

PROVIDING FOR THE EXPENSES OF CERTAIN COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

MARCH 15, 2017.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. HARPER, from the Committee on House Administration, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H. Res. 173]

The Committee on House Administration, to whom was referred the resolution (H. Res. 173) providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the resolution be agreed to.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE RESOLUTION

Pursuant to House Rule X, clause 6, the Committee on House Administration (hereinafter referred to as the “Committee”) reports an omnibus, biennial “primary expense resolution” to cover the expenses of each standing and select committee of the House, except the Committee on Appropriations. H. Res. 173 is the primary expense resolution reported by the Committee on House Administration for the 115th Congress.

On March 8, 2017, by voice vote, the Committee agreed to a motion to report H. Res. 173 favorably to the House without amendment. The resolution authorizes the aggregate amount of funding for standing and permanent select committees for the 115th Congress, and also includes a provision to require a review of the use of committee funds at the beginning of the second session of the 115th Congress.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

During the first three months of each new Congress, House Rule X, clause 7, authorizes House committees to continue operations based on their funding authorizations from the preceding session.

This continuing authorization allows committees to organize, adopt legislative and oversight agendas, and seek spending authority through the adoption of a primary expense resolution by the House.

The funding process begins after a House standing or permanent select committee determines its biennial funding needs, and introduces a House resolution seeking those funds. Under House Rule X, clause 6, all funding resolutions, which are referred to as primary expense resolutions, are referred to the Committee on House Administration. Since this funding process merely authorizes the expenditure of funds already provided (or to be provided) in appropriations acts, the funding measure takes the form of a simple House resolution, which does not require Senate or presidential approval. After requesting and reviewing committee budget submissions, the Committee recommends an appropriate allocation of funds.

115th Congress proceedings

To gather the information necessary to create the omnibus primary expense resolution, the Committee required the standing and permanent select committees to submit estimates for their expected expenses for both sessions of the 115th Congress. The Committee asked that committees provide line item estimates for the following expenses: personnel compensation (including salaries and lump sum payments), overtime, travel, communications, and printing and reproduction costs.

The Committee also requested that committees estimate their expenses for other services, including consultant contracts, detailees from executive and other agencies, training, representational expenses, and other services. Finally, the Committee requested budget estimates for the costs of supplies, materials, and equipment.

To further gather the information necessary to create the omnibus primary expense resolution, the Committee convened a hearing to provide the Chairs and Ranking Members of the standing and permanent select committees an opportunity to present and share their views on their respective budget requests for the 115th Congress.

During the hearing, Members of the Committee asked the Chairs and Ranking Members about how their budget requests would impact their ability to conduct effective oversight or pursue their legislative goals.

Members of the Committee also asked the Chairs and Ranking Members how they were managing and will manage their resources with equity and prudence. Since the 104th Congress, House majority leadership and the Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee have encouraged the Chairs of the standing and permanent select committees to provide the minority with one-third of committee staff and/or resources authorized in the primary expense resolutions. During the hearings, the Committee sought to ensure that the minority in each committee was treated equitably in the funding process. Each Ranking Member was asked if he or she was allocated the traditional one-third share of committee staff positions and/or committee resources, as determined by each committee. These exchanges indicated that all of the committees appear to be in compliance with the traditional “two-thirds/one-third” distribution of funds among the majority and minority.

After the hearing, the Committee used the budget submissions and Member testimony to create an omnibus expense resolution, introduced by Chairman Harper, to authorize funding for all of the committees. The resolution includes a provision to require the Chairs and Ranking Members to return to the Committee after one year for an additional oversight hearing to review the use of funds from the first session, unless waived by the Committee. These proceedings will be open to the public, and will provide an opportunity to discover how effectively and efficiently funding allocations are being used. The provision is intended to promote accountability, transparency, and oversight of each committee's resources.

In reporting out this resolution, the committee is recommending to the House an authorization to expend approximately \$131,415,404 in the first session, and \$132,365,176 in the second session. The resolution also includes a reserve fund for unanticipated expenses of \$1,250,000 in the first session and the same amount in the second session.

Hearing room upgrades

The Committee on House Administration has determined that funds requested for hearing room upgrades by the committees should be removed from the committee funding process and be allocated separately. The Committee believes this is necessary so that the omnibus resolution accurately reflects the true base funding levels for each committee. Since much of the work performed in upgrading hearing rooms arises from costs related to infrastructure modifications of House buildings and other services usually performed by the Architect of the Capitol and Chief Administrative Officer under their own or other budget authority, it is not appropriate to account for these costs within committee's budgets.

The House Administration Committee believes that these upgrade requests are indicative of the need for a responsive and organized committee hearing room upgrade process. It should be noted that audio and video technology in several committee rooms are very dated and urgently need to be replaced and or upgraded to ensure the continued public broadcast of congressional proceedings.

The Committee on House Administration directs the Chief Administrative Officer to implement a Committee Hearing Broadcast Program to manage hearing room upgrades. The Hearing Broadcast Program will include (1) technology standards for hearing rooms and supporting components in the House Recording Studio, (2) a management plan for a standard upgrade process and ongoing sustainment, and (3) recommendations to the Committee for hearing room upgrade priorities. Committees that want to fund hearing room technology upgrades outside of the Hearing Broadcast Program must obtain approval from the Committee on House Administration.

The Chief Administrative Officer is also directed to provide support staff to operate the broadcasting functions for each committee room. Committee staffs are not authorized to operate broadcasting functions for official committee events, unless the committee receives authorization from the Committee on House Administration.

Authorization and oversight plans

The Committee expects the funding allocated for each committee to be appropriately assigned by each committee to its subcommittees to ensure that the committees are able to accomplish their goals, as outlined by each committee's authorization and oversight plan as required by House Rule X, clause 3(d)(5).

Allocations for the Committee on Rules and Committee on Ethics

The Committee has reported a resolution with funding higher than the requests for the Committee on Rules and Committee on Ethics. The additional funding provided for the Committee on Rules is intended to provide appropriate funding for the new House Rule concerning comparative prints of bills reported by committees. The additional funding provided for the Committee on Ethics is intended to provide additional resources for the Advice and Education Office of the Ethics Committee and to provide resources for an update to the House Ethics Manual.

SUMMARY OF THE RESOLUTION

Section 1 adjusts the aggregate amount paid out of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives with respect to the 115th Congress for the expenses (including the expense of all staff salaries) of the permanent select and standing committees of the House (except the Committee on Appropriations).

Section 2 adjusts the amount provided for the expenses of each standing and permanent select committee of the House (except the Committee on Appropriations) for expenses incurred during the first session of the 115th Congress (the period beginning at noon on January 3, 2017, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 2018).

Section 3 adjusts the amount provided for the expenses of each standing and permanent select committee of the House (except the Committee on Appropriations) for expenses incurred during the second session of the 115th Congress (the period beginning at noon on January 3, 2018, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 2019).

The amounts for each committee contained in the primary expense resolution are as follows:

	1st Session	2nd Session	Total
Committee on Agriculture	\$5,699,668	\$5,737,849	\$11,437,517
Committee on Armed Services	8,094,170	8,094,170	16,188,340
Committee on the Budget	5,190,212	5,190,212	10,380,424
Committee on Education and the Workforce	7,146,429	7,307,783	14,454,212
Committee on Energy and Commerce	10,265,721	10,265,721	20,531,442
Committee on Ethics	3,340,663	3,340,663	6,681,326
Committee on Financial Services	8,290,225	8,290,225	16,580,450
Committee on Foreign Affairs	7,836,993	7,836,993	15,673,986
Committee on Homeland Security	7,503,923	7,503,923	15,007,846
Committee on House Administration	5,021,565	5,321,565	10,343,130
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence	6,050,000	6,050,000	12,100,000
Committee on the Judiciary	7,625,286	7,725,286	15,350,572
Committee on Natural Resources	6,879,172	6,879,172	13,758,344
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform	9,129,841	9,129,841	18,259,682
Committee on Rules	3,230,281	3,230,281	6,460,562
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology	5,484,978	5,484,978	10,969,956
Committee on Small Business	3,037,400	3,249,637	6,287,037
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure	8,655,500	8,760,500	17,416,000

	1st Session	2nd Session	Total
Committee on Veterans' Affairs	3,979,031	3,979,031	7,958,062
Committee on Ways and Means	8,954,346	8,986,346	17,940,692
Reserve Fund	1,250,000	1,250,000	

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 173

INTRODUCTION AND REFERRAL

On March 7, 2017, Representative Gregg Harper of Mississippi introduced House Resolution 173, which was referred to the Committee on House Administration.

HEARINGS

On February 15 and February 16, 2017, the Committee held an oversight hearing to review the budgets for all the standing and select committees (except the Committee on Appropriations) in the 114th Congress, and to review budget planning for the 115th Congress. The Chairs and Ranking Members of the select and standing committees provided testimony on their respective use of committee funds.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On March 8, 2017, the Committee met to mark up House Resolution 173. The Committee ordered the resolution reported favorably without amendment to the House by voice vote, with a quorum present.

COMMITTEE RECORD VOTES

In compliance with House Rule XIII, clause 3(b), with respect to each record vote on an amendment or motion to report, together with the names of those voting for and against, the Committee states that there were no recorded votes during the consideration of this resolution.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In compliance with House Rule XIII, clause 3(c)(1), the Committee states that the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under House Rule X, clause 2(b)(1), are incorporated into the general discussion section of this report.

STATEMENT OF BUDGET AUTHORITY AND RELATED ITEMS

The resolution does not provide new budget authority, new spending authority, new credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures and a statement under House Rule XIII, clause 3(c)(2), and section 308(a)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is not required.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

In compliance with House Rule XIII, clause 3(c)(3), the Committee states, with respect to House Resolution 173, that the Director of the Congressional Budget Office did not submit a cost estimate and comparison under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In compliance with House Rule XIII, clause 3(c)(4), the Committee states that House Resolution 173 serves as the biennial “primary expense resolution” to cover the expenses of each standing and select committee of the House, except the Committee on Appropriations. The performance goal and objective of House Resolution 173 is thus to provide adequate expenses for each standing and permanent select committee of the House, ensuring that each may acquire and retain appropriate staff and equipment to carry out their legislative and oversight duties.

