal workers, pipefitters, all those kinds of things. So that is about 70 percent of my workforce are the hands-on labor force that does the work around the Campus.

About 15 percent are what you would consider professional trades, engineers, architects, legal, safety professionals, and so about 15 percent would be support functions.

Senator MULLIN. On subcontractors, how many subcontractors do you have working on the complexes?

Mr. AUSTIN. I would need to get back with you on the exact number, but we usually have on Campus, depending on the project, we probably have around an additional 500 contractors that are working on Campus based on, you know, the prime contractors we use—

Senator MULLIN. For maintenance purposes?

Mr. AUSTIN. Oh. For maintenance purposes?

Senator MULLIN. Yes, not building, not rebuilding and that—

Mr. AUSTIN. Okay. Not for buildings. Very few, we have some for—we have some assistance with elevators because of the workload, and we have some in a few other areas, but relatively few.

Senator MULLIN. Yes, at the power plant I noticed you had quite a few workings there.

Mr. AUSTIN. Power plants are almost exclusively run by government employees.

Senator MULLIN. Yes.

Mr. AUSTIN. So we have contractors out there doing some of the work on our construction projects, and some of those things, like we had a tie around one of the smokestacks out there that had broken off, and that was made structurally unstable.

Senator MULLIN. Right.

Mr. AUSTIN. That was beyond the skill set, we brought in contractors to fix that. So we do have them coming in for one-off missions like that.

Senator MULLIN. And what about the—I think when I was out there I saw them maintenance—in a burner or chiller, I think.

Mr. AUSTIN. Yes, a chiller.

Senator MULLIN. I forget what it was.

Mr. AUSTIN. Yes, it was probably a boiler is what they are doing, since we are coming off a season on those. And so for those, yes, we do have some folks who do—not day-to-day, that is not a day-to-day maintenance that is, you know, annual refurbishment, where they come in and remove the scaling, and refurbish it.

Senator MULLIN. So the majority of the plumbing, electrical, HVAC, carpentry, that is all done in-house? We are not subbing any of that out?

Mr. AUSTIN. Yes, Senator.

Senator MULLIN. So are we behind in hiring people, or are you able to keep fully staffed, pretty much. Fully staffed, I would consider anything over 90 percent really.

Mr. AUSTIN. If that is the metric we are working off, then we are about 92 percent right now as far as our staffing, so we would be—

Senator MULLIN. What is your turnover like?

Mr. AUSTIN. It is time to hire.

Senator MULLIN. Turnover.

Mr. AUSTIN. Oh. Turnover; varies a bit, depending on what trade and what personnel we are talking about, but we are—I would have to get back with the exact number, but it is 4- to 5 percent I think per any—

Senator MULLIN. What is your pay compared to the private market? Let us say for an electrician?

Mr. AUSTIN. So that is something that we are looking at right now. We actually just are in the final throes of a wage grade study, where we are looking at how our pay compares to the private sector, and to other Federal Government employers. Because our employees, depending on what sector you are looking at we have—or what trade you are looking at, we are either comparable or below. We don't have anybody really who is above that level.

Senator MULLIN. You are doing a study on the wages for trade?

Mr. AUSTIN. Wage grade study, to see about how our pay compares to other Federal entities, and I mean that study has been—

Senator MULLIN. How long have you been doing a study on that?

Mr. AUSTIN. Because we are looking at—

Senator MULLIN. No. I mean, how long have you been doing this study?

Mr. AUSTIN. Oh. How long is the study? Probably, less than a year, I think, less than a year. They are coming back to us with the—they have already given us the results—one of the issues is if we wanted to change the way we do our pay, we have to go to the Federal—

Senator MULLIN. I understand that. I just think of these studies—I am sorry, being a contractor myself, I just sit there and I look at it, and I go, you know, I can tell you real quick what my competitors are paying. And these are union employees, and so it seems like you could call the local union hall for pipefitters, and for electricians, and for mechanical, and find out what they are paying pretty quick. I mean, you could do that in 30 minutes.

Mr. AUSTIN. And you could but that—we will never be paying as high as the hourly rate for the—

Senator MULLIN. I understand that. I just want to know what the competitiveness is, let me see if there is a—because if you are—I mean, if you have got a 92 percent—I mean, you are hired at 92 percent right now, and your turnover is pretty low when it comes to trades like that, I mean, you are doing pretty good.

Mr. AUSTIN. Yes.

Senator MULLIN. And I am just saying, if there is a way for us—if we are behind, if there is a way for us, we need to be looking at hiring more tradesmen.

Mr. AUSTIN. Um-hum.

Senator MULLIN. I didn't know if there is a problem. At 92 percent, I would say there is probably not really that big of a problem for it, because I would say the benefits are pretty good. And that way we can get started on this deferred maintenance, yes.

Mr. AUSTIN. So that is the overall rate. I would have to get back to you for as far as the specific trades, because I know there is more turnover, say, of our custodians. And some of our other trades people have much higher turnover because of the pay. But I have

always—when I do my visits with employees, I always say we are never going to be competitive with the hourly workers from the unions because their pay is seasonal, it fluctuates, goes up and down. Ours is going to be steady. We have a better benefits package than you are going to get from, say, a union job.

So we are never going to compete with those on a per-hour basis. But the job security, the fact that they can work in a predictable environment, they are not traveling all over the city or across the country for jobs, that they are getting a predictable paycheck, those have benefits too.

Senator MULLIN. They do.

Mr. AUSTIN. And so when we are talking to our employees, and so when we are talking about the wage, we say it is not just the—that was kind of informing us what the private sector does. Kind of we say, call down the union, take 30 minutes, we have done those kinds of things, but also talking about the other Federal agencies and seeing what we can do about it, because we are, you know, in the Federal Government there is only so much we can do about adjusting pay for our employees.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you so much.

This concludes the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee hearing regarding the fiscal year 2026 funding for the Library of Congress and Architect of the Capitol.

Thank you, Dr. Hayden, and Mr. Austin, for testifying today.

The hearing record will remain open for seven days, allowing Members to submit statements and/or questions for the record, which should be sent to the subcommittee by close of business on Tuesday, May 13, 2025.

The next hearing for the subcommittee will be held on Wednesday, May 14th at 3:00 p.m., in room SD-192 in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. We will be hearing testimony from the U.S. Capitol Police and Sergeant at Arms regarding their fiscal year 2026 budget.

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

MEETING ROOM UTILIZATION IN LIBRARY OF CONGRESS BUILDINGS

Question. How often is the Library at 100 percent capacity in meeting rooms through all three buildings? Can you provide a listing of all the meeting rooms and the percentage of occupancy?

Answer. Senator Markwayne Mullin, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, asked the Librarian of Congress during the May 6, 2025 hearing A Review of the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Requests for the Library of Congress and the Architect of the Capitol, for a list of meeting rooms in all three Library of Congress (Library) buildings on Capitol Hill, the respective square footage of each space, and how often they are used.

This document and Attachment A provide the requested information in addition to important background and context for space utilization by the Congress, the Library of Congress, and external parties.

PUBLIC EVENT SPACE

The Library of Congress has a variety of meeting and event spaces in its three Capitol Hill buildings available for Congressional use. The Thomas Jefferson Building has rooms suitable for functions ranging from small meetings and dinners for 12 attendees, to concerts for 485, and large receptions for 1,200. The James Madison

Building houses the nation's official memorial to President James Madison with space for receptions for 200 attendees, a small theater for 64, and other meeting rooms for lectures and small conferences. This summer, a new event space will open on the 5th floor of the John Adams Building capable of hosting events up to 350 people.

The attached PDF lists more than twenty reservable meeting and event spaces in the John Adams, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson Buildings, along with their square footage and attendee capacity in various seating configurations (reception, dinner, theatre-style, etc.)

- Four of these event spaces, all in the Jefferson Building, are reserved for the exclusive use of Congress or the Librarian: the Congressional Pavilion, Emerson Hall, the Librarian's Ceremonial Office, and the Member's Room.
- Three of the spaces, in the Madison Building, are used for LOC staff meetings: LM-139, the Oval Gallery, and the Staff Multipurpose Room.
- All other event spaces listed may be booked for Congressional use, and are also used for the Library's public events, internal staff meetings, and some of the in-person seminars and classes for Congressional staff offered by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Law Library.
- Two of the event spaces, the Great Hall in the Jefferson Building and Madison Hall in the Madison Building, are available only for evening events, since they are open to the public during the day.

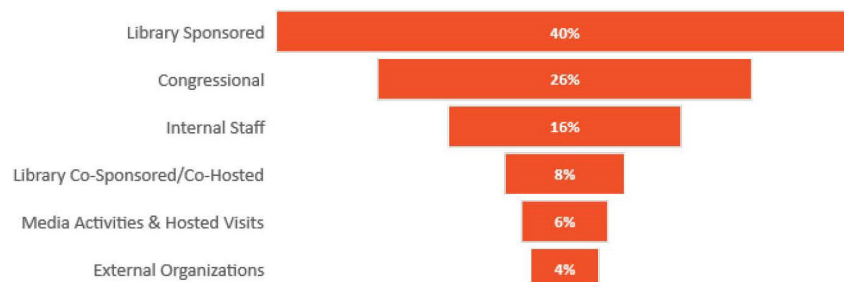
MEETING ROOM UTILIZATION IN THE JEFFERSON AND MADISON BUILDINGS

The Library analyzed room reservation data from September 1, 2023 to May 5, 2025 to determine utilization patterns, efficiency, and trends within the specified period.

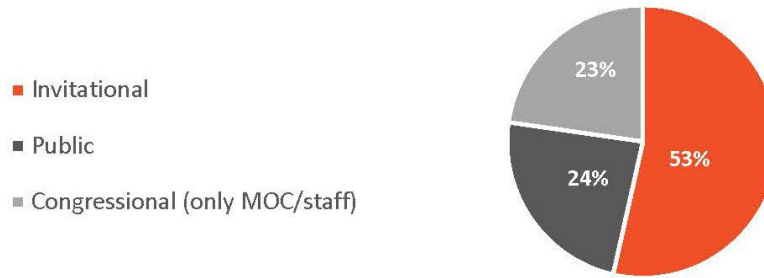
RESULTS

There were over 2,700 bookings of Library of Congress meeting rooms and event spaces between September 1, 2023 and May 5, 2025. The analysis revealed variations in room utilization, influenced by event type, day of the week, and the Congressional calendar. By accounting for these factors, the daytime utilization of the primary event rooms in the Jefferson and Madison buildings, when Congress is in session, between 9am-5pm is 25%. The evening utilization of events after 5pm is 24% in the Jefferson building and 14% in the Madison building. The most utilized space, booked 41% of the time while Congress is in session, is the Members Room in the Jefferson building, reserved for use exclusively by Members of Congress and the Librarian of Congress. The second most utilized room at 30% is the Montpelier Room in the Madison Building. Seven additional spaces have utilization percentages between 25–30%. Looking at the utilization of available time by day of the week, midweek appears to have the most utilization of space at 29% on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The lowest utilization is on Mondays at 13%. Thursday nights are the most booked evenings, linked to the public "Live at the Library" events, with 25% of space utilized.

Of the more than 2,700 actual bookings during this time, 40% were Library Sponsored events. These events included in-person CRS and Law Library classes exclusively for Congressional Staff. 26% of the bookings were of events hosted by congressional offices. The graph below displays the events by sponsor category.



Most events, 53%, were by invitation only, including meetings limited to Library staff or invited outside guests. 24% of the events were open to the general public, and 23% were limited exclusively for congressional attendees only. The graph below displays other events by audience category.



CAVEATS

From September 1, 2023 to May 5, 2025, there were also more than 2,300 additional room reservations made and later canceled. These reservations were excluded from the utilization data, but should be taken into account, as often events, particularly congressional events, are canceled and/or rescheduled at the last minute, preventing other reservations from being made and skewing the utilization percentages.

Although there are over twenty different Library event spaces available to reserve, the capacity for the Library's employees to simultaneously support events is constrained by staffing and equipment in many cases versus room availability. The following capacity constraints should be considered regarding staff availability:

- event coordinators to organize events and manage guests;
- event operations specialists to oversee vendor load-in and out as well as support services;
- event operations assistants to provide equipment and food service support;
- materials handlers to setup and breakdown furniture before and after every event;
- security personnel, especially for evening events; and
- overtime pay for staff supporting evening events.

These caveats are especially important when considering that events take place in public buildings open to researchers from 8:30am to 8:30pm and visitors from 10am to 5pm and movement of event furniture is scheduled at 6:00am and after hours. Even at current utilization, Library staff are required to work large amounts of overtime to support the event schedule.

The historic Thomas Jefferson Building is a challenging venue to host simultaneous events due to three of the most popular rooms being on the same floor with shared access to elevators, stairs, restrooms, a single kitchen, and storage. In the Madison Building, Library staff also must supply technical equipment and food service support to dozens of in-person seminars for Congressional staff held in CRS classrooms.

NEW EVENT SPACE IN THE JOHN ADAMS BUILDING

Later this summer, the Library will debut LA-516 in the John Adams Building as an event space. The room incorporates Art Deco designs and features a mural by American artist Ezra Winter illustrating the characters in the "Canterbury Tales" by Geoffrey Chaucer. Capacities will allow theater seating for 320 and round tables for 220, making it one of the Library's largest event spaces. We look forward making this space available for Congressional use.

CONCLUSION

Although most Library event spaces are utilized an average of 25% of Library working hours, expanding usage is complicated by the availability of staff to manage

spaces and events. However, we welcome increased use by Members of Congress and Congressional staff, especially in our soon to be opened Adams Building space.

We also look forward to working with the Committee to explore avenues to further publicize the availability of Library of Congress event space for Congressional offices as well as for external parties.

	Name	Number	Area (SF)	Reception	Dinner	Theater	Conference	Classroom
JAB	Future Event Space	LA516	5,977	350	220	320	78	180
	Future Event Space	LA516-B	1,481	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Future Event Space	LM516-D	1,481	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Future Event Space	LA516-C	357	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Future Event Space	LA516-A	357	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
JMB	Dining Room A	LM620	975	100	48	80	30	35
	Dining Room C	LM619-A	960	75	48	50	NA	NA
	LM139	LM139	808	30	40	50	25	36
	Madison Hall	LM1EXB	2,999	200	80	130	48	50
	Montpelier Room	LM619	2,830	250	160	200	60	90
	Montpelier Room & Dining Room A	LM619 & LM620	3,805	325	208	250	NA	NA
	Montpelier Room & Dining Room C	LM619 & LM619-A	3,790	325	208	250	NA	NA
	Montpelier Room & Dining Room A & Dining Room C	LM619, LM620, LM619-A	4,765	400	256	300	NA	NA
	Mumford Room	LM649	2,209	200	96	180	64	90
	Oval Gallery	LMOG	615	NA	NA	30	18	16
	Pickford Theater	LM302	808	NA	NA	64	NA	NA
	Staff Multipurpose Room	LM622-D	495	NA	NA	NA	16	NA
	West Dining Room	LM621	1,275	150	64	130	46	60
	Ceremonial Office	UJ101	557	20	12	NA	NA	NA
	Coolidge Auditorium	LG45A	3,462	NA	NA	486	NA	NA
TJB	Congressional Pavilion	UJ159	1,609	50	21	NA	NA	NA
	Emerson Hall	LJA01	1,990	49	49	49	28	45
	Great Hall (1st Floor)	UJ100-A	7,258	350	144	200	NA	NA
	Great Hall (2nd Floor)	UJ02ATR2	10,046	850	440	NA	NA	NA
	Mahogany Row	UJ110	360	18	10	NA	NA	NA
	Mahogany Row	UJ110-A	332	NA	NA	16	10	6
	Mahogany Row	UJ111	332	NA	NA	16	10	6
	Mahogany Row	UJ111-B	332	NA	NA	16	10	6
	Mahogany Row	UJ112	332	NA	NA	16	10	6
	Mahogany Row	UJ113	762	NA	NA	23	16	NA
	Members Room	UJ160, 161, 162	2,385	150	96	130	50	60
	NW Pavilion	UJ119	2,253	150	96	130	30	60
	Whittall Pavilion	LG45E	1,364	90	48	80	36	40

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING REGISTER OF COPYRIGHTS AND DIRECTOR

STREAMLINING COPYRIGHT ROYALTY PROCEEDINGS

Question. Can you provide more details on the Copyright Royalty Pool distribution process and what solutions would help move the process along?

Answer. A proceeding to distribute cable or satellite royalties¹ has two phases: an allocation phase wherein the royalty fund is allocated among categories of claimants (e.g., sports, commercial TV, music) and a distribution phase where the allocation is distributed to individual claimants. The attached document provides an overview of the second phase: the distribution process.

ADDING ANOTHER PANEL OF JUDGES SPECIFICALLY FOR DISTRIBUTION PROCEEDINGS.

In addition to the cable and satellite distribution proceedings, the CRB conducts proceedings to set rates under statutory licenses for activities as varied as reproducing and distributing nondramatic musical works in analog or digital form for distribution (including via digital download and interactive streaming); publicly performing sound recordings via webcasting, satellite and cable radio, and by business establishments; and noncommercial public broadcasting of musical works. Since 2018, the CRB also sets the administrative fee that funds the Mechanical Licensing Collective (MLC), a non-profit organization established to administer the statutory mechanical blanket license for reproducing and distributing analog and digital musical works in phonorecords. The CRB also conducts rulemakings consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act when establishing or updating CRB regulations.

¹For secondary transmissions of television or other broadcast programming under 17 U.S.C. §§ 111, 119, and 122.

To speed up distribution proceedings, Congress may wish to consider authorizing the Librarian to appoint a second panel of full- or part-time judges, specifically for cable and satellite distributions and related work.

INTERNAL EFFICIENCIES TO STREAMLINE THE PROCESS.

The CRB and the Library have been considering ways to improve the distribution process through rulemakings and changes in internal processes.

LARGER ADVANCE PARTIAL DISTRIBUTIONS

The CRB is authorized to make partial distribution of royalty funds in advance, while proceedings (and appeals) are pending. Recipients are required to agree to return any overpayments, plus interest, before the final distribution, so that fair and accurate final payments can be made. These advance partial distributions have historically been for approximately 40% of the royalties on deposit. If the risks can be mitigated, it may be reasonable to increase this so that more funds are paid out to owners more quickly. Recent advance distributions have reached as high as 85% of amounts on deposit.

TARGET COMPLETION DATES

To bring more structure to the CRB proceedings and to set expectations among the participants more clearly, the CRB is considering a practice used in other administrative proceedings whereby at the outset of a proceeding, and considering comments from the participants, the CRB sets a target date by which the entire proceeding should end. Extension beyond that date would require justification from the parties or the Judges, as appropriate, and could require the approval of the Librarian.

EFFICIENCIES THAT WOULD LIKELY REQUIRE STATUTORY CHANGE.

Some potential efficiencies to the process for distributing cable and satellite royalties would likely require statutory change.

DISPUTES REGARDING REPRESENTATION OF CLAIMANTS; SANCTIONS ON PARTICIPANTS

With a few exceptions, copyright owners are represented before the CRB by organizations that pursue the owners' claims collectively, e.g., the Joint Sports Claimants, the National Association of Broadcasters. Ultimately, these organizations pay the individual copyright owners from the royalty share distributed by the CRB in accordance with agreements between the owners and their representatives.

In recent years, the CRB has seen motions to disallow certain claims, based on the allegation that claimant organizations are not bona fide representatives of copyright owners. Producing evidence and arguments and resolving such disputes is highly fact-specific and time-consuming. This type of challenge is appropriate when raised in good faith. However, these disputes have largely been brought by one distribution phase participant, who has repeatedly been found to have submitted unfounded or fraudulent claims themselves.

In 2017 the CRB pursued a rulemaking to enable imposition of sanctions on participants submitting fraudulent claims. Ultimately, no sanctions regulations were adopted as it was not clear whether the CRB had the statutory authority to impose effective sanctions on a participant who submits fraudulent claims.

It may be helpful to provide clear statutory authority for the CRB to impose certain sanctions on participants (and related entities, given the fact that multiple related corporate entities have participated in past proceedings) who have been found to have submitted fraudulent claims in a prior proceeding. Sanctions for other improper litigation conduct may be appropriate as well. While some sanctions could be monetary, other sanctions could also foreclose the ability to participate in current and future proceedings.

The CRB is mindful that it may be beneficial for the participants to have notice of any findings of fraudulent claims and the consequences of a finding of fraudulent claims, and for copyright owners to have notice of the risk of choosing to be represented by a participant found to have submitted fraudulent claims. Owners should be informed that the consequences may include diminishment of royalty awards, or foreclosure of obtaining any royalty awards for claims represented by a sanctioned or foreclosed participant.

ASSIGNING ADDITIONAL TASKS TO A SINGLE COPYRIGHT ROYALTY JUDGE

While most of the CRB's work is done as a panel of three judges, there is a list of matters in 17 U.S.C. 803(b)(6) that can be assigned to and decided by a single judge. It may be useful to add discovery motions to that list. As discovery disputes often turn on particular matters of copyright law or economic evidence, assignment to the judge with the relevant specialized experience makes sense. Having matters handled by one judge rather than all three would speed matters up. Adding authority for the Chief Judge to assign any intermediate task (i.e., not a final determination) to a single judge would provide even greater flexibility.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERFORMANCE

Following a 2012 decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, the Librarian's ability to remove a Judge is no longer limited to a for-cause removal. The Librarian's ability to address performance or conduct is limited to sanction or removal, however, as the Judges do not receive performance appraisals and are not in a performance-based pay system.

Congress may wish to consider updating the CRB statute to adopt the pay and performance language that applies to the recently created Copyright Claims Board. Unlike the Copyright Royalty Judges, whose pay is linked to the fixed scale for administrative law judges, the Copyright Claims Officers are paid under the senior level system, which is a performance-based pay system. The Claims Officers' independence is preserved by language establishing that the performance appraisals they receive may not consider the substantive result of any of their decisions.

Cable & Satellite Royalty Distribution

STATUTORY LICENSES

- Cable and satellite system operators are given license by 17 U.S.C. 111 and 119 to retransmit certain television and radio programs originally broadcast to the public, provided they pay a statutory royalty to the copyright owners and comply with other requirements.
- Royalty rates were originally established by statute and now are updated through voluntary negotiation between operators and copyright owners or through proceedings by the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB).
- Operators deposit the royalties with the U.S. Copyright Office (USCO), which serves as a fiduciary for the funds, investing them in Treasury securities while on deposit and disbursing them as directed by the CRB.
- The CRB resolves controversies among claimants to the funds, allocating the total royalties received in a year among categories of claimants and distributing each allocation among individual claimants.
- Final distributions are based either on voluntary settlements among the claimants or on the CRB's formal determination after a full hearing on the claims (and appeals, if any.)
- The CRB orders allocations and distributions as percentages of total royalties. The USCO calculates the specific amounts to be disbursed, taking into account the deposits, interest earnings, and any advance partial distributions.

CLAIMANTS

- With few exceptions, copyright owners are represented before the CRB by organizations that pursue their claims collectively, such as ASCAP, Commercial Television Claimants, and Joint Sports Claimants.
- USCO disburses funds to the claimant organizations, which, in turn, pay the copyright owners in accordance with contractual arrangements between the organizations and the owners.

ISSUES

- Distribution proceedings address significant factual and legal issues, including whether:
 - The economic models favored by parties are appropriate.
 - The claimant organizations are bona fide participants and representatives of copyright owners.
 - The definitions of the market categories into which royalties are allocated are accurate and up-to-date.

CURRENT DISTRIBUTION PROCEEDINGS

- The CRB case docket is available at: app.crb.gov/search/cases.
- 2023 Cable and Satellite: Claims filed in July 2024.
- 2022 Cable and Satellite: Claims filed in July 2023. Advance partial distribution pending in April 2025.
- 2018-21 Cable: Consolidated. Hearing in the allocation phase scheduled for spring 2026.
- 2018-21 Satellite: Consolidated. Notices of controversy filed. CRB considering schedule proposals for allocation phase briefing and hearing.
- 2014-17 Cable and Satellite: Consolidated. Final allocation determination on appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. In the distribution phase, claims issues are to be resolved by May 2025, after which the CRB will schedule a live hearing (or documentary proceeding).

CRB Distribution Proceedings

ALLOCATION PHASE

Allocate annual royalty fund among categories of claimants (sports, commercial TV, music, etc..)

A1 Negotiation/Pre-Hearing

1. File claims in July for last year's royalties.
2. Announce allocation phase.
3. Consider category definitions.
4. Voluntary negotiation; notice of controversy.
5. Set hearing schedule.
6. Parties gather evidence.
7. Direct statements; discovery; amended statements.
8. Rebuttal statements; discovery.
9. Settlement period and report. (Participants may settle all or part of the dispute at any time.)

A2 Hearing

1. Evidentiary hearing (5-6 weeks).
2. Post-hearing briefs.
3. Rebuttal briefs.
4. Closing arguments.

A3 Determination/Appeals

1. Initial allocation determination.
2. Rehearing, if requested.
3. Final allocation determination.
4. Register of Copyrights legal review.
5. Librarian of Congress approval.
6. Publish in *Federal Register*.
7. Appeals and remand, if any.



ADVANCE PARTIAL DISTRIBUTION

1. Request any time after filing claims (A1-1).
2. CRB publishes draft advance partial distribution order for review and comment.
3. Recipients must sign agreement to return any overpayment plus interest to ensure accurate final distribution.
4. Order; payment schedule linked to investment maturity dates.

DISTRIBUTION PHASE

Distribute royalties to individual claimants within category allocations.

D1 Claimant Disputes, Negotiation/Pre-Hearing

1. Announce distribution phase.
2. Confirm claimants and representatives.
3. Resolve claimant disputes through briefing and hearing, as needed.
4. Voluntary negotiation; notice of controversy.
5. Set hearing schedule.
6. Parties gather evidence.
7. Direct statements; discovery; amended statements.
8. Rebuttal statements; discovery.
9. Settlement period and report. (Participants may settle all or part of the dispute at any time.)

D2 Hearing

1. Evidentiary hearing (2-3 weeks).
2. Post-hearing briefs.
3. Rebuttal briefs.
4. Closing arguments.

D3 Determination/Appeals

1. Initial distribution determination.
2. Rehearing, if requested.
3. Final distribution determination.
4. Register of Copyrights legal review.
5. Librarian of Congress approval.
6. Publish in *Federal Register*.
7. Appeals and remand, if any.

FINAL DISTRIBUTION

1. After final distribution determination (D3-3) and appeals, if any (D3-7).
2. Initial order; amounts calculated by USCO Licensing Section, reflecting deposits, interest, and any advance partial distributions.
3. CRB publishes initial order for review and comment.
4. Final order; payment schedule linked to investment maturity dates.

Copyright Royalty Board

BACKGROUND

- The Copyright Act establishes statutory (or “compulsory”) licenses that limit the exclusive rights of copyright owners by allowing certain uses of their copyrighted works without express permission, provided the user pays an appropriate royalty and complies with other statutory requirements. See 17 U.S.C. 111, 112, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 122, and 1004.
- The Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) was established in 2004 to set royalty rates and terms under the statutory licenses and to distribute the royalties for certain transmissions on cable and satellite systems and digital audio recording devices and media (technology) (DART.) 17 U.S.C. 801(b). The CRB differs from its predecessors, the Copyright Arbitration Royalty Panels (CARP) and Copyright Royalty Tribunal (CRT), in two key ways:
 - It works through salaried administrative judges rather than contracted arbitrators as CARP did; and,
 - It reports to the Librarian of Congress, rather than being a separate entity as the CRT was.
- Since 2018, the CRB also sets the administrative fee that funds the Mechanical Licensing Collective (MLC), a non-profit organization established to administer the statutory mechanical blanket license for producing and distributing analog and digital phonorecords. 17 U.S.C. 115(d)(7)(D), 801(b)(8).

SCOPE OF THE STATUTORY LICENSES

- The statutory licenses are most closely associated with: sound recordings; nondramatic musical works (composition and lyrics); motion pictures and other audiovisual works; and, pictorial, graphic and sculptural works.
- Exclusive rights covered by the licenses are: reproduction (analog copies, digital copies, ephemeral copies necessary to perform the work); distribution and digital audio transmission; and, public performance and display.
- Activities facilitated by the licenses include:
 - Reproducing nondramatic musical works in analog or digital phonorecords for distribution, including via digital download and interactive music streaming.
 - Noninteractive digital transmissions of sound recordings (webcasting; satellite or cable radio, background performance in business establishments.)
 - Retransmitting TV and radio broadcasts via cable or satellite.
 - Noncommercial public broadcasting.

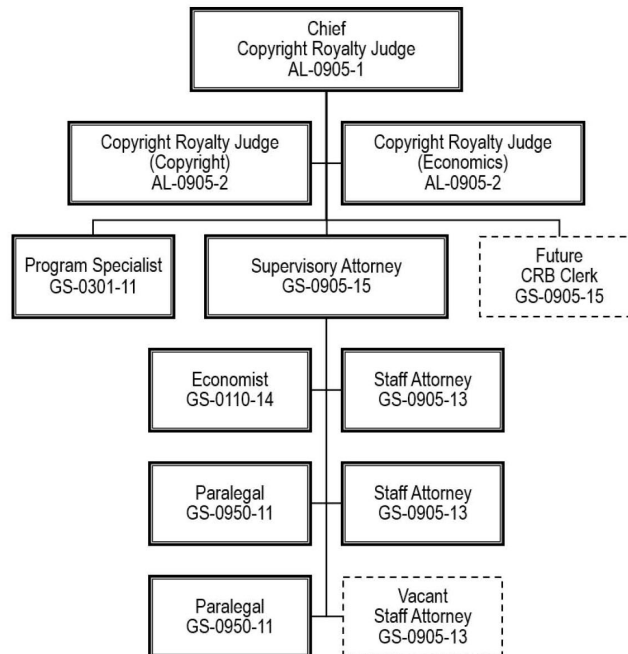
PARTICIPANTS IN CRB PROCEEDINGS

- Organizational participants in proceedings to set royalty rates or distribute royalties include, for example:
 - Amazon; American Association of Independent Music; Apple; ASCAP; BMI; Church Music Publishers Association; College Broadcasters; GMR; Google; Harry Fox Agency; Major League Soccer; Mood Media; Motion Picture Association; Music Choice; National Association of Broadcasters; National Music Publishers Association; National Public Radio; National Public Television; National Religious Broadcasters Music License Committee; Recording Industry Association of America; SAG/AFTRA; SESAC; SiriusXM/Pandora; Sony Music Entertainment; SoundExchange; Spotify; UMG Recordings; Warner Music Group
- Lists of participants and claimants are published in the *Federal Register* and available in the CRB case docket system (app.crb.gov/search/documents). (Search document type “Petitions to Participate” or “Claims List.”)

Organization

STAFFING

- The CRB currently has 11 positions, one of which is vacant. The supervisory attorney and staff attorney positions are new in FY 2025.
 - Eventually, the plan is to replace one staff attorney position with a position of clerk to the CRB. For now, the recently-retired senior counsel is serving in this role on a part-time, temporary basis.
- As a small organization, the CRB is necessarily a collaborative group. Within the team: the supervisory attorney serves as a practice manager; the staff attorneys support the Judges, monitor each case, motion, and rulemaking, and are available to provide updates to participants; the program specialist and paralegals provide administrative and legal support; the economist analyses and validates data; and the clerk directly supports the Judges during hearings.
- Salaries and benefits for the positions are funded from appropriations to the U.S. Copyright Office under 17 U.S.C. 803(e). Recent Appropriations Acts specify that the CRB's non-personal expenses (e.g., IT systems, contracts) may be funded from offsetting collections associated with Licensing.



CRB Rate Proceedings

SETTING RATES

Under 17 U.S.C. 804(b), every five years, the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) adopts voluntarily-negotiated royalty rates and terms or sets new rates and terms through a formal proceeding. Rate proceedings have four stages.

R1 Negotiation/Pre-Hearing

1. Announce proceeding; participation deadline.
2. Confirm participants.
3. Voluntary negotiation; notice of controversy.
4. Set hearing schedule.
5. Exchange disclosures.
6. Direct statements; discovery; amended statements.
7. Rebuttal statements; discovery.
8. Settlement period and report.

R2 Hearing

1. Evidentiary hearing (4-5 weeks).
2. Post-hearing briefs.
3. Rebuttal briefs.
4. Closing arguments.

R3 Determination/Appeals

1. Initial rate determination.
2. Rehearing, if requested.
3. Final rate determination and regulations.
4. Register of Copyrights legal review.
5. Librarian of Congress approval.
6. Publish in *Federal Register*.
7. Appeals and remand, if any.



SETTLEMENT

1. Participants may settle at any time. Settlements may cover part or the whole of the dispute.
2. Settling parties submit copies of their settlement and proposed regulatory changes to the CRB for approval.
3. CRB publishes for comment from the public or objections from participants.
4. CRB adopts, unless one or more participants objects and the CRB concludes that the settlement is not reasonable or contains provisions contrary to the license or other law.

R4 Annual Adjustments

1. Some rates adopted via settlement or set through final CRB determination include formulas for annual adjustments.
2. The CRB publishes the rate adjustment in the Federal Register. See, for example, [37 C.F.R. 385.11\(a\)\(2\)](#) re phonorecord rates and [386.2\(b\)](#) re satellite retransmission rates.

REGULATIONS

- Royalty rates are published in Title 37 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, in [37 C.F.R. parts 380 to 390](#).
- Rules and procedures for proceedings before the CRB are found in [37 C.F.R. parts 350 to 355](#). These regulations reflect procedures and timelines set out in 17 U.S.C. 803.
 - CRB regulations are established (or modified) through a formal rulemaking process under the Administrative Procedure Act, per 17 U.S.C. 803(a).
- U.S. Copyright Office (USCO) regulations establishing procedures for cable and satellite royalty deposits and the mechanical license are found in [37 C.F.R. parts 201](#) and [210](#).

Statutory License Summary

The table identifies: the rate proceeding; the principal types of works and rights covered by the license and statutory citation to the license; the regulatory citation to the current rates; the fiduciary managing the royalty deposits; and, the year that new rates are due.

Rate Proceeding	Principal Works, Rights, and License	37 C.F.R.	Fiduciary	New Rates
● Webcasting (Web VI, in process)	- Sound recordings - Digital audio transmissions, ephemeral copies - 17 U.S.C. 114, 112(e)	Part 380	SoundExchange, SAG/AFTRA, AFM	2026
● Satellite (Annual COLA based on CPI)	- Audiovisual works, musical works, sound recordings - Retransmission, ephemeral copies - 17 U.S.C. 119	Part 386	USCO	2026
● New Subscription Services (1998-) (NSS V)	- Sound recordings - Public performance via non-interactive digital audio transmissions, ephemeral copies - 17 U.S.C. 114, 112(e)	Part 383	SoundExchange, SAG/AFTRA, AFM	2026
● Cable	- Audiovisual works, musical works, sound recordings - Retransmission, ephemeral copies - 17 U.S.C. 111	Part 387	USCO	2027
● Public Broadcasting (PB IV)	- Published nondramatic musical works and published pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works - Public performance, ephemeral copies - 17 U.S.C. 118(c)	Part 381	Agents selected by copyright owners	2028
● Phonorecords (PR IV)	- Nondramatic musical works - Physical and digital (download, interactive streaming) copies and distribution - 17 U.S.C. 115	Part 385	MLC	2028
● Pre-Existing Subscription Services / Satellite Digital Audio Radio Services (Pre-1998) (PSS/SDARS III)	- Sound recordings - Digital audio transmissions, ephemeral copies - 17 U.S.C. 114, 112(e)	Part 382	SoundExchange, SAG/AFTRA, AFM	2028
● Business Establishments (BE IV)	- Sound recordings - Ephemeral copies - 17 U.S.C. 112(e)	Part 384	SoundExchange	2029

Cable & Satellite Royalty Distribution

STATUTORY LICENSES

- Cable and satellite system operators are given license by 17 U.S.C. 111 and 119 to retransmit certain television and radio programs originally broadcast to the public, provided they pay a statutory royalty to the copyright owners and comply with other requirements.
- Royalty rates were originally established by statute and now are updated through voluntary negotiation between operators and copyright owners or through proceedings by the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB).
- Operators deposit the royalties with the U.S. Copyright Office (USCO), which serves as a fiduciary for the funds, investing them in Treasury securities while on deposit and disbursing them as directed by the CRB.
- The CRB resolves controversies among claimants to the funds, allocating the total royalties received in a year among categories of claimants and distributing each allocation among individual claimants.
- Final distributions are based either on voluntary settlements among the claimants or on the CRB's formal determination after a full hearing on the claims (and appeals, if any.)
- The CRB orders allocations and distributions as percentages of total royalties. The USCO calculates the specific amounts to be disbursed, taking into account the deposits, interest earnings, and any advance partial distributions.

CLAIMANTS

- With few exceptions, copyright owners are represented before the CRB by organizations that pursue their claims collectively, such as ASCAP, Commercial Television Claimants, and Joint Sports Claimants.
- USCO disburses funds to the claimant organizations, which, in turn, pay the copyright owners in accordance with contractual arrangements between the organizations and the owners.

ISSUES

- Distribution proceedings address significant factual and legal issues, including whether:
 - The economic models favored by parties are appropriate.
 - The claimant organizations are bona fide participants and representatives of copyright owners.
 - The definitions of the market categories into which royalties are allocated are accurate and up-to-date.

CURRENT DISTRIBUTION PROCEEDINGS

- The CRB case docket is available at: app.crb.gov/search/cases.
- 2023 Cable and Satellite: Claims filed in July 2024.
- 2022 Cable and Satellite: Claims filed in July 2023. Advance partial distribution pending in April 2025.
- 2018-21 Cable: Consolidated. Hearing in the allocation phase scheduled for spring 2026.
- 2018-21 Satellite: Consolidated. Notices of controversy filed. CRB considering schedule proposals for allocation phase briefing and hearing.
- 2014-17 Cable and Satellite: Consolidated. Final allocation determination on appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. In the distribution phase, claims issues are to be resolved by May 2025, after which the CRB will schedule a live hearing (or documentary proceeding).

CRB Distribution Proceedings

ALLOCATION PHASE

Allocate annual royalty fund among categories of claimants (sports, commercial TV, music, etc.)

A1 Negotiation/Pre-Hearing

1. File claims in July for last year's royalties.
2. Announce allocation phase.
3. Consider category definitions.
4. Voluntary negotiation; notice of controversy.
5. Set hearing schedule.
6. Parties gather evidence.
7. Direct statements; discovery; amended statements.
8. Rebuttal statements; discovery.
9. Settlement period and report. (Participants may settle all or part of the dispute at any time.)

A2 Hearing

1. Evidentiary hearing (5-6 weeks).
2. Post-hearing briefs.
3. Rebuttal briefs.
4. Closing arguments.

A3 Determination/Appeals

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2. Rehearing, if requested.
3. Final allocation determination.
4. Register of Copyrights legal review.
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6. Publish in *Federal Register*.
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ADVANCE PARTIAL DISTRIBUTION

1. Request any time after filing claims (A1-1).
2. CRB publishes draft advance partial distribution order for review and comment.
3. Recipients must sign agreement to return any overpayment plus interest to ensure accurate final distribution.
4. Order; payment schedule linked to investment maturity dates.

DISTRIBUTION PHASE

Distribute royalties to individual claimants within category allocations.

D1 Claimant Disputes, Negotiation/Pre-Hearing

1. Announce distribution phase.
2. Confirm claimants and representatives.
3. Resolve claimant disputes through briefing and hearing, as needed.
4. Voluntary negotiation; notice of controversy.
5. Set hearing schedule.
6. Parties gather evidence.
7. Direct statements; discovery; amended statements.
8. Rebuttal statements; discovery.
9. Settlement period and report. (Participants may settle all or part of the dispute at any time.)

D2 Hearing

1. Evidentiary hearing (2-3 weeks).
2. Post-hearing briefs.
3. Rebuttal briefs.
4. Closing arguments.

D3 Determination/Appeals

1. Initial distribution determination.
2. Rehearing, if requested.
3. Final distribution determination.
4. Register of Copyrights legal review.
5. Librarian of Congress approval.
6. Publish in *Federal Register*.
7. Appeals and remand, if any.



FINAL DISTRIBUTION

1. After final distribution determination (D3-3) and appeals, if any (D3-7).
2. Initial order; amounts calculated by USCO Licensing Section, reflecting deposits, interest, and any advance partial distributions.
3. CRB publishes initial order for review and comment.
4. Final order; payment schedule linked to investment maturity dates.

Royalty Funds — Cable, Satellite, DART

ROYALTIES DEPOSITED WITH USCO

- Cable retransmission of TV and radio programs under 17 U.S.C. 111.
- Satellite retransmission of TV and radio programs under 17 U.S.C. 119.
- "DART" - importing, distributing, and manufacturing digital audio recording devices and media (technology) under 17 U.S.C. 1004,
 - Because market changes and related litigation have limited use of the licenses under the Audio Home Recording Act of 1992, incoming DART royalty deposits have stopped.
- The Library and USCO ensure that the royalties on deposit are audited annually. See the financial statements and independent auditors' reports: copyright.gov/licensing.

OTHER FIDUCIARIES OR AGENTS

- Royalties under other licenses are not deposited with the USCO.
- SoundExchange (soundexchange.com) manages royalties due to copyright owners and featured performers for non-interactive streaming, satellite and cable radio, webcasting, and business establishments under 17 U.S.C. 112 and 114.
- The AFM & SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property Rights Distribution Fund (afmsagafratfund.org/) manages royalties due to non-featured musicians and vocalists for non-interactive streaming, satellite and cable radio, and webcasting under 17 U.S.C. 114.
- The Mechanical Licensing Collective (themlc.com) manages royalties for making and distributing digital (download, interactive streaming) phonorecords under 17 U.S.C. 115.
- As agents for copyright holders, ASCAP, BMI, GMR, Harry Fox Agency, and SESAC manage some royalties for public broadcasting under 17 U.S.C. 118.

USCO Statements of Fiduciary Activity For the Year Ending September 30, 2024 (Unaudited)

Beginning Fiduciary Net Assets	\$ 1,561,555,000
Royalty fees received	194,094,000
Cable	193,272,000
Satellite	822,000
DART	-
Investment earnings	83,215,000
Total Inflows to Fiduciary Net Assets	277,309,000
Distributions to Copyright Owners	(199,189,000)
Cable	196,041,000
Satellite	3,148,000
DART	-
Refunds of royalty fees	(26,000)
Net royalty fees retained for administrative costs	(5,240,000)
Total Outflows from Fiduciary Net Assets	(204,455,000)
Increase in Fiduciary Net Assets	72,854,000
Ending Fiduciary Net Assets	\$ 1,634,409,000

USCO Royalty Balances as of April 23, 2025 (Unaudited)

Cable	\$ 1,704,006,593
Satellite	65,480,583
DART	159,387
Total Royalty Pool	\$ 1,769,646,563



5/1/2025

Cable Royalty Balances

DEPOSITS

- Cable system operators deposit royalties with the USCO in January and July.
- Approximately \$220M per year, though the amount has been declining.
- Cable total (unaudited) as of April 23, 2025 was \$1,704,006,593. Cable funds represent approximately 96% of the total royalties on deposit with USCO.
- Royalties earn interest while on deposit. (* Note, for example, the difference between the 2024 figures for the deposit amount and remaining balance.)

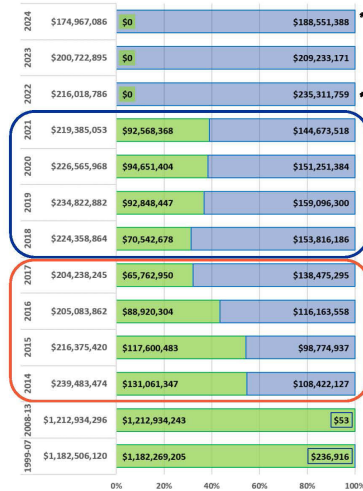
ADVANCE PARTIAL DISTRIBUTION

- Participants may request advance distribution any time after initial claims are filed. (Stage A1-1.) More than one advance is possible.
- Advance distribution has typically been for about 40% of the royalty year on deposit, as shown in green in the chart on the right.
 - ** Approximately \$94,125,000 (40%) of the 2022 funds will be paid out after May 1, when the comment period on the CRB order closes.
- Recipients of advances must agree to return any overpayment plus interest so that the final distribution will be accurate.
- If repayment risks can be mitigated, distributing a higher percentage in advance may be reasonable.

CURRENT CABLE PROCEEDINGS

- CRB case information: app.crb.gov/search/cases
- 2022-25: Consolidation expected summer 2026. (A1-5.)
- 2018-21: Hearing in the allocation phase scheduled for spring 2026. (A2-1)
- 2014-17: Final allocation determination on appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. (A3-7) In the distribution phase, claims issues (D1-1) are to be resolved by May 2025, after which CRB will schedule a live hearing (or documentary proceeding). (D1-4)

Deposited, Disbursed, Remaining 1999-2024



5/1/2025

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING
COPYRIGHT ROYALTY LITIGATION

LENGTH OF COPYRIGHT ROYALTY PROCEEDINGS

Question. How long does a distribution proceeding last?

Answer. As shown in the table below, cable royalty distribution proceedings, covering both proceeding phases, can vary from 5 years to more than 10 years depending on factors such as:

- The volume and complexity of issues in controversy (i.e., excluding issues where the parties do not resolve those issues by settlement or stipulation) that must be addressed in the proceeding.
- The volume and complexity of collateral issues (e.g., whether a party legitimately represents rightsholders) that must be addressed.
- Whether a party seeks a rehearing by the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) after an initial determination in either the allocation or distribution phase.
- Whether a party appeals a final CRB determination to the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and whether the Court remands the case to the CRB for further proceedings.

The substantive role of the CRB (and, prior to 2005, the Copyright Arbitration Royalty Panels) in a proceeding does not commence in earnest until after (1) the royalty information becomes available to the parties; (2) the parties accumulate the evidence and analyze the opinions generated by their experts (e.g., surveys, regression analysis, etc.); and (3) the parties indicate or the CRB otherwise determines that a controversy exists.

Multiple royalty years are typically combined into a single proceeding to make it more efficient and cost effective for the parties to litigate. The proceedings do not begin until after the final royalty year has been added to the case.

Cable Distribution Proceedings 1998-2022					
Royalty Years	Phase 1 – Allocation		Phase 2 – Distribution		Total Time
	Start	Final Determination	Start	Final Determination	
1998-1999	11/20/01 66 FR 58179	1/26/04 69 FR 3606	1/30/08 73 FR 5596	3/13/15 80 FR 13423	13.5 years
2000-2003	4/2/08 73 FR 18004	5/12/10 75 FR 26798	2/10/11 76 FR 7590	10/30/13 78 FR 64984	5.5 years
2004-2005	7/15/08 73 FR 40623	9/17/10 75 FR 57063	8/16/13 78 FR 50114	4/17/19 84 FR 16038	10.5 years
2006-2009	Parties Settled				
2010-2013	6/5/15 80 FR 32182	2/12/19 84 FR 3552	Parties Settled		5 years
	2/8/20 DC Circuit Affirmed				
2014-2017	2/8/19 84 FR 2390	6/28/24 89 FR 54166			6.5 years
	12/20/19-4/5/21 Stay pending confirmation of category definitions¹				
	Appeal to DC Circuit				
2018-2021	8/13/24 89 FR 65938	Spring 2026			
2022-2024	Pending consolidation				

¹ Unlike the proceedings since 1978, the participants in this proceeding did not stipulate as to the definitions of the Allocation categories, e.g. defining the scope of "Joint Sports Claimants" and "Program Suppliers" categories. Therefore, the case was stayed in order to consider briefing and comments on adoption of categories.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator MULLIN. Until then, the subcommittee stands adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 10:50 a.m., Tuesday, May 6, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 3:08 p.m., in room SD-192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Markwayne Mullin, (Chairman), presiding.

Present: Senators Rounds, Heinrich, and Murray.

SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE,
UNITED STATES SENATE
UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARKWAYNE MULLIN

Senator MULLIN. I guess I will say the hearing will come to order.

That you guys were waiting on me, so I apologize about that. Right in the middle of votes and another hearing, it has been interesting. Anyways, I am looking for my opening statement.

I would like to welcome everyone here to the third and final, fiscal year 2026 budget hearing for the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.

Today we have with us, Chief—is it Manger? Manger? Chief, I know we have talked multiple times. Thank you. I will be referring to you as Chief, because that is more fitting to your title. So appreciate it so much for you being here. I understand that this is probably your last hearing with us.

Mr. MANGER. It is.

Senator MULLIN. And so anyways, we sure appreciate you being here.

We have Jennifer Hemingway, the Senate Sergeant at Arms. Thank you. Both of you guys do phenomenal work, both agencies' work tirelessly to protect Members of Congress, and our staff and almost eight million visitors to the Capitol Campus each and every year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the men and women at the United States Capitol and the Sergeant at Arms for the work they do to keep us safe. Their commitment enables us to do our job on behalf of our constituents, and I mean that sincerely.

We couldn't do it without you guys, it was never more evident than when you guys are truly willing to jump in front of a bullet

for us and make sure we get home, when honestly, our family loves us no more, no less than your families do. But it is a service that you guys have decided to do, and I don't take that for granted, ever. So thank you, guys, and thank you for the ones that you had the privilege of serving with.

Now, I would like to mention at our first two hearings this year we faced—you know, we are faced with a budget environment that will require difficult and important decisions on how we move forward in the coming fiscal year, while we do that, we can't forget that we need to support our agencies and their mission's requirements. It is important that every legislative branch agency is responsible and good stewards of the resources and makes wise choices about priorities.

The fiscal year the Senate—this fiscal year, the Sergeant at Armed Service is requesting \$357.4 million, an increase of \$46.6 million, which is above the fiscal year 2025 enacted level. This request includes funding for innovative—to innovations to enhance the Senate's physical and cybersecurity, State office operations, and Member protection. It also includes additional FTEs to support operations across the agency.

The United States Capitol Police budget request is \$967.8 million, an increase of \$161.3 million, or a 20 percent increase over the funding level provided in a full-year CR. The funding level would support continued growth in sworn and civilian staff levels, and provide an increase of \$52.6 million for general expenses.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. I look forward to a productive discussion. And I understand your agencies' priorities for the upcoming year.

Now, I would like to turn to the Ranking Member, Senator Heinrich. And thank you so much for your patience, sir.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

Senator HEINRICH. No problem. Thank you, Chairman.

I want to begin today by just expressing how disappointed I am in President Trump's removal of Dr. Hayden, our Librarian of Congress. As I said when she appeared before us last week, Dr. Hayden has served the American people with distinction, working to bring literacy to every single American. Her removal by the President is both unwarranted and, in my view, improper.

Now, turning to today's witnesses, I look forward to hearing from Chief Manger and Mrs. Hemingway. Thank you both for being here today, and thank you to the dedicated professionals at your agencies who provide safety and security to the Senate every day as we carry out our constitutional responsibilities.

It is through the dedication of your teams that the American people can visit the U.S. Capitol and witness their Government in action.

Chief Manger, I want to thank you for your—is it 46 years of service—46 of service as you prepare to retire from your current position as Chief of the United States Capitol Police.

You served as Chief of Police during a difficult time and focused your efforts on the challenges that the department faced. The Senate is grateful for your service and that of all the Capitol Police.

Now, I understand the department is requesting \$967 million, an increase of \$161 million over fiscal year 2025 enacted levels, and this request includes funding for salaries, general expenses, and reimbursements to State and local governments for law enforcement functions.

As you mentioned in your written testimony, it is a substantial request, and we look forward to working with your team to prioritize funding that is critical to the execution of the department's mission, and critical to keeping our officers safe. I look forward to hearing more about your fiscal 2026 budget request.

And Ms. Hemingway, as our Sergeant at Arms, you play a critical role as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the Senate. I would like to thank you for this work, the work that you and your team do to support this institution. Your request is \$357 million for fiscal year 2026, a 15 percent increase over 2025 enacted levels.

I understand this funding will enable the Sergeant at Arms to continue its efforts to increase security, modernize IT systems, and enhance interagency coordination. And I look forward to hearing more about your vision for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

Again, thanks to you both for being here today. And I am looking forward to this hearing.

Senator MULLIN. I would like to thank Senator Rounds and Senator Murray for being here.

At this time we will turn to our witnesses for their opening statements. Please be as precise to 5 minutes as possible.

Ms. Hemingway, I will ask you to start.

SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE,
UNITED STATES SENATE

**STATEMENT OF HON. JENNIFER HEMINGWAY, SERGEANT AT ARMS
AND DOORKEEPER**

Ms. HEMINGWAY. Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, Senator Rounds, Vice Chair Murray, and Members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of the Sergeant at Arms fiscal year 2026 budget request.

The Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper serves the Senate as the Chief Law Enforcement and Protocol Officer and is responsible for the Senate's physical security, cybersecurity, emergency preparedness, and several support functions. Security is a significant piece of our day-to-day mission. In calendar year 2024, we addressed more than 5,700 requests for law enforcement assistance, a 35 percent increase over the prior year.

Using authority and monies provided by this Committee, we fund security equipment, monitoring services, and physical security improvements for senators' homes. We offer a data removal tool to make it more difficult for bad actors to find specifics about senators on the Internet. Our efforts extend beyond D.C. to provide security enhancements and upgrades for more than 460 State offices. Working with the Federal Protective Service, we have conducted 156 assessments and enrolled 56 senators in our Temporary Armed Guard Service Program.

The SAA provides other services too. We spend \$1.85 million monthly on rent for State office space. 99 percent of Senate offices and committees participated in employee assistance and well-being services last year to enhance staffs' personal and professional effectiveness. Senate offices and committees ordered more than 19,000 printed materials and 8,700 flags from our printing and graphics team.

Accomplishing our mission under a continuing resolution has required some belt tightening. To prioritize funding for projects and improvements that benefit our Senate customers, I instituted a selective hiring freeze, will not provide merit raises or a cost-of-living increase, and canceled a \$4 million contract that was internal to the Sergeant at Arms for human capital management.

For fiscal year 2026, as both of you mentioned, we seek \$357 million—a \$47 million increase over our current funding. Much of this increase was also proposed in fiscal year 2025.

Among our requests is a \$5 million increase for the Office of Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Continuity. Because of increasing confrontations, disruptive visitors, and hundreds of potential threats against senators, I believe this funding is necessary for the safety and security of senators, staff, and visitors to Senate offices.

In addition, we ask this Committee to provide \$10.5 million in no-year funds. \$5.5 million would establish a State Office Operations Fund. This fund would allow us to pay rent if regular appropriations are not available.

This fund could also be used to directly support leasehold improvements in Federal buildings that are often delayed due to GSA's resource approach. This fund would be similar to the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery fund established by this Committee in the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 2022.

Our remaining requests are detailed in my written testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to highlight some of the key pieces of our proposal. I believe this budget will allow us to meet the security and operational needs of the Senate, and I welcome your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HONORABLE JENNIFER A. HEMINGWAY,
SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of the Sergeant at Arms' (SAA) fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget request.

The Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper serves the Senate as its chief law enforcement and protocol officer and is responsible for a host of services in the Senate, including critical physical security, cybersecurity, emergency preparedness, and support services.

Earlier this year we supported three (3) National Special Security Events in 15 days: the January 6 Joint Session to Count Electoral Votes, the State Funeral for former President James Earl Carter, and the 60th Inaugural Ceremonies.

These events required effort across the Sergeant at Arms. From media credentialing to technical support to security planning to photography, every office in the Sergeant at Arms supported the Senate during these events while carrying out our day-to-day mission.

Our law enforcement work is a significant piece of our daily operations. In calendar year 2024, the office of the Sergeant at Arms addressed more than 5,700 requests for law enforcement assistance, including security escorts for Senators' do-

mestic travel, advice for public events, and local law enforcement support. This was an increase of 35 percent (35%) over the previous year. We also prevented the delivery of more than 2,300 suspicious mailings that required further scrutiny by the Capitol Police.

Using authority and funding provided by this Committee since FY 2023, we have funded security equipment, monitoring services, and physical security improvements for Senators' homes through the Residential Security System Program. Participation in the program has increased from 17 percent (17%) in the first year to 40 percent (40%) this year, with 40 Senators participating as of May 5, 2025.

Thanks to the Appropriations Committee, we are able to provide the Privacy Bee data removal tool to Senators and their spouses upon request, too. This privacy tool helps participants blur their homes on Apple Maps and Google Street View as well as remove personal information from data broker websites, corporate databases, and many of the major junk mail lists. That makes it more difficult for bad actors to find specifics about Senators through a quick Internet search. Privacy Bee also conducts vulnerability monitoring to determine whether a participant's personal information has been compromised through a hack or phishing scam.

In calendar year 2024, we conducted emergency training for more than 4,100 staff and more than 120 members of the press and, in response to the August 2, 2023, false active shooter threat, an SAA team led a working group to review and update our active shooter training. We worked with Senate offices to review their Emergency Action Plans and Continuity of Operation Plans. These reviews occur on a rolling, two-year basis, and in 2024 we helped update 123 Emergency Action Plans and 41 Continuity of Operation Plans. We also finalized the online Emergency Action Plan tool in May 2024, which includes room-specific evacuation routes, AED locations, and Emergency Staging Areas. This mobile app enables members of the Senate community to have this information in the palms of their hands, saving critical time in an emergency.

Of course, our security efforts extend beyond Washington, D.C. to more than 460 state offices across all 50 states. During calendar year 2024, we partnered with the Capitol Police and local law enforcement to provide security training at 82 state offices, reaching 313 staff. We provided hands-on security training and consultations to more than 230 staff representing 43 Senators in our State Office Demonstration Room here in Washington, D.C., too.

We provided physical security enhancements and system upgrades for 77 state offices and security systems. While 99 percent (99%) of state offices have adopted some level of SAA-recommended and funded security enhancements, I am hopeful that this year we can achieve 100 percent participation.

Working with the Federal Protective Service (FPS), we have conducted a total of 156 state office facility security assessments and have enrolled 56 Senators in our Temporary Armed Guard Service (TAGS) program through early May, 2025. TAGS allows Senators to request FPS Protective Security Officers at commercial state offices, and we deployed FPS officers at eight (8) state offices during calendar year 2024.

We continue to offer the AlertMedia emergency notification tool to Senators, their spouses, and staff at no cost to Senate offices. AlertMedia provides customized notifications to users about severe weather incidents, civil unrest, major crime, and other potentially impactful events. At this time, more than 700 individuals from 49 Senate offices use this service.

Further, we offer to provide satellite phones to Senators and their state offices for emergency communications. After Hurricane Helene caused record flooding across several states last fall, one State Director reported that satellite phones were the only mode of communication for a prolonged period of time, and having SAA-issued satellite phones allowed the Senator and his team to remain in contact with other Senate offices as well as state and local officials. Eighty-one (81) Senators utilize these phones.

Securing the Senate also involves cybersecurity. We have strengthened our cyber threat detection and response capabilities by hiring three (3) new security analysts to monitor and defend the Senate network as well as by adding a threat intelligence position in October 2023 that represents the Senate on the National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force. The latter hire allows us to communicate about cyber threats in real-time with 20 law enforcement and intelligence agencies. We have increased our efforts to make the Senate community aware of cybersecurity tactics and scams. Recent alerts to Senate staff have warned of current phishing lures and a focused smishing campaign; we also offer monthly briefings about cybersecurity topics, tips, and best practices.

We successfully completed our second large-scale cybersecurity assessment of the Senate network at the end of 2024 as well. That assessment made minimal rec-

ommendations, such as removing end of life operating systems and unsupported web browsers, as well as patching some third-party software. We have closed out a number of those recommendations and expect to have all of them closed by the end of calendar year 2025.

As I mentioned earlier, security is only part of our mission. Over the past several months, we have been focused on new Senator orientation and office transitions in D.C. and the states. In November, we joined the Secretary of the Senate in welcoming Senators-elect, their spouses, and their transition staff to Washington, D.C. We offered guidance about security, setting up state offices, and office equipment and technology. Since then, we have supported 14 outgoing and 14 incoming Senators' office building moves, assisted with the turnover of 36 state offices to new Senators, and continue to support Senate office and committee moves.

We welcomed our first Stars of Valor Fellow in March and, as of May 5, 2025, are actively recruiting for placements for eleven (11) Senators.

In addition, last year we refreshed the working space within the Chamber dais for the Legislative Clerks and Parliamentarian and built a new desk for Capitol Police and Senate Pages in the Senate tunnel. In calendar year 2024 we completed upgrades of end-of-life audio-visual equipment in the hearing rooms of this Committee, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on the Budget, the Committee on Rules and Administration, and the Committee on Veterans Affairs. We also upgraded our digital audio network to improve the audio feeds from all hearing rooms to the news media.

We completed the Otis payroll automation, which allows offices to submit payroll actions electronically; enhanced the electronic financial disclosure application; and built PILLARS, a seating application for the Inaugural Ceremonies. We revamped the Senate Employment Bulletin to make it simpler for job seekers to explore and apply for Senate vacancies and easier for Senate office staff to review the applicant pool.

We are on track to complete the migration of services from the TranSAAct application to ServiceNow during this fiscal year. This platform will make it easier for Senate offices to request a variety of SAA services, including phone support, Congressional IDs, and floor privileges.

Accessibility improvements remain a priority. We purchased two ADA-compliant shuttle buses that transport about 10,000 passengers each year. Members of my team have completed training to create accessible documents for Senate offices, and we provided QR codes to Senate committees that enable individuals with hearing impairments to access live captions of hearings on their personal devices.

Last year 84 Senate offices and 16 committees ordered more than 2,200 printed materials using Direct Xpress, our online order fulfillment service. We covered more than 3,000 photography assignments at the request of Senate offices, and offices ordered more than 31,000 photo prints from the Sergeant at Arms. We broadcast over 1,000 hours of Senate floor proceedings and 452 hearings. Our media galleries credentialed approximately 1,450 correspondents, for a total of almost 5,100 credentialed media.

In 2024, nearly 6,400 Senate employees attended training provided by the Employee Assistance Program or participated in well-being activities, and approximately 1,800 employees accessed resources addressing childcare, parenting, adult care, aging, education, legal concerns, or financial issues. Almost 200 individuals participated in our Passport Day earlier this year, and last year the Joint Office of Training and Development provided 65 custom trainings, facilitated 10 staff retreats, and hosted the State Staff Conference for 125 staff from 42 Senate offices. In addition, 990 staff attended our Wellness Fair, 129 participants donated blood at our blood drives, and 82 staff participated in health screenings. We also assisted staff with 69 vehicle lockouts, three (3) flat tire repairs, and 14 jump-starts in Senate parking lots.

To accommodate increasing requests for security assistance, rising state office rents, and higher equipment costs for Senate offices under a continuing resolution has required some belt tightening. To prioritize funding for projects and technology improvements that benefit our Senate customers, we have instituted a selective hiring freeze, will not provide merit raises or a cost-of-living increase and have canceled an internal-to-the-SAA human capital software management system. Because we are operating under a continuing resolution, a number of our requests for funding increases this year are renewed requests from our proposed FY 2025 budget. In addition, six (6) of our 13 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) position requests are renewed requests.

For FY 2026, we are requesting \$357,381,000, a \$46,564,000 increase over current funding.

Our request includes \$130,353,000 for salaries, \$14,478,000 over the enacted level. The increase includes \$3,822,000 for a cost-of-living adjustment, 9,393,000 for salary increases and other adjustments, and \$1,263,000 for new FTE positions. This will provide the Sergeant at Arms with a total of 1,050 authorized FTE positions.

Six (6) of the new positions will support SAA Support Operations: a financial analyst to provide long-range planning, budgeting, and project tracking; a technology system solutions specialist to research, evaluate, and test technologies for Printing, Graphics and Direct Mail; a logistics and operations specialist to support the flag ordering process; two digital and graphics designers to support Senate offices' digital media projects, e-Publications, and accessible PDF forms; and a program management specialist to monitor and communicate project statuses for the Program Management and Congressional Transition office. Four of these positions were requested in FY 2025; we have added a second digital and graphics designer and a program management specialist to our renewed requests.

The four (4) positions requested for the Office of Security, Emergency Preparedness and Continuity will serve the Senate community as parking specialists. These are new FTE requests for FY 2026.

Two (2) new positions will serve in the Executive and Staff Offices. We are renewing our FY 2025 request for a wellness technology and communications specialist to help identify and manage technology solutions for the Employee Assistance Program. We are making a new request for a program manager to support state offices with emergency planning, supply and equipment logistics, and event notifications. The position will also administer the Temporary Armed Guard Services program.

We are renewing our FY 2025 request for a continuity communications engineer within the office of the Chief Information Officer. This position will support the Senate's increasing communication capabilities and staff who have specialty communications devices like satellite phones and radios.

Our request includes \$216,528,000 in our five-year expense account, \$31,086,000 over the enacted level. The increase includes \$4,455,000 to account for rising costs and \$26,631,000 for improved security and services for the Senate community.

Within that request is \$9,552,000 for the Office of Security, Emergency Preparedness and Continuity, an increase of \$5,099,000 over the enacted level. This increase includes renewed requests from FY 2025 for \$120,000 to address higher rates for new vehicle leases as well as \$100,000 for costs associated with Capitol Police support for Congressional delegations. The Sergeant at Arms is required to reimburse Capitol Police for these expenditures, which have increased significantly in recent years.

Our request includes a new increase of \$800,000 for a mobile and web-based duress platform that will allow Senators to alert authorities if they feel threatened or unsafe. As with other security programs, use of this platform will be voluntary.

We request \$35,439,000 for the Executive and Staff Offices, an increase of \$4,872,000 over the enacted level. This increase includes renewed FY 2025 requests of \$1,032,000 for state office buildouts and tenant improvements that help secure Senators' state offices, and \$1,300,000 to pay rent for state offices in Federal buildings and make leasehold improvements in Federal spaces. It includes renewed requests of \$350,000 for AEDs and related supplies so we can transition from the post-9/11 emergency supply kits currently in state offices to a modern program that is able to scale and meet emerging requirements. We are also renewing our FY 2025 request for \$35,000 for an application to improve the onboarding process for Senate pages.

We requested \$395,000 for state office secure reception areas in FY 2025 but are updating that request to \$695,000 this year due to increasing construction costs and additional Senators adopting our recommended security enhancements. We could see some out-of-cycle construction due to the General Services Administration's planned closure of certain Federal buildings housing Senate state offices, too. We also are requesting a new increase of \$725,000 to replace security equipment in state offices. The work driven by this lifecycle replacement program will require the addition of two contract staff; funding for those contractors is included in this request.

We request \$150,894,000 for the Chief Information Officer, an increase of \$14,922,000 over the enacted level. The increase includes several renewed requests from FY 2025. We are renewing our request for an increase of \$1,500,000 to address the increasing costs of our cybersecurity contracts and update our cybersecurity risk assessment program. This funding will also provide the ability to mitigate potential cyber risks within our supply chain. In addition, we are renewing our request for an increase of \$1,500,000 for information technology (IT) support services. This will provide for a three-month transition period when we award a new contract for the Senate IT Help Desk and will help ensure there is no impact on service to Senate

offices. We are renewing our requests for increases of \$1,265,000 to address Senate offices' growing demands for data warehousing, long-term data retention, and file size growth; \$1,051,000 for backup, archiving, and export capabilities associated with the widespread adoption of Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, and SharePoint Online; \$218,000 to improve Internet services for state offices; \$250,000 for the e-Gallery Pass program, which will provide Senators with the option of issuing electronic Senate gallery passes to constituents; and \$50,000 to provide Privacy Bee to Senators and their spouses.

Our new requests for FY 2026 include an increase of \$2,550,000 to provide Microsoft Enterprise licenses for Senate offices. In January, we used \$2,550,000 in available appropriations to cover this cost for Senate offices for calendar year 2025. Offices spend an average of \$300 per user for this license, and the SAA covering this expense freed up an average of \$57,000 per office to fund other IT needs with their Economic Allocation Fund (EAF) monies.

Our related request for an increase of \$3,275,000 for the Economic Allocation Fund will further assist Senate offices with the cost of technology equipment and software licenses. In FY 2025, we had requested an increase of \$775,000 for the EAF, but we are increasing that request to help offices meet their technological needs.

In FY 2026 we also plan to begin our search for a data center location to strengthen the Senate's technology posture. The new data center will provide the added benefit of faster network speeds for state offices that may currently experience a delay on the Senate network because an office's geographic distance from a data center directly impacts lag time. While this is measured in milliseconds, some state offices do notice a delay. We will select a location that gives those offices faster access to the Senate's technology resources while strengthening the Senate network.

Our FY 2026 request includes \$11,620,000 for Capitol Operations, an increase of \$5,985,000 over the enacted level. We are renewing our FY 2025 request for \$65,000 to design and build custom IT cabinets for state offices. An SAA team collaborated to create these lockable cabinets, and this funding would allow us to improve state office operations and aesthetics with these cabinets that mask noise and neatly secure Senate equipment and wiring.

We are seeking a new increase of \$5,000,000 for renovations to the Senate Recording Studio, which broadcasts Senate floor proceedings and hearings and offers individual services to Senators.

This modernization will focus on replacing complex equipment that is near or past the end of its serviceable life in multiple rooms.

We also seek a new increase of \$750,000 for Capitol Operations to address an expected rise in framing orders from Senate offices. At the beginning of this Congress, in coordination with the Committee on Rules and Administration, we updated the Senate Frame Shop offerings for the first time in 20 years. We increased the number of molding finishes and mats available to offices and began to offer mat embossing and cutting. We have seen a 4.75 percent (4.75%) increase in orders over the same period of time during the 118th Congress, and the new orders are more complex because of our increased offerings.

Lastly, our request includes \$10,500,000 in no-year funds. We seek \$5,000,000 to continue replacing aging audiovisual equipment and systems in Senate hearing rooms. This is a renewed request from FY 2025. We request \$5,500,000 for a new State Office Operations Fund. The SAA currently spends \$1.2 million each month on rent for state office space in commercial buildings and \$650,000 each month on rent for state office space in Federal buildings. Additionally, leasehold improvements for state offices in Federal buildings are often delayed due to General Services Administration funding constraints and bandwidth, often beyond a Senator's term. We are requesting a State Office Operations Fund to ensure continuity of monthly rent payments for Senate state offices and for leasehold improvements in Federal buildings. We envision this fund to be similar to the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery fund that was established by this Committee in the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2022.

We also request permission to expand the Residential Security System Program to provide residential security support for officers of the Senate, as defined in 2 U.S.C. § 4101(b), when prudent. Federal law authorizes the Capitol Police to provide personal protection for officers of the Congress when such protection is necessary,¹ and we recommend that the Residential Security System Program offer similar residential security support.

¹ 2 U.S.C. § 1966.

This budget will allow us to meet the security needs of the Senate and provide the services Senate offices have come to expect, while also addressing new and emerging needs.

Thank you for working with us on each of these endeavors and for the opportunity to discuss our accomplishments and FY 2026 budget request.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Chief.

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

STATEMENT OF HON. CHIEF J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF OF POLICE, UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. MANGER. Thank you, Chief. Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the United States Capitol Police budget request for fiscal year 2026. Over the past 4 years, the USCP has experienced tremendous growth. Since 2021 there have been significant changes to increase the department's staffing levels, enhance our security posture, and modernize technology.

So I need to acknowledge at the outset that the department's 2026 budget request is substantial, it is close to \$1 billion. I recognize there are other police departments of a similar size whose budgets are not as large as ours, but we are not an ordinary law enforcement agency, in fact, our mission incorporates elements similar to the FBI, the United States Secret Service, and the Federal Protective Services.

Moreover, while the officers that you see around our campus represent a large portion of the department's workforce, the full scope of our duties far exceeds that of officers and agents stationed at physical posts. Much of the work performed by the department staff, both sworn and civilian, goes well beyond Capitol grounds. Significantly, many of the mission requirements simply did not exist 4 years ago. I cannot sufficiently emphasize that point enough. Following nearly 20 after-action reports and 140 total recommendations, the department's mission expanded exponentially and continues to expand.

The department had to respond to and implement recommendations that spanned the gamut in complexity, from equipping every officer with riot gear, to developing department-wide policies, to expanding operational planning, and strengthening the department's training functions.

As a result of these recommendations, the department has taken on new responsibilities and created new divisions and teams that did not previously exist. Member security concerns and major operational planning have driven the need for additional resources and staffing. The increased threat climate is perhaps one of the biggest drivers of the department's continuing need for additional resources.

This past year alone, we saw threats against Members increase to a staggering 9,400 in 1 year. The current threat environment has resulted in the continuation of sunset protection details and the addition of short-term threat-based details. It has resulted in increased requests for Member escorts and security monitoring at regional airports, additional technical surveillance countermeasure inspections which have increased by nearly 400 percent since 2021,

Member residential security assessments, which have almost doubled since 2021, and requests for law enforcement coordination assessments, which has increased by 159 percent since fiscal year 2022.

The department created a new stand-alone Intelligence Services Bureau, which didn't exist 4 years ago. Our reorganization also created an Office of Standards and Training Operations, which allows the department to centralize its training, policy development, and inspections functions. All of these were recommendations issued by the Inspector General.

The Protective Intelligence Operations Center is a state-of-the-art fusion center for the intake and coordination of Members' threat-related investigations and the newly established residential program—residential security program, again, another program that didn't exist 4 years ago.

None of these components existed 4 years ago. They are all new, and they all are must-haves in our current threat environment.

The department's fiscal year 2026 budget request builds upon the accomplishments achieved over the past 4 years, it includes, as you said, \$687 million to fund salaries and benefits: \$255 million to fund general expenses and \$25 million in multi-year funding to support the continuation of the department's mutual aid program. I can't stress strongly enough that the department's protection responsibilities do not end at the Capitol Campus' borders. The department is statutorily entrusted with nationwide protective responsibilities of Members, requirements that it cannot undertake without the support and resources of our partner, law enforcement agencies, and that mutual aid funding.

The department expects to reach approximately 2,530 sworn personnel by the end of fiscal year 2026. While this represents an increase in our staffing levels, the department needs to continue efforts to balance its workload, specifically between the uniformed operations and the protective and intelligence operations.

By the end of fiscal year 2027, I feel confident that the department will reach our target sworn staffing levels. The department is tasked with ensuring that Members, the Capitol complex staff, and visitors remain safe and secure, and must do so on a Campus that is entirely open and accessible to all. There is no other Federal Government office building with a comparable public access policy.

I want to sincerely thank the Members of the Committee for your trust and support these past 4 years. It is through our joint partnership that the department has achieved such a transformational change.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here before you today. And I look forward to your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF,
UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Chairman Mullin, Ranking Member Heinrich, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the United States Capitol Police (USCP or Department) budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. As I appear before you for what will likely be my last budget hearing, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Subcommittee for its consistent support of the women and men of the U.S. Capitol Police. They courageously carry out their duties of protecting the Mem-

bers of Congress, the Capitol Complex, and the legislative process day in and day out. I am proud of the work they do, and of the many accomplishments and improvements the Department has undertaken during my tenure. It has been an honor for me to serve as their leader.

Over the past 4 years, the USCP has experienced tremendous growth. Since joining the Department in 2021, I have had the distinct honor of leading this organization through significant changes to increase the Department's staffing levels, enhance its security posture, modernize technology, streamline administrative processes, and boost employee morale. This transformation has taken time because the changes have been significant. But we are not done yet.

I need to acknowledge, at the outset, that the Department's FY 2026 budget request is substantial—it is close to one billion dollars. I recognize there are other police departments of a similar size whose budget is not as large as ours, but we are not an ordinary law enforcement agency. The USCP is not like traditional police departments. In fact, our mission incorporates elements of many Federal law enforcement agencies. We are part FBI, U.S. Secret Service, and Federal Protective Services. Moreover, while the officers that you see on and around the Capitol Complex represent a large portion of the Department's workforce, the full scope of our duties far exceeds that of the officers and agents stationed at physical posts. Much of the work performed by the Department's staff—both sworn and civilian—is conducted off Capitol Grounds. The Department's responsibilities to Members and the Congressional community include protective details nation-wide and abroad, threat investigations, criminal investigations, campus-wide physical and technical security measures, intelligence analysis and reporting, canine security, offsite delivery screening, and hazardous incident response, among others.

This work is further supported by the vast array of administrative duties that are the foundation of the Department's workforce—to include training and wellness programs, policy development and implementation, inspections and internal controls, IT services, facilities and logistics, fleet management and maintenance, financial management, procurement, human resources, and background investigations. This work is critical to the Department's functioning but is often not seen or appreciated.

Significantly, many of these mission requirements simply did not exist prior to January 6, 2021. I cannot sufficiently emphasize that point. Following the events of that day, the Department's mission expanded exponentially and continues to expand. As a result of the 103 recommendations issued by the U.S. Capitol Police Inspector General (OIG), the Department had to respond to and implement recommendations that spanned the gamut in complexity, from equipping every officer with riot gear, to developing Department-wide policies, to expanding event planning and coordination efforts, to strengthening the Department's training functions. Recommendations of this scope and magnitude typically take years and years to implement; the Department did so on an expedited timeline.

Other factors have also contributed—and continue to contribute—to the Department's expanding mission set. Congress requested that the Department undertake a top-to-bottom survey of its operations, and as result, the Department commissioned the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) assessment, which issued recommendations in three key areas—staffing, technology, and training. The Department responded in record time with an implementation strategy to make those recommendations a reality.

Member security concerns and major event planning have driven the need for additional resources and staffing. The increased threat climate is perhaps one of the biggest drivers of the Department's continuing need for additional resources. The past year alone saw threats against Members increase to a staggering 9,400 in 1 year—more than double over the past 10 years. That is a huge increase, and given the current political climate, one that is likely to continue an upward trend. The current threat environment has resulted in additional Member protective events, which have increased by 27 percent since 2023; continuation of sunset details and the addition of short-term threat-based details; increased requests for Member escorts and security monitoring at regional airports; additional Technical Surveillance Countermeasures (TSCM) inspections, which have increased by nearly 400 percent since 2021; Member Residential and Capitol Complex security assessments, which have almost doubled since 2021; and requests for law enforcement coordination assessments, which have increased by 159 percent since FY 2022.

The Department's wholesale reorganization was another OIG recommendation that the USCP implemented to increase its mission response. The reorganization created a new, stand-alone Intelligence Services Bureau, which collects and analyzes all sources of intelligence to identify domestic and international threats, and coordinates information sharing with the intelligence community. The reorganization also created a third office—the Office of Standards and Training Operations—

which allows the Department to centralize its training, policy development, and inspections and controls functions, all recommendations issued by the OIG.

The Department also created additional operational components, such as the Rapid Response Team, which provides a dedicated patrol team that can be rapidly deployed to support events and demonstrations, critical incidents, or calls for service; additional civil disturbance units that allow for increased activations to enhance our security posture; and significantly, the Protective Intelligence Operations Center (PIOC), a state-of-the-art fusion center for the intake and coordination of Member threats, related investigations, and the newly established residential security program.

None of these components existed at the time I became Chief—they are all new. And the implementation of each new program required staffing, research and analysis, IT support, procurement, budgeting, and where appropriate, new equipment, vehicle fleet, and other support services, both on the sworn and civilian sides of the Department. All these actions were necessary, but not always seen.

I. BACKGROUND

To properly evaluate the Department's FY 2026 request, it is important to conduct a brief retrospective of the Department's evolution these past 4 years. In 2021, the Department faced a trifecta of significant challenges: critically low sworn staffing levels, the need to re-open the Capitol campus post-pandemic, and remediating over one hundred audit recommendations issued by the OIG and other oversight entities following the events of January 6. These were large-scale challenges the Department had to confront simultaneously and within a compressed timeframe, significantly taxing a workforce already severely understaffed. Morale and work-life balance suffered significantly.

Recognizing the need to prioritize staffing, in FY 2022, the Department launched a comprehensive sworn hiring strategy to increase its sworn bench strength. The plan evolved into a multi-year hiring and training strategy that established a hiring target of 288 new sworn recruits each fiscal year that is designed to take into account the lag time between recruit hiring and full utility, which is approximately 10 months. An integral part of the strategy is creating and developing a "pipeline" of uniformed officers to support operational requirements to allow more experienced officers to qualify for internal, specialized positions throughout the Department.

The impact of this hiring strategy started to yield results in FY 2022 when sworn hiring began to outpace attrition. However, an additional challenge emerged that further impacted Department staffing: the expanding threat environment. This dynamic called for enhancements to the Department's security posture, and by extension, the need for increased staffing in the Department's protective operations. In response, the Department expanded its hiring strategy to include 63 additional, external positions to directly support the Protective and Intelligence Operations (P&IO) Office. These positions form part of the Department's current FY 2026 budget request and focus on the onboarding of entry-level agents to support, primarily, dignitary protection and investigations.

II. DEPARTMENT'S FY2026 BUDGET REQUEST

The Department's FY 2026 budget request builds upon the accomplishments achieved over the past 4 years. It includes \$687 million to fund salaries and benefits, \$255 million to fund general expenses, and \$25 million in multi-year funding to support the continuation of the Department's mutual aid program. This budget request reflects the Department's priorities in three critical areas: (1) Advancing Member Protection, (2) Optimizing the Workforce, and (3) Modernizing USCP Security and Technology.

a. Advancing Member Protection

The current climate of threats has reached alarming levels—in FY 2024 alone, the number of threats launched against Members of Congress exceeded 9,400. Members of Congress, their families, and staff face a range of threats, both on the Capitol campus and in their state and district offices, and the Department must be prepared to anticipate, mitigate, and respond. Social media and the Internet provide a breeding ground for threats that, regardless of their nature, the Department must investigate. That effort requires human resources, which if the current trend continues, will only add to the need for staffing. This is a mission requirement of the highest priority. To maintain a posture of optimum readiness, the Department deploys resources that cast a wide protective net and requires staffing for: (1) Congressional delegations and other special events inside and outside the continental United States; (2) security awareness briefings to Member offices; (3) criminal investiga-

tions; (4) execution of search and arrest warrants Nation-wide; (5) TSCM inspections; (6) residential security; (7) committee hearing security coverage; (8) deployment of threat-based protective details; and other operational mission requirements to keep Members, family, and staff out of harm's way.

The Department must continue to adapt and take proactive measures to stay one step ahead of criminal actors. A significant step in that direction was the establishment of the PIOC. It serves as a centralized command center for Member protection, integrating intelligence, threat assessment, and other related protective operations. The FY 2026 budget seeks funding to continue PIOC operations and provide comprehensive and effective security measures in response to the current and future threat environment.

The Department's Member protection responsibilities, however, do not end at the Capitol campus' borders. The Department is statutorily entrusted with nation-wide protective responsibilities, requirements that it cannot undertake without the support and resources of partner law enforcement agencies. Thus, the Department is asking Congress to renew the mutual aid funding it extended in the Emergency Security Supplemental Appropriations Act¹ to reimburse law enforcement partners for providing mutual aid. The Prime Minister of Israel's visit in July 2024 illustrated the effectiveness of this program, when hundreds of officers from ten different law enforcement agencies joined with the USCP to secure the Joint Meeting of Congress. The mutual aid program also provides additional protective detail coverage to enhance Members' security in their home districts by coordinating with state and local law enforcement to provide residential security and support events.

b. Optimizing the Workforce

The Department has made unprecedented efforts to increase its sworn workforce, and we are extremely grateful to Congress for the support that made it possible. But if the Department is to perform the vast range of services the Congress rightfully expects, the Department needs the resources to properly do the job. Thus, the Department can only carry out its 24/7, no-fail mission through the dedicated commitment of all Department employees—sworn and civilian. The Department's civilian workforce supports not only administrative functions, including procurement, budget and financial management, logistics and fleet management, human resources, background investigations, information technology, policy, internal controls, and training, but also fills critical operational functions within the Department, including roles that support the Command Center, event planning and emergency response, hazardous incident response, vehicle screening, training, physical security and technical countermeasures, threat assessments, and intelligence and investigative analysis. Although rarely seen, the civilian workforce is the invisible hand that supports every aspect of the Department's operations.

The Department has made tremendous strides in hiring since I arrived at the USCP, and it was accomplished through your direct support. As a result of the hiring strategy that I implemented when I first arrived, the Department has hired over 900 officers, resulting in a net increase of approximately 375 sworn personnel after factoring in attrition. By continuing this strategy, the Department expects to reach approximately 2,530 sworn personnel by the end of FY 2026. While this represents optimal staffing levels, the Department needs to continue efforts to balance its workload, specifically between Uniformed Operations and Protective and Intelligence Operations. By the end of FY 2027, I feel confident that the Department will reach target sworn staffing levels across its organizational entities.

c. Modernizing USCP Security and Technology

The FY 2026 budget seeks fundings for the continued maintenance of existing security systems, investment in new technologies, cybersecurity, and stakeholder priorities. The demand for security measures across the Capitol Complex has increased and requires funding to ensure access controls, video surveillance, intrusion alarms, duress, and other systems are effectively designed, installed, and maintained. The increasingly complex and dynamic nature of the Department's physical and technical security program requires the Department to conduct research into new technologies, including the appropriate use of artificial intelligence to enhance security capabilities across the Capitol Complex. The FY 2026 budget request seeks funding to continue these critical modernization initiatives.

III. CONCLUSION

The Department is tasked with ensuring that Members, the Capitol Complex, staff, and visitors remain safe and secure, and must do so on a campus that is en-

¹Public Law 117–31.

tirely open and accessible to all. There is no other Federal government building with a comparable public access policy. The Department must be positioned to meet the needs of Members and the security of the Capitol Complex on a no-fail basis. I recognize the fiscal environment we are in, but the Department cannot provide all the services requested and required if it is not sufficiently funded.

In just a few years, the Department will celebrate its 200th anniversary, and I have every confidence that, with continued commitment, planning, strategic vision, and Congressional support, the Department will continue its upward trajectory of excellence in the fulfillment of its protective mission over Congress, Members, staff, visitors, and the legislative process.

I want to sincerely thank the Members of this Committee for your trust and support these past 4 years. It is through our partnership that the Department has achieved such transformational change.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you, for you both, and thanks for the testimony. I will skip my question for now and go to Ranking Member Heinrich.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Chairman.

Chief, one of the things I want to ask you about is talk a little bit about the Intelligence Services Bureau and how the posture there has changed over the course of the last few years?

Mr. MANGER. Four years ago—sorry, 4 years ago, one of the biggest failures in January 6th was our intelligence failure. And we have gone from an agency that consumed intelligence, where the FBI, would inform us of things, and DHS, we are now a major player in the intelligence community in this region. We have folks assigned to different task forces, and we have folks working directly with the FBI and DHS.

And we not only still consume intelligence, but we gather intelligence, we analyze the intelligence, we operationalize that intelligence. It allows us to do better operational planning for things that occur on our Campus. And most importantly, we disseminate that intelligence. We disseminate it to our own folks, and we share it with other agencies in the intelligence community.

Senator HEINRICH. As you mentioned in your testimony, there have been just very significant increases in the number of threats to senators and Members of Congress. I think you said in your testimony that there were more than 9,400 incidents in 2024. Just talk a little bit generally, about how Capitol Police has responded to that and what the increase in protection response looks like under the current threat environment?

Mr. MANGER. So one of the biggest challenges was to keep up with that caseload. For some period of time after I got here, we had the same number of agents that were investigating the threats, and yet the number of threats had tripled, quadrupled. And so we had to add, and we continue to add folks in our Investigations Division. And not only do I think they do a good job at investigating those cases, but where we were still, I think, falling short of the mark was in terms of our being responsive back to the reporting parties.

The good news is that really through the efforts of the Sergeant at Arms, along with the Capitol Police, we have gotten Members to report everything. And this is good, but it is now up to us to make sure that we are responsive and that we get back to the reporting parties and let them know what progress we have made in the investigation, what we found out, those kinds of things. And

we, for a long time, have fallen short on that. We have our Protection Investigative Intelligence Operations Center up and running 24/7 now, and that operations center will go a long way in making sure that not only are threats acted on immediately and that they get the appropriate attention, but that we are better at getting back to Members with the information that we are able to gather through those investigations.

Senator HEINRICH. I have seen firsthand the shift from sort of a one-way communication to more of a partnership, so I think, on behalf of a lot of Members, we appreciate that very much.

I understand you only have a few weeks left before your retirement. Of all the changes that you have implemented in the department, which ones do you think had the greatest impact on moving the needle, improving security?

Mr. MANGER. I think getting the appropriate staff together. I mean, if you look at the—and I read every single one of the after-action reports—that, you know, in 2021, many of them pointed out that the Capitol Police were woefully understaffed and had been historically understaffed. Getting the staffing up to where it should be so that we can have the number of posts that we really need to have, so we have enough screening entrances to handle the folks that come here to work, come here to visit.

To be able to respond quickly, and one of the things I am most proud of is our Rapid Response Team, where when there is a disruption anywhere on this Campus, there is a quick response by Capitol Police and it is an effective response. And so I think that we are ready for anything, whereas before it was always: Well, we have got a problem here, let us find a few people that we can pull off of a post to respond. We are light years ahead of that with our operational planning now. And I think that this Campus is much safer because of it.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Chief.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Thank you both for being here.

Ms. Hemingway, I would like to start with you. You know, when we start looking at the budget, obviously there is a lot of concerns because everybody has got to have a haircut at this point. It is hard to find anything that we can increase because we have a \$37 trillion deficit and growing. At the same time, we have got to make sure that those that are visiting the Capitol and those that work here are also safe along the ways.

And so we all have different things we have got to look at. Talking about safety, I recently had an opportunity to speak with Deputy Jason Bell, and I brought up some serious security concerns, to which I see there are just major holes. And so before I really get into the budget questions, I want to know if you believe we should have a complete wholesale review of the Senate security posture, and if you do, if you would commit to working with me and working with others on actually evaluating, not just what we have always done, but what we can do different?

Ms. HEMINGWAY. Yes, Senator. I look forward to partnering with you in that effort. I think 4 years after January 6th and after additional resources have been allocated for security measures, it is an appropriate time to take a look at our Campus security posture to see what additional vulnerabilities we need to address, and per-

haps what changes we need to make to our visitor management system in order to keep senators, staff, and our visitors who are here in the buildings safe.

Senator MULLIN. Right. And one concern, there are multiple concerns, and one I will just air out here that I have is, you know, during votes, the plaza is wide open, and there is not a more vulnerable time than when Members are getting out of their vehicles, walking to their cars. We were told at one time that the plaza would be closed when the vote was called. Problem is, you can go out there right now when the vote is called and the plaza is not closed.

People are all over it. People are going through with baby strollers, riding their bikes across with backpacks, carrying backpacks, carrying suitcases. And we understand what can easily be concealed in those. And I want, I want the American people to have access to their Capitol as much as anyone, but at the same time we know there is a huge threat, especially a growing threat, on public figures that are in public offices.

And I think there needs to be a serious look at what we do at the plaza during votes, regardless if the House or the Senate is open, because you cannot just close half of it because people continue to walk and continue to ride bikes.

And I think that would be one start, but there other issues that I would like to discuss too, because as I said, it is not just protecting us, but it is also protecting those that are in uniform and those that are out of uniform. So thank you so much for that.

Can you explain to us the demand for personal offices and committees for additional funding for their technology needs?

Ms. HEMINGWAY. Yes, thank you for the question. This year we are asking a \$3.3 million increase for the Economic Allocation Fund. The Economic Allocation Fund provides money to Senate offices and committees at the beginning and midpoint of each senator's term or after the organization of a Committee each Congress. Leadership and the institutional offices also receive that same funding at the start of the Congress.

If you take a look back 6 years and think about when a senator may have started, at that point a laptop cost \$600. That same laptop today costs, on average, \$1,500. We also now have staff and senators who are increasingly reliant on technology in order to do their work, and that trend will continue. In addition, coming out of COVID, many of us carry multiple devices. We now have a desktop, we have a laptop, we have a tablet, and we may have multiple phones. All of that taken together has led to an increase in demand, combined with increased prices. Our request for this increase will help ensure that Senate offices can get the equipment that they need and require.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. And Ms. Hemingway, I do realize that the Senate continues to ask you for—ask your office to do more and more, and take on more and more responsibilities. With that being said, with the tough budget year, can you kind of hit—send me your priorities, what are the must-dos?

Ms. HEMINGWAY. Yes, my top three priorities are the \$5 million increase that we request for our Office of Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Continuity that will allow us to respond directly to

increased threats against Members. Last year was an election year, but we saw an 83 percent increase in threats against Members of Congress and a 38 percent increase in directions of interest.

My second priority is the Economic Allocation Fund that we just discussed, along with a \$2.55 million increase for the Sergeant at Arms to buy Microsoft Enterprise licenses for offices. This year, using available funds, we bought those licenses for Senate offices. We would like the funding to continue to provide those licenses.

My third priority is the \$5.5 million for the State Office Operations Fund that I discussed. It would allow us to pay rents if regular appropriations were not available, and would also ensure that we can more quickly accomplish leasehold improvements for Senate State offices.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you.

Ms. HEMINGWAY. Thank you.

Senator MULLIN. Senator Murray.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you very much, Chair Mullin, Senator Heinrich. I look forward to working with both of you on this Committee. And thank you to both of our witnesses today.

And I especially want to thank your staffs. They are dedicated and hardworking public servants, they keep this place humming, and they protect everyone who works in and visits the Capitol. So I want to thank both of you and all your staffs. We really rely on the tireless public service of men and women who do extraordinary jobs under increasingly difficult circumstances, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, weekends, and holidays throughout the year.

So thank you to all of them as well, particularly the men and women in uniform who guard our doors and patrol the complex and keep us safe. I look forward to talking with you about how we can—what we can do to make sure that we are providing the necessary resources to allow them to keep doing that job.

Chief Manger, I also want to acknowledge your retirement and thank you for your tremendous service. You took over as Chief in a very dark and difficult moment following the horrific attack on the Capitol on January 6th, thank you for answering the call and taking on that responsibility.

And I do want you to know I am going to keep pushing for us to finally hang the plaque that honors all the officers who protected the Capitol on that day. We know the plaque was made. We know it is here in the Capitol somewhere, and I have yet to see one good reason why the Speaker hasn't put it up yet, so I want you to know I am going to keep pressing till we get that done. But thank you, especially, for your service.

And finally, before I turn to my questions, I do want to mention, as Senator Heinrich did, about the outrageous firing of Carla Hayden, of the Library of Congress, who sat before this very subcommittee just last week. She served honorably. She served capably. She made sure our Nation's history was accessible and engaging, and that all of our communities had their stories told and heard. And that abrupt firing, without cause, without notice to Congress, is not only an affront to this incredible public service, but it really is an affront to the independence of this Congress.

So I am outraged. I hope our Republican colleagues join us in that.

Chief Manger, I want to ask you to give us an update on the staffing within the Dignitary Protection Division. These are highly trained personnel. They serve in critical and increasingly difficult roles. In your budget request, you are requesting additional protection agencies. How are you hiring the protective personnel and procuring the resources to support the division and meet your mission?

Mr. MANGER. You know, it is funny, but when Senator Mullin asked the Sergeant at Arms about the top priorities, dignitary protection is number one for us in terms of the need and a priority in our budget. We are asking for, again, the ability to hire 288 new positions. This allows us to continue the flow into the agency, and the opportunity for people who want to go from Uniform Services Division to Dignitary Protection without diminishing the uniformed officer's ability to continue to do their job.

So that is the first way we do it. We are also bringing folks in directly to become DPD agents and hiring them directly and training them. So we have got, and we are allowing for lateral hires as well. So these are strategies that we did not use before, and it is helping us make progress. But we have got to get the number up to, right now, we believe 530 DPD agents is what is needed.

And you touched on it in terms of the hours that these individuals have to work, we have got to get the staffing up so that we are not making people work double shifts, and canceling days off, and all that sort of thing. It is the DPD agents who are the ones that are constantly bumping up against the maximum allowable pay rate. And so getting the staffing up will solve that problem.

Senator MURRAY. Yes, and you and I have talked before about the problem of retaining sworn law enforcement personnel, these are really demanding, high-stress jobs. In recent years, we have authorized retention bonuses and student loan repayment programs. Is there any data in if that has been effective?

Mr. MANGER. Well, I can just tell you that our attrition rates are lower than they were before we had those, so I think that is evidence. And just anecdotally, you talk to a lot of cops, and that is keeping them here, especially at a critical time for some of these folks that would be at a time in their career where: Well, I am either going to stay—if I keep staying, then I am just invested now to stay through the end. Versus or: Are there other opportunities somewhere else? So I think it is a very effective way to keep people here.

I know that this year, we are going to hopefully be able to offer some retention bonus, but it is not going to be near what we have offered in years past.

Senator MURRAY. Okay, thank you. My time is out. I do have additional questions I would like to submit for the record. Thank you.

Senator MULLIN. And just for a reminder, because the librarian has been brought up twice here, I really didn't want to get into that in this hearing. But for the history of understanding the librarian and how this came about to begin with, if we go back to when the conception of the librarian was formed by Thomas Jefferson in 1902, it was a lifetime appointment. It was a lifetime appointment until President Obama changed it in 2015 and made the

librarian where it was at the service and at the will of the President.

There was no objection by this side at that time when that was taken care of. So that was well within the President's authority to be able to let go the librarian. There is no separation of powers because that appointment for the librarian has always been appointed by the President of the United States. So just for historical purposes, I didn't want to get into it, but it has been brought up twice. I think that is—that is an important piece of information that is being left out here.

Chief, you just said that your objection is to hire—part of your reason for asking for the increase is to hire 288 new officers; is that correct?

Mr. MANGER. That is correct.

Senator MULLIN. Your recruiting classes are full month after month; is that correct?

Mr. MANGER. They are, yes.

Senator MULLIN. Okay, so you are not having a recruiting issue, right?

Mr. MANGER. We are not.

Senator MULLIN. And really, if you break down the 288 employees, you have 996—roughly, overtime hours, actually over 996,000 actually overtime hours that you paid out last year to the tune of 84—let us just round the number—\$84.3 million. Just quick math, if you did 288 employees and you times it by 52, which they don't work 52 weeks a year, but just times it by 52, and you give them 50 hours a week, that just comes up to 748,000 hours right there.

So if we not having a recruiting issue, then we have all your classes are full, we can get there underneath the current budget you have right now. Put an additional 288 people on the force, they still are able to get overtime at a tune of 50 hours a week, that is including with your officers you have today. Because your officers you have today, if you take that and divide it up, they average right at 50 hours a week, 40.8 hours, actually.

And I know this is different from protective service guys that are doing protective work versus the uniform, but my point is, if we look at restructuring it, rather than just asking for us to throw more money at it, it is saving the taxpayer dollars. But we can't do it because your recruiting classes are completely full, and you only—we are only able to go through the recruiting classes, you have two places that you put these things—that you put your recruits through, right?

Mr. MANGER. FLETC in Shelton—FLETC in Georgia and then Shelton.

Senator MULLIN. And we are limited on numbers there. Have we looked at having an additional place? Because obviously, like I said, you are not having a recruiting number—a recruiting issue because your classes are full, so we can't ever get to the 288 if we are at maximum capacity right now. So what is our option?

Mr. MANGER. One of the findings in a recent training needs assessment that we completed is that the facilities are the choke point for us.

Senator MULLIN. Right, but I mean, have we looked at getting a different facility, a different place to send our recruits to?

Mr. MANGER. Yes, well, we could look at that. I mean, FLETC has just historically been—

Senator MULLIN. Historically, yes.

Mr. MANGER [continuing]. And Federal Law Enforcement Training Center is where we train all Federal law enforcement officers.

Senator MULLIN. But if they are not able to meet the need, then the definition of insanity is doing the same thing expecting different results. If they are not able to meet the need, and they are not able to recruit fast enough, we have to change. Because instead, you are paying out 996,000 hours of overtime, which is a tune of \$84-plus million, and you could easily get the other 288 officers in place with the budget you have right now by just cutting down people's overtime, which would also help their quality of life, because they are not—they are going to be able to be home a little bit more, at the same time, still get the overtime at 50 hours a week.

And so there is math here that actually works, but we can't do it unless you are willing to change and look outside what we have always done.

Mr. MANGER. Well, the change that I am dealing with is the growing caseload. I mean, this is not a static workload that does not change every year. It is increasing every year.

Senator MULLIN. The growing caseload, you would need 288 additional officers, right?

Mr. MANGER. And we are trying to make up for deficits that continue, especially in the—

Senator MULLIN. But you can't get there, that is what I am getting at. If your recruiting classes are 100 percent full, you will never be able to get there unless we look at a different place to start putting these recruits through, the different class.

Mr. MANGER. I understand what you are saying, but we are making progress in terms of getting ahead of attrition every year with the 288 people that we are putting through.

Senator MULLIN. By what numbers?

Mr. MANGER. Typically, our attrition numbers, and I can get them to you, are around usually 130, 140 people who leave. So we are coming out—

Senator MULLIN. But if it is just—

Mr. MANGER [continuing]. Just estimating, we are coming out at least 100 officers ahead each year.

Senator MULLIN. So at that rate, if you kept the current load and your current assessment, risk assessment stays, it would still take you 3 years to get hired up?

Mr. MANGER. I estimate that by the end of fiscal year 2027, we would be close.

Senator MULLIN. But you can't do that. Your recruiting classes are full, and your attrition rate is at 134, and you are bringing in 220, I thought 220-some, new recruits every year, you are less than 100, you need 288. Just simple math there says it is going to take over 3 years. In fact, it is going to take three and a half years.

Mr. MANGER. Well, we are making progress every year in terms of getting closer to the staffing.

Senator MULLIN. But why have we not looked at getting a new place to send the recruits, is what I am getting at? Just because we are—and this is what, it is like I am going in circles here. I don't understand why we are not trying to find new places to put the recruits through so we can have a higher amount hired each year. If we need 288 today, then what are we going to need in 3 years from now? You are never going to get caught up with that.

Mr. MANGER. If there is someplace that will give us the certificate—that allows us to certify these police officers as Federal law enforcement officers, another facility, I am happy to look at it.

Senator MULLIN. I am good with it too. And I think we can help you find one. We just need to start looking. I yield.

Senator HEINRICH. Mr. Chairman, I would be very happy to work with you, and we just happen to have a Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia, New Mexico, that we would love to make sure meets the requirements of the U.S. Capitol Police.

Senator MULLIN. Honestly, let us look at it.

Senator HEINRICH. Absolutely. I am not saying—

Senator MULLIN. I mean, if we want to take a full hearing there, let us go.

Senator HEINRICH [continuing]. I am not saying that to jest. They do great work. I know that the first—

Senator MULLIN. If we had one in Oklahoma, I would offer it too, by the way.

Senator HEINRICH. There are some very specific requirements for the Capitol Police, and I am not sure if we currently meet all of those, but we would be happy to work on it, so.

Ms. Hemingway, you serve on the Capitol Police Board that provides oversight to the U.S. Capitol Police. It is also responsible for selecting the next Chief. What is the status of that selection process, and just sort of bring us up to date and talk about the time line a little bit?

Ms. HEMINGWAY. Sure. Thank you for that question. Following Chief Manger's announced retirement, effective May 29th, the Capitol Police Board engaged with the Police Executive Research Forum to assist in a competitive search. We are in the middle of actively interviewing a well-qualified pool of applicants. We are on track to make a decision, as a Board, by the end of this month, and provided we do not deviate from that time line, I look forward to introducing you to the new Chief of Police in June.

Senator HEINRICH. Great. Chief, in your view, what should be the primary focus in the first month of the incoming Chief's tenure?

Mr. MANGER. Well, I think that depending on where they come from, whether it is an internal candidate or external, but certainly any external candidate, there are two big challenges in this job: one, of course, you have to know how to run a large police organization, and some of us came in with that ability. But then you have to learn Capitol Hill and how that—

Senator HEINRICH. The uniqueness of this particular environment?

Mr. MANGER. Yes. And that is like nothing else. And so to make sure that you have the staff in place, and you know, the right guidance to make sure that you are navigating Capitol Hill in an effec-

tive way so that you can be effective on day one when you get in here. And that is what a new chief should focus on if they don't have that experience already.

Senator HEINRICH. The Sergeant at Arms has also increased its focus on Member protection, as you mentioned, including security concerns for our families and staff. In your testimony, you referred to more than 5,700 requests in 2024 for security travel and public events. In broad terms, what has the Sergeant at Arms done to increase its focus on Member protection both here in D.C., but also back in people's home districts and home States?

Ms. HEMINGWAY. Both here in D.C. and in home States, we now offer, thanks to this Committee, the Residential Security System Program. We have 41 senators who are actively participating in this program, through which we are able to provide a security assessment, work with the senator on security recommendations, and once those recommendations are agreed to, we cover the cost of implementation, monitoring, and maintenance. I am very proud of that accomplishment over the past few years with this Committee's support.

With respect to law enforcement coordination to help address the threats, we encourage senators to let us know about events that are upcoming so we can do an intelligence threat assessment, and based on that assessment, we recommend a level of law enforcement support.

Thanks to this Committee again, Capitol Police has money to reimburse State and local agencies for mutual aid law enforcement support. If law enforcement support is not appropriate, we have several training classes and offer tips and coordinate with staff to make sure that they are well prepared to support senators.

For our State offices we also offer the AlertMedia tool, which State offices staff, senators, and spouses can use to maintain situational awareness about events near them. We also harden State offices, including with ballistic glass and secure reception rooms. We put security equipment in state offices, and part of this budget request includes funding for the lifecycle replacement of that equipment. Those are just a few highlights that I would offer to you.

Senator HEINRICH. Great. Thank you.

And thank you, Chairman. I am going to offer the rest of my questions for the record today, but I very much appreciate the hearing.

Senator MULLIN. Thank you. Chief, I want to—something was brought to my attention, we are talking about budgets, and we are looking at ways to either increase or save money. What is OEI?

Mr. MANGER. Office of Equity and Inclusion.

Senator MULLIN. And the purpose?

Mr. MANGER. The purpose in the Capitol Police is to—it is designed to promote a culture of teamwork and shared commitment to our mission. Every member of the Capitol Police, I want them to feel like they are part of the team and committed to our mission. And our OEI reports directly to me because I think that what they do is that important. It is less than 1 percent of our budget and—

Senator MULLIN. It is the tune of \$1 million for 9 people, is how much it costs, \$1 million?

Mr. MANGER. Yes. Some of those are contractors and——

Senator MULLIN. And you have nine personnel; four civilian and five contractors?

Mr. MANGER. Right.

Senator MULLIN. That is a hefty payroll for nine people.

Mr. MANGER. Yes, and we can certainly look at ways to pare some of the expenses down if need be.

Senator MULLIN. What does your average officer make a year?

Mr. MANGER. Well, the starting salaries right after you are out of the academy is about mid-80s.

Senator MULLIN. Mid-80s?

Mr. MANGER. Yes. But the average officer is probably making in the——probably just over six figures.

Senator MULLIN. Okay. So you could hire at least ten new officers. Now, once again, obviously you are not having a recruiting issue, but I am having a hard time because OEI sounds a lot like DEI, and it is on the—I mean, when you literally go onto your front website, it is literally there, and in fact, recently they were having a fair, which looked like it was a fair for grade schoolers, and I was going to put a stencil up and show it because it was actually, I mean, they are talking about having raffle tickets, and giving away prizes, and they are going to have snacks for everybody. And I am going: Really? I have a hard time justifying that.

Mr. MANGER. Well, we have got—if you look at the programs that——

Senator MULLIN. And it talks about where everybody feels comfortable going to, and it talks about——talking about their diversity. And then it also has a chart on there, and it shows how many officers are White, and the ethnic groups that are there. But it specifically shows White officers, and I go: Really? This is what we need in the workplace?

Because that is called division, because if we are trying to hire the best and brightest based on merit, then why would that chart even need to be in the OEI?

Mr. MANGER. Well, I will tell you that all over this country, people in every community want to know if their police department is reflecting the diversity and the experience of their community.

Senator MULLIN. But also, everybody here wants to be safe. And that is why we want to hire based on merit.

Mr. MANGER. And that is number one, and if you heard what I said before.

Senator MULLIN. Yes.

Mr. MANGER. I mean, this team is designed to promote a culture of teamwork, where everybody feels like they are part of the team.

Senator MULLIN. That is not what the——

Mr. MANGER. And that is important to me.

Senator MULLIN [continuing]. That is not what the website——

Mr. MANGER. And if you have an organization that is large as mine——

Senator Mullin[continuing]: That is not what the website, sir——

Mr. Manger[continuing]: You want people to have——

Senator MULLIN. Chief, read website that is not what that says.

Mr. MANGER. I have read the website. They do a lot of different things.

Senator MULLIN. It does not say that. What you are describing, it does not say. I don't want to get in a tit for tat for you, but if you want to get in an argument about it, we can. This is a good way to make sure——

Mr. MANGER. I am not arguing with you.

Senator MULLIN. Well, you are. This sounds——

Mr. MANGER. I am telling you what the substance of this—you asked me what the purpose of the team was.

Senator MULLIN. Did it—why doesn't it say that on the website, because it doesn't. There is nowhere on that website that it says anything that you are saying. So you can tell me what it may—supposed to be. I can tell you what the website is saying. So which one is it?

Mr. MANGER. It is what I tell you.

Senator MULLIN. Well, there need—then the website—then the website is dead wrong.

Mr. MANGER. Because that is what I—that is the direction I have given that team.

Senator MULLIN. Well, then you are not looking over it very well, because they are spending a million dollars for nine people, and you don't even know what the website says.

Mr. MANGER. I do know the website says.

Senator MULLIN. And the job—and the fair that they have, that they are going to have for whatever it is, it does not say that. It says: Come to make sure everybody feels comfortable and included. And then, once again, it breaks down every race. I believe you are pretty diversified.

I get along with your officers. Love your officers. I think they are awesome. Get along with every one of them. I go by, there is not a single time that I don't go by and I shake their hands and tell them, thank you, and I joke and kid with them. And I don't see there is a diversity issue, but OEI is making it an issue.

Mr. MANGER. That is not true.

Senator MULLIN. Then why would they have a chart that showed every ethnic group there?

Mr. MANGER. That they do——

Senator MULLIN. And then it talks about diversity, and it talks about what their goal is and how important diversity is to get——

Mr. MANGER. When we talk about diversity, the diversity of experience that brought everybody to be on Team USCP.

Senator MULLIN. When you read—when you read your website, it doesn't talk about that. Because it starts to talk—it talks about diversity goals, and your diversity goals are based on race. So once again, Chief, you are not accurate.

Mr. MANGER. I don't—I don't believe that is the case.

Senator MULLIN. Okay. Well, I can go back and I can quote it, because it talks about diversity on female officers, it talks about diversity on different races, and it talks about what your goals are to get there. So it does. And I don't—you know, if that is what you are at, then just own it, and instead of saying——

Mr. MANGER. Well, it is not. It is not. We do not have quotas, we do not—our diversity efforts are not: Oh, let us hire this—this kind of person, not that kind of person. That is not the case.

Senator MULLIN. Well, it says that if you want to—which I don’t care if they—if everybody is on merit-based hire the best people, so I don’t care about it. I am not trying to get in tit for tat for it.

Mr. MANGER. We are doing——

Senator MULLIN. But it does say in there that you are trying to diversify the force to 30 percent females, which, I don’t care. It does not bother me so——

Mr. MANGER. That is a national program called “30 for 30”, where there is an effort to increase the number of women in policing.

Senator MULLIN. So there is a quota.

Mr. MANGER. No, it is not a quota. No. I mean, it is a goal. It is not a quota for us.

Senator MULLIN. Okay. We have a lot of work to do. I want to make sure that everybody here at the Capitol is safe. I want to make sure that everybody that comes and visits us, and everybody that comes here to work, goes home to their families, and that is including all the officers, that is my number one goal. At the same time, I want to be a good steward of the dollars we are spending and make sure they are going to that goal.

And I want to look at the way we do things. Just because we do things a certain way and we have done it for 10 years doesn’t mean we can’t get better at it. And my goal as the chair is to do that. And we can do that through one, if we are financing a program, I want to make sure it is a program that is actually being effective in every way possible, every way possible.

So I look forward to working with you, Chief. I do appreciate your service. We don’t always agree on every issue, but where you have taken the department in a few short years is commendable. I think there are a lot more changes that need to be happen—or that needs to happen, but you have done a pretty good job walking into a very difficult situation. So thank you.

Unless the Ranking Member has anything else to say, I will close the Committee.

Senator HEINRICH. I just want to thank you both. I have seen measurable improvements to both of your organizations. And that is not lost on me, and I think it is not lost on most of the Members. And please be sure that your workforces understand how much we appreciate them.

Senator MULLIN. This concludes the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing regarding fiscal year 2026 funding for the Sergeant at Arms and the United States Capitol Police.

Thank you, Ms. Hemingway; and thank you, Chief, for testifying today. We appreciate the information you provide and look forward to working with each of your agencies as we continue to evaluate the security needs of Congress.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Senator MULLIN. The hearing record will be open for 7 days, allowing members to submit statements and/or questions for the record, which will be sent to the subcommittee for close of business on Wednesday, May 21, 2025.

CONCLUSION OF HEARINGS

Senator MULLIN. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:58 p.m., Wednesday, May 14, the hearings were concluded, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

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