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COMMITTEE FUNDING HEARING

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MEETING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, FEBRUARY 28, 2007

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HEARING ON COMMITTEE FUNDING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:35 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Juanita Millender-McDonald (chairwoman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Millender-McDonald, Lofgren, Capuano, Gonzalez, Davis of California, Ehlers, Lungren, and McCarthy.

Staff Present: Charles Howell, Chief Counsel; Tom Hicks, Counsel; Matt Pinkus, Professional Staff/Parliamentarian; Kristin McCowan, Chief Legislative Clerk; George Hadijski, Minority Director of Member and Committee Services; and Peter Sloan, Minority Professional Staff.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Good morning. The Committee on House Administration will now come to order.

It is great this morning to have all of our Chairs here to outline their agenda and talk about their budgets and the priorities for the 110th Congress. It is customary for this committee to bring the Chairs before us to speak about this and to outline their budgets.

I have been very impressed with what I have seen in reading the various letters and the outlines of the Chairs. As you know, in the 109th Congress, there was not a budget; therefore, the committees budgets will stay pretty much as they were in the 109th Congress with just a tweak of perhaps a 2 percent increase. So we are very, very grateful to the Chairs for their tolerance on this.

However, in the second half of the 110th Congress we will be reviewing the budget process again. And we have spoken with the Speaker, and she has consented to review that.

So we do have the Members coming in order by time. We are sorry that we are running a little late here in getting started. But this morning we have with us Chairman Lantos and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, both representing the Foreign Affairs Committee. And they are here this morning to present their agenda and their budget.

Good morning to both of you.

Mr. LANTOS. Good morning.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Good morning.

The CHAIRMAN. Before we get started, though, I would like to at least have the Ranking Member make an opening statement before we move on.

Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity, and I am sorry I held you up for 3 minutes. I was in the back room discussing, and I did not realize you were here.

In the interest of time and since we have a number of people waiting, if you don't object I will submit my statement for the record and just make a few very brief comments.

I, first of all, want to thank all the chairmen for coming. I have been on this committee for 12 years now. This is an annual program that we go through. We listen in great detail to what the committee chairs and ranking members have to say and use our best judgment.

This year is totally different than any I have experienced because we have very little judgment to exercise, because of the lack of money available. The decision was made by the Speaker to spread it across the board with the exception of some additional funds for the Armed Services Committee, which I have personally questioned because I think the work of every committee is equally important.

Nevertheless, that decision has been made, so the only hope for salvation will be next year. I hope we do manage to pass a budget this year, and we will be able to consider your request in more detail next year.

One last comment I would make: Something I worked very hard on when we took over the majority some years ago was to restore or to bring—not restore because it hadn't been there—but to bring every committee up to a two-thirds/one-third ratio, majority getting two-thirds of the funds and the minority getting one-third.

And it was a painstaking task because when we were in the minority, some of the committees only received 10 percent of the total budget. Naturally the members of those committees were not at all anxious to have the new minority get more than they had been willing to give to us.

With Chairman Bill Thomas we worked very hard on this. We managed to get it through, and so a few years ago we reached a one-third/two-thirds for every committee. I would hope that every committee before us will commit to maintaining that ratio to the best of their ability during the course of the year.

So I will ask that question of everyone.

I also recognize that chairmen and ranking members have considerable leeway as to just how they worked this agreement out, because there are joint expenses and so forth and they have been very creative in that. It is very important that we continue the principle of two-thirds/one-third, not just for the benefit of the current minority, but for the benefit of the current majority for the time when they may once again be in the minority.

Having said that, Madam Chair, I turn it back over to you.

[The statement of Mr. Ehlers follows:]

Committee Funding Hearing
Committee on House Administration
110th Congress
February 28, 2007

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Vernon J. Ehlers

I thank my colleague from California, Ms. Millender-McDonald, for her remarks, and welcome all of our distinguished colleagues who will be joining us here today in order to submit their Committee funding requests for the 110th Congress.

We have many Committees to get through, and a limited amount of time in which to receive their testimony, so I'll keep my remarks brief.

My goal today is two-fold – first, to maintain what has, in the last few years, been a relatively smooth Committee funding process. Many of our Chairmen and Ranking Members have established standing precedents about the operating practices within their respective Committees, and have functioned for many years in accordance with those principles. It is my hope that this proceeding will be in keeping with that spirit, and that the needs of both the majority and minority parties for each Committee will be represented in the requests submitted today.

Second, I want to ensure that an equitable division of funding continues. When we previously served in the minority, we were not provided with sufficient funds or staff. When we assumed the majority in 1995, we committed to giving the minority 1/3 of the resources and staff allocation for committees, so they could fulfill their responsibilities. That 2/3 – 1/3 allocation was a commitment we honored while in the majority, and I hope and expect the new majority to continue to honor it.

It is also important to note that, as we saw in 1995, a change in Majority control of the House presents a rare opportunity to improve the manner in which the House conducts its business. In that light, I encourage my colleagues who will be appearing before us today to look at this transition and their new responsibilities not as an occasion to meet an established minimum standard, but rather as an opportunity to raise the bar and set an even higher standard than we have been able to accomplish in the past. I am sure that my Democratic colleagues are still quite enthralled with their newly-gained majority status and are not inclined in the early days of this Congress to envision a return to the minority. However, I would caution them against such hubris and hope that they seize this unique opportunity to set standards in how their committees are run that they would view as just and fair had they remained in the minority.

Adjustments to the 2/3-1/3 budget allocation have been made in the past, for instance through the use of shared staff, or a centrally managed budget for non-personnel expenditures. My goal is not to discourage these types of arrangements – in fact, I admire the creativity and cooperation demonstrated by some Chairmen and Ranking Members to establish a process that works for their Committees. However, I do want to ensure that those in the Minority continue to be given adequate resources, and that each Chairman and Ranking Member are able to come to an arrangement that is satisfactory for both parties.

Again, I thank our distinguished colleagues for joining us today, and I look forward to receiving their testimony.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ranking Member.

And now we will go to the Chairman for his opening statement and then to the Ranking Member for her opening statement, and then we will proceed from there.

Good morning to you both.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM LANTOS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Chair, Mr. Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, my colleagues, allow me to begin with a personal observation, which is also incumbent upon me to reveal the truth. The Chair of this committee and I have a special relationship. She is not only a dear friend, but a neighbor; and occasionally I have the privilege of cleaning her car, picking up her lost keys, opening the doors for her, and if she has a particularly heavy package, it is I who carries it in.

So I ought to be entitled to special treatment, but I am not asking her for any.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am grateful, however.

Mr. EHLERS. I think this amounts to undue influence.

Mr. LANTOS. I am just delighted to see this great colleague, a woman of great intellectual distinction and commitment, have this chairmanship.

If you will allow me, Madam Chairman, I always also would like to reminisce for about 30 seconds. It was 20 years ago in this room that my wife Annette and I had the pleasure of hosting the Dalai Lama's first appearance in the Congress of the United States.

The administration wouldn't touch him with a 10-foot pole. The leadership of Congress would not see him. And it was just a handful of colleagues who joined Annette and me in recognizing this great leader.

Subsequently, he was received by the leadership of the Congress, the Vice President, the President. And his career culminated when Richard Gere, myself and the Dalai Lama appeared on Larry King's program. You can't get any higher than that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Absolutely.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Chair, members of the committee, this has been a very bipartisan committee under the leadership of our friend, Henry Hyde, and it will be an equally bipartisan committee under my chairmanship. I have great pleasure of serving with my most distinguished colleague from Florida, and you will hear from her in a minute.

To indicate the degree of bipartisanship that is present in our work, there are eight shared staff Members—there were eight shared staff members of the committee under Chairman Hyde. I have eight shared staff members. I retained six of Mr. Hyde's staff people because they have done an outstanding job and they will do an equally outstanding nonpartisan job as shared staff members of the committee.

I don't need to tell a group of your sophistication that for better or worse—and, unfortunately, for worse—Foreign Affairs has an incredible agenda. Whether you watch television or read the newspapers, whether it is 80 percent or 90 percent of the issues, from

Iraq to Afghanistan to Iran to North Korea to China to India to Russia to Europe, the issues are with our committee.

We are realists. We are not asking for the kind of increase that in terms of our workload we would require. We are asking for a modest 4.9 percent increase for both the current year and the next year.

Let me also mention that in terms of efficiency and productivity, Madam Chair, we have very bad distribution of offices. Speaker Hastert indicated to us that they would try to accommodate us. We have five of our subcommittees' staff in the Ford Building; this makes it very difficult for us to operate efficiently. And I am just making a modest plea, I presume on behalf of both of us, that as possible, if you could, allow us a consolidation of physical space.

I want to thank you for giving us this opportunity. I will be delighted to answer any questions after you hear from my friend.

The CHAIRWOMAN. The Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Well, thank you so much, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Lantos, our friends and colleagues.

I have a prepared statement that I would like to make part of the record, but I would also like to echo the remarks made by our distinguished chair. This is a truly bipartisan committee. It is a delight for us on the other side of the aisle to work with Chairman Lantos on difficult, thorny, complex issues.

Today, for example, we have a full committee hearing on Iraq. In the afternoon, we have a full committee hearing on North Korea. Every day we are meeting the challenges that are presented before us, defeating the radical Islamic militant jihadists, dealing with nuclear proliferation throughout the world. But we do work in a bipartisan manner.

It does not mean that we agree with all of the issues. But we do it—we disagree in a courteous and in a professional manner. So it is an honor for me to work with Tom and his staff on all of these issues.

I echo his comments about our request for the funding, and most especially for a consolidation of space because going from building to building makes our work that much more difficult. But I also will just submit my statement for the record.

Thank you Madam Chair, thank you Mr. Ranking Member and members.

[The statement of Ms. Ros-Lehtinen follows:]

Statement of the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Before the
Committee on House Administration

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee for giving Chairman Lantos and me the opportunity to present the budget request of the Committee on Foreign Affairs for the 110th Congress.

The matters address by our Committee are among the most critical our nation faces and have far-reaching implications for U.S. efforts abroad and for our policies here in the United States.

If we are to provide for our nation's security, we must be able to effectively address the threats posed by Islamist militant extremists, their state-sponsors, financiers, and others supporters.

We must be able to assess and strengthen our non-proliferation efforts and develop an integrated approach to curbing the spread of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, including by addressing both export control mechanisms, as well as illicit networks that provide rogue regimes and non-state actors with the technology, materials, and assistance to pursue policies that threaten U.S. and global security.

Our focus should not simply be on addressing immediate threats but in pursuing sustainable programs that will build civil society, provide for political freedom and economic growth and prosperity, thereby countering the precursor conditions that breed hatred and extremism and, in turn, lead to violence and terrorism.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, needs to have the human, technological, and financial resources to assess, develop, and implement legislative strategies that will help achieve the desired objectives.

We must be able to respond to emerging developments quickly and must be able to discuss issues of mutual concern with our allies in an informal forum—both here and abroad.

Our budget request reflects these needs and realities, which is why I support this request and ask the Committee on House Administration to support it as well.

I will be working with Chairman Lantos to achieve a fair and equitable majority/ minority distribution of the funding, and look forward to working with all our colleagues in developing and implementing an effective foreign policy that promotes U.S. national security interests in the short and long-term.

Thank you for your time.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much for both of you and your presentation today, and thank you for the brevity of it, given the time constraints.

Mr. Chairman and Ms. Ranking Member, I hear you very clearly that there is a need for this modest increase. However, again, because of the budgetary constraints that we are under, we are trying our best to do whatever we can possibly do to give as much as we can for chairpersons this year.

So I would have to say that, at this juncture, what we have afforded to you is the 2 percent increase for inflation—2.4 for inflation. But we can look at the physical space that you speak about and see whether the consolidation can be done. Of course, I would have to speak with the Speaker and see just where we are in terms of that.

You said you had how many staffers in the Ford Building?

Mr. LANTOS. We have five subcommittees in the Ford Building. We work on a very integrated basis, Madam Chair, and an enormous amount of time is wasted running back and forth. And this would just help us do our work somewhat more rationally.

The CHAIRWOMAN. That, I can certainly——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Chair, if I could just add to that, and also I meant to echo Ranking Member Ehler's comments about a fair and equitable distribution of majority/minority funding, and I thank the ranking member for bringing that up. I know that Chairman Lantos is very cognizant of that and has been working with us on that point.

Mr. LANTOS. Absolutely.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And you two have worked very well with that two-thirds/one-third ratio; that is very good, and we are thankful to you for that.

I will again look into the consolidation in terms of your five subcommittees——

Mr. LANTOS. We appreciate that.

The CHAIRWOMAN [continuing]. And see what we can do there.

Outside of that, I am sorry that this year brings us to this point where we are trying to struggle with the budget, in light of the fact that there was no budget last year. So we are having to come in with the baseline budget from last year with a modest increase for inflation, and that is where we are at this juncture.

And I would now refer to the Ranking Mmember for comments.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Very briefly, space is at a premium for every committee and most of the committees I am on have split their staff. If you could see the quarters that both the majority and minority staff of this committee have, you would be grateful for the situation.

I realize that is small consolation.

But one question I did have about you wanting to consolidate. Would you be willing to consolidate everything in the Ford Building, have all of your subcommittees and staffs in the Ford Building?

Mr. LANTOS. I will be happy to take it back to my colleagues. I doubt that the answer will be in the affirmative.

Mr. EHLERS. I just wondered because there are a lot of people who would prefer more space in these three buildings. But I just wanted to know that.

The other is a political statement. I supported the President's surge in Iraq, but I have made it clear in speeches and in my writings that I felt we should have an equal surge in diplomacy. I am quite happy to argue, in your case, that if we are going to give more money to the Armed Services Committee, when everyone else is being held the same, that your committee should also get more, so we can increase our diplomatic efforts as well as our military efforts.

Mr. LANTOS. If I may respond to my good friend, although I realize he was half serious and half witty, I have just come back from Moscow and had very serious discussions with the Soviet foreign policy leadership. Then I was in Western Europe. In many places I was asked, as the new chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, what is my number one objective, and I had very little difficulty answering it, Madam Chair.

I said, when I came to the Congress, the reputation, the standing, the prestige of the United States was sky high. It is now the lowest that I can recall in my adult lifetime, which is a long lifetime. And I think our committee has a very heavy responsibility beyond any geographic location; be it North Korea or Iraq or Afghanistan, it is to work on restoring global respect and appreciation for the United States as the one remaining superpower with enormous global responsibilities.

And your comment that you favor a surge in diplomacy is a comment I fully relate to and strongly approve, so I appreciate your observation.

Mr. EHLERS. Well, thank you. I want to assure you that my comment about matching money for you with money for the Armed Service Committee, I was dead serious.

Mr. LANTOS. I appreciate it.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you very much. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. Lantos and Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, we do recognize that the issues you have are vast and very complex. And you do represent us well when you go abroad, and nationally, to speak on the issues of foreign affairs, so we appreciate the work that you do.

I would like to ask if there are other members who would like to make comments before we move on?

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. LOFGREN. Just briefly, I would say thank you to the chairman, who is, I am proud to say, from our great State of California, and to the ranking member, for the work they do for our Nation. It is really wonderful that we have Members who are experts in this field.

When you think of diplomacy, you think, executive branch, but we also think legislative branch because we have an important role to play.

My question is really generic, and I am not sure how it is going to be developed. But we have, and the Speaker has announced her interest in making sure that all committee hearings are webcast,

which I think is a great step forward, because then the public will be able to see the work that we are doing.

Do you know whether that has been accomplished in all of your hearing rooms or do we need to do something more to accomplish that?

Mr. LANTOS. I think we are capable of doing it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If I could continue, Chairman Hyde——

Mr. LANTOS. Excuse me. Our full committee hearing room is fully equipped. The subcommittee hearing rooms are not yet, and I very much look forward to having all of our committee rooms——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If I could continue, I echo what the chairman said. Under Chairman Hyde's leadership, we were able to modernize Room 2172 of Rayburn, and so that is fully operational. As the chairman points out, our subcommittees then meet in different rooms and they are not able to do that, like many of our subcommittees.

Ms. LOFGREN. We want to make sure every full committee is capable of webcasting and then, as we move through this, that every subcommittee——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Many subcommittee hearings do take place in the full committee room.

Ms. LOFGREN. Rather than bother all of the committee chairmen, I wonder if later the staff could give us a status report on where we are. And then, at a subsequent date, I am sure you will want to show the leadership on getting us there. And I just think—you know, if the public could see what this committee is doing, I think it would be a good thing for not only the committee, but for the country.

So I thank you very much for your answer, for your service.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. And if I could point out that our committee is headed by a naturalized American and the ranking member is a naturalized American, and here we are talking about foreign policy.

The CHAIRWOMAN. It doesn't get any better than that.

Thank you all so much. Because of time constraints and because we have chairpersons who are waiting in the wings, we thank you both so much and appreciate your tolerance with us on the budget.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you so much.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We would like to see now the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. Conyers, and their Ranking Member, Mr. Smith.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here and if you would like to summarize your statements and submit your full statements for the record, we would appreciate that because of the time constraints. Good morning to both of you, and welcome.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. CONYERS. Good morning, Madam Chairman, to the Honorable Juanita Millender-McDonald; and our ranking member from Michigan, Vern Ehlers, and the rest of the distinguished—the former attorney general of California, of course; and Zoe Lofgren, who has been on our Judiciary Committee, as well; and our dear

friend from Massachusetts. We are all delighted to be here and to merely let you know of the good cooperation that is being enjoyed by the chairman and the ranking member on the House Judiciary Committee. I have been working with Lamar Smith in a very fine way, which makes our submission rather easy and simple.

First of all, we don't have any major requests compared to some that you are receiving. And I begin by reminding you, the Judiciary Committee is among the most active committees; 13 percent of the total legislative measures introduced have been referred to our committee. It has always been an active committee. And we have an even more ambitious agenda for the 110th Congress.

Immigration is the biggie that we are all hoping now to repair and move forward from the 109th Congress. But we also have lobbying reforms, civil rights concerns, criminal justice, commercial and administrative law, patent and copyright reform, judicial security, and antitrust, among others.

I might say that I also had a very cordial meeting with Attorney General Gonzalez yesterday in preparing him to come before the committee, and I think we are going to get more oversight than we have ever had before.

And finally, consistent with past practice, Ranking Member Lamar Smith and I have agreed to allocate a third of the payroll to the minority, as usual, after first deducting shared administrative employees. We were at seven in the last Congress, we are down to six now; and this allows additional payroll flexibility to the minority.

That is the bulk of information that I bring you. But I am happy to be before so many friends on this committee, including the honorable chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Conyers follows:]

Statement of Chairman John Conyers, Jr.
House Committee on Administration
Feb 28, 2007

Chairwoman Millender -McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers, and Members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to appear before you today with Mr. Smith to present our budget request for the House Judiciary Committee.

The Judiciary Committee is among the most active Committees in the House, if not the most active. In the last several Congresses, we have frequently been called upon to consider important and complex legislation that affects all facets of our society.

In the 109th Congress, for example, over 13% of the total legislative measures introduced were referred to this Committee. The Judiciary Committee reported 87 bills and resolutions to the House, with accompanying legislative reports on all but four. In addition, a total of 20 bills in which the Judiciary Committee had a jurisdictional interest, were signed into law by the President.

To support these measures, the Committee held 164 hearings of which 113 were oversight hearings and 51 were legislative hearings. The Committee held 33 mark-ups at which it considered 135 public bills.

This Congress will be no different. Among other things we are planning to take up omnibus immigration reform legislation, as well as critical bills dealing with lobbying reform, civil rights and

liberties, criminal justice, commercial and administrative law, patent and copyright reform, judicial security, privacy protection, and antitrust, among others. We also plan to spend considerable time and effort on legislation reauthorizing the Department of Justice and its many programs. I also expect the Committee will be active in oversight activities, both with regard to the Administration and private parties. This will no doubt be very time, resource, and personnel intensive.

To properly address all of these issues, it will require that many interconnected factors be considered simultaneously. Given the severe negative ramifications that could result without careful and thorough consideration of any of these matters, I believe it is imperative that adequate Committee staff resources be available on these issues.

As a result, we are asking for a budget increase of 4% in 2007 and another 4% in 2008. This includes two additional staff for the Majority and one additional staff for the Minority, bringing us from 83 to 86 total staff. We are also hoping to use the new budget to replace dated equipment, upgrade our overflow hearing room with a modified audio/visual system, and redesign our web page.

Consistent with past practice, Ranking Member Smith and I have agreed to allocate one-third of the payroll to the Minority, after first deducting shared employees. Last Congress, the Committee maintained seven shared employees, while this Congress we have

agreed to reduce that number to six, allowing additional payroll flexibility to the Minority. Most of these shared employees are carryover employees from last Congress, consistent with the non-partisan, administrative nature of their positions. I appreciate the spirit of cooperation shown by Ranking Member Smith in reaching this accomodation, and look forward to working with him in implementing the final budget this Committee approves.

Members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention to our request, and am happy to respond to any questions you might have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I thank the gracious gentleman from Michigan so much, and appreciate your very informative opening statement.

You do have an active committee. And I tell you, you have the big guns—immigration, lobby reform and copyright. So we look forward to your leadership on those issues, along with our colleague on this panel, who will be working very hard on immigration issues.

Mr. Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. LAMAR SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. Welcome.

Mr. SMITH. First of all, may I have unanimous consent to have my formal written statement entered as part of the written record?

The CHAIRWOMAN. You may, and thank you so much.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to point out to Chairman Conyers that it looks like we have some favorable terrain here. Two members of the House Administration Committee are members of the Judiciary Committee. I have a colleague from San Antonio, who just left, who is also a member of the committee; and also a colleague from Massachusetts, who is the chairman of the House Ethics Task Force, that I serve as ranking on, is a member of the House Administration Committee, too.

So I hope those friendships will be—not pay off, that is too crass—but will be recognized during the process.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We know how to pick them, right?

Mr. SMITH. True.

Madam Chair, I simply want to say that I support Chairman Conyers' request for a very small—relatively small increase in the Judiciary Committee budget. That 4 percent is small compared to a lot of other committee requests, and furthermore, most of that 4 percent is going for an increase in salaries, which is needed.

It is my opinion that, frankly, most of the people who work on Capitol Hill are underpaid and overworked. And this allows the Judiciary Committee to raise the salaries of some of our hardworking Judiciary Committee members.

So I am happy to be here to support the chairman and his request for the Judiciary Committee budget. And I will yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

Statement of Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Lamar Smith
Committee on House Administration
Judiciary Committee Budget for the 110th Congress
February 28, 2007

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Judiciary Committee's budget request for the 110th Congress.

I support the budget request that Chairman Conyers has submitted. I share his view that, given its workload, the Judiciary Committee would benefit from the small increase in resources we have requested.

Though the new House leadership's priorities may differ from those pursued in past Congresses, I expect the Judiciary Committee's central role in the major policy deliberations of this body to remain unchanged.

Additional financial resources will enable my Republican colleagues and me to work with the majority to meet our legislative and oversight responsibilities more effectively.

Among the important matters the Committee must consider are ensuring that federal law enforcement agencies have the necessary tools to prevent terrorist attacks; that America's borders are secure; that our nation's children are safe from sexual predators; and that the administration of justice is fair and efficient within our federal judiciary.

These issues are critical to the safety and wellbeing of millions of Americans.

This budget request reflects our shared belief that a highly qualified staff is the cornerstone of the Committee's capacity to consider complicated and often controversial legislation and policy issues that fall within its jurisdiction.

To attract and retain quality staff, the Committee must be able to offer compensation that is at least somewhat competitive with the private sector.

This is particularly challenging when a disproportionate number of committee staff are attorneys with substantial public policy expertise who could command higher salaries from the private sector. I believe these factors justify the salary increases requested in the Judiciary Committee's budget submission.

I am satisfied that this request will continue to allow the minority to control one third of the Committee's budgetary resources for personnel.

While undoubtedly the Chairman and I may differ in our views on policy matters, I hope we can continue to agree on the importance of ensuring that the Judiciary Committee has the necessary resources to represent the views of all Americans.

I yield back the balance of my time

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. And it is good to see the two of you working actively on an active committee, and that you are willing to share your employees to the degree that you can.

I would like to have the Ranking Member make statements because we are on a tight schedule, but I would like to remind you that in spite of the budget constraints that we do have, and you come in first from the baseline of last year's budget, we have only a 2.4 percent increase in your budget at this juncture for inflation, because that is the best we can do, given what we received from the appropriators.

So that is the best that we can do. And if there is anything that comes down the pike, we will certainly look forward to working with you on it.

Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. EHLERS. Very briefly, I just want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for abiding by the two-thirds/one-third split. I personally worked very hard over the past 12 years with Chairman Thomas to achieve that goal, and we want to make sure we maintain it. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. Anyone for comments?

Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Having served on the Judiciary Committee before, and now, I appreciate the one-third split. I recall in the old days it was not that way, and I believe we got 20 percent of staff and 11 percent of the funds.

I wonder, do you have a number of what the ratio of personnel is, staff is, in this request?

Mr. CONYERS. It is in here.

Mr. LUNGREN. I was looking for it. I couldn't find it.

Mr. CONYERS. We have a total number of 86. So it is 51/21—25, excuse me.

Mr. LUNGREN. 51/25. Thank you. I appreciate that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. LOFGREN. Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that the time is short, but I just wanted to say, having been a member of the committee now for 13 years, this is an incredibly hardworking committee.

I think, some weeks, it seems like every bill on the floor has gone through our committee, and especially the salary for the lawyers. I mean, we have kids coming out of law school that are being hired for far in excess of the experienced lawyers that we are trying to hire in the committee. So I think anything we can do today and also, hopefully, in the future would be paid off by good service and oversight; and I am hopeful that we might be able to do that down the line.

I thank the chairperson for recognizing me.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

And I thank the two of you. It has been great seeing both of you so cordial to each other and working so well together in spite of the budget constraints. We appreciate the work that you do, the oversight that you have done; and we thank you so much for your time here with us this morning.

Mr. CONYERS. We hope your confidence in us will continue throughout the 110th Congress.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Indeed, it will. Thank you so much.

The next committee is Financial Services, the Chairman, Mr. Frank, the Ranking Member, Mr. Bachus.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BARNEY FRANK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. FRANK. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for your patience. We know that you were here on time, and we are running a little behind. So thank you so much.

Mr. FRANK. I believe we have submitted the budget request. We sent along, I am told, an iconic copy in a single PDF file. I have no idea what that is, but I am told we submitted it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We have received it.

Mr. FRANK. I have very able people who can do that for me. So there it is.

And don't try to explain it to me, Vern. It will be hopeless.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I know that is right.

Mr. FRANK. We are here with our request. Obviously, I realize you are given a lot more demand than supply, and we certainly understand your difficulties.

Our committee, like many others, has a heavy workload. There have been extraordinary developments in the financial services area—hedge funds, private equity derivatives—plus we inherit, as we take over—as you know, Madam Chair, because you have your own interest here—a serious deficit with regard to affordable housing. And we will be trying to undo a great deal of that.

We are also trying to deal with a long overdue set of problems that remain after the hurricane in the gulf. So that there has been a significant expansion in our workload, and we hope that you will do the best you can in giving us the ability to deal with it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. The ranking member, Mr. Bachus.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. SPENCER BACHUS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Chairman, members of the committee, I fully support the budget request that the chairman has made. As he has said, there are many critical issues that come before the Financial Services Committee. CFIUS will be on the floor today, and we will have Katrina tomorrow.

Our committee is one of the largest in the Congress, and when you actually divide the amount of money per member of the committee, I think ours will be the third from the bottom.

So while I think it is a sufficient amount of money, I certainly don't think it is excessive in any regard.

I will close with that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay, thank you so much. Thanks to both of you.

And you certainly do have critical issues, and I appreciate the work that Financial Services has done. Your committee has worked vehemently with Hurricane Katrina in terms of trying to get that moving, in terms of affordable housing. I am very impressed with

the agenda that the Chairman and the Ranking Member have set forth. We just really are very impressed with your agenda.

Unfortunately, the budget constraints have curbed anything outside of the 2.4 percent increase that we will be giving at this juncture, because we just do not have the money that is necessary to go any higher than that.

Mr. Chairman, you want to make a statement?

Mr. FRANK. I do, Madam Chairman. I was delinquent in not saying this before.

We obviously have needs. Let me underscore one of the things, and I heard you talk about this, and I appreciate that with regard to young people coming out of law school.

I think the greatest bargain the American people get—and they don't understand it—is the willingness of so many talented men and women to work here for less than they can make elsewhere. And I am chagrined at our ability, or inability, to do more.

One of the things I think we should be addressing is, I think the disparity between the people who work very hard on our personal office staffs and the committees, we don't pay either adequately. We pay the personal staff even more inadequately.

I would hope this is something we can address. I am embarrassed to be an exploiter of such talented, hardworking people. The system forces us to do this.

So whatever we can do. And I would make that our highest priority. Don't paint my walls and don't replace my rug, but give those people a raise because they deserve it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I do appreciate that and I could not agree with you more. We do have very, very talented staff that work on these various committees; and the pay is really something that we should be embarrassed by.

Mr. Chairman, I have noted that, and I will talk with the Speaker about that when I talk with her about the various comments.

Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. BACHUS. I would just reiterate what the chairman said. When we recruit staffers, we are recruiting against Wall Street. We are recruiting against top banks. We are recruiting against securities companies, insurance companies. And financial services is actually the largest growth industry in America today. And we are competing against even foreign companies that are hiring a lot of our staffers.

The demand in accounting, in all these fields, is great, so we—most of our staff have offers off the Hill at considerably more money, and——

The CHAIRWOMAN. Indeed.

Mr. BACHUS [continuing]. We are struggling to maintain our expertise.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Ehlers. Comments?

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

On that last point, I think part of the reason for the underpay is that for years Members of Congress have felt—have, in fact, been paid less than they were paid before they got here. I think that just sort of spreads through the system, and it is very unfortunate.

In my opening statement, I emphasized how hard I had worked with Chairman Thomas over the past 12 years to get equity between the committees and establish a two-thirds/one-third ratio. So I am asking the chairman if he plans to continue two-thirds for the majority, one-third for the minority, and if that has all been worked out?

Mr. FRANK. I would say—first, I do want to say, while I am not a deeply religious man, I assume you will be rewarded at some point for having worked closely with Chairman Thomas for that period.

Secondly, we have I think worked in a completely bipartisan way. We have maintained that ratio and we certainly plan to continue to do so.

Mr. BACHUS. Chairman Frank has been exceptionally fair in the process and in the transition. He really helped us to avoid some hardships, and I couldn't be——

Mr. FRANK. Thank you.

Mr. BACHUS [continuing]. More pleased or happy over his chairmanship, unless I was the chairman. That would be the only way I would be happy and content.

Mr. FRANK. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. EHLERS. I just want to say, I enjoyed working with Chairman Thomas. I learned so much from him, both what to do and what not to do. It was a wonderful learning experience because he is a remarkable person.

Last comment, you should not sell yourself short, Chairman Frank. I know that you are a very bright person, and PDF simply means portable document format. It is just a way to send a document from one computer to another computer. Very simple.

Ms. LOFGREN. Designed by Adobe in my district.

Mr. FRANK. I am pleased to know that. And I am confident that for as long as I have to send documents, I will have people to send them. And when I retire no one should expect to get any documents from me.

Mr. EHLERS. Just so you don't have to.

Mr. FRANK. I do want to acknowledge, however, that since 2004, at the insistence of a member of this committee, Mr. Capuano, I do have a cell phone.

Mr. EHLERS. I won't try to explain JPG to you. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Capuano, do you want to say something?

Mr. CAPUANO. Since I have been dragged into this, I would also challenge the chairman to see, if he has a cell phone with him, if it is on.

Mr. FRANK. I do. I do. Here it is.

Mr. CAPUANO. Is it on?

The CHAIRWOMAN. And they have just summoned him to the floor?

Mr. FRANK. No, they don't have the number.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, and thank you for your tolerance.

The next chairman and ranking member we have are from the Homeland Security Committee—the Chairman, Mr. Thompson, and the Ranking Member, Mr. King.

Gentlemen, welcome, and thank you so much for your patience.

Mr. Chairman, as you know by sitting in, knowing the time constraints, we will ask that you summarize your statement and submit your entire statement for the record.

Mr. Chairman, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Millender-McDonald and Ranking Member Ehlers. I would like to thank you and all the members of the committee for allowing me and Representative King to testify on the funding submission for the Committee on Homeland Security.

As you know, our committee is the new kid on the block, having only been permanent, last Congress, to oversee the fledgling Department of Homeland Security. While new, I promise you that we are old beyond our years.

That is because our first year as a permanent committee, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma struck. We found ourselves not only supervising a department struggling to merge 22 agencies, but also watching as it failed in its first significant post-9/11 test.

So we have some challenges, and I would like to say that while I was ranking member, Chairman King afforded me the opportunity to work with him in a very collegial manner. We continue to do so. With the change here in leadership in Congress, we have managed two suspension bills on the floor, one as late as yesterday. We will do a number of other things around the jurisdiction of the committee.

After receiving permanent jurisdiction, I would like to say for the record the two-thirds/one-third ratio will remain in effect. We have worked out all the administrative challenges around that, and as far as our position is concerned, everything is correct.

The challenge we have is, how do we continue to make good policies toward keeping America safe? It is a challenge, to be honest with you. Bad people think 24 hours a day on how they can hurt Americans here in this country, as well as abroad; so we have been challenged.

To that end, while we are not asking for any additional moneys, per se, we did receive authorization from the Speaker to increase the staffing allotment based on previously allocated moneys; and that has been granted. So from our standpoint, we are here asking for the continued support of the committee with a nominal increase for cost of living, salaries, and what have you.

Apart from that, again, we are all very familiar with what we have confronting this committee and this Nation, and we look forward to working in a collegial manner with Chairman King—Ranking Member King.

I just gave you a promotion.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Watch it now.

Mr. THOMPSON. And I will yield if I might to my ranking member for any comments he might have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Thompson follows:]

Statement before
The Committee on House Administration
Chairman Bennie G. Thompson
Committee on Homeland Security
February 28, 2007

- Thank you Chairwoman Millender-McDonald and Ranking Member Ehlers.
- I'd like to thank you and all the Members of the Committee for allowing me and Rep. Peter King to testify on the funding submission for the Committee on Homeland Security.
- As you know, our Committee is the new kid on the block, having only been made permanent last Congress to oversee the fledging Department of Homeland Security.
- While new, I can promise you that we are old beyond our years already.
- That is because in our first year as a permanent Committee, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma struck.
- We found ourselves not only supervising a Department struggling to merge 22 agencies, but also watching as it failed its first significant post-9/11 test.
- As Clark Kent Ervin, the former IG of the Department said in 2005, if "Hurricane Katrina represented a real-life rehearsal of sorts, the response suggested that the nation is not ready to handle a terrorist attack of similar dimensions."
- Clearly, we have our job cut out for us this Congress as we work to improve the Department's homeland security record.
- You will be hearing a lot about "we" from us during our testimony here today. That is because Homeland Security is neither a Republican nor a Democratic issue.
- Terrorists and hurricanes have yet to sort out folks by their political stripe when deciding who to strike.
- Madame Chairwoman, homeland security is an American issue.
- That is why Rep King and I, as well as our respective staff, have and will continue to work together to make our nation a more secure place.
- And why we have co-sponsored H.Res. 191 to cover expenses for the Committee on Homeland Security in the 110th Congress.
- Now, I must admit, I may need some help translating Peter's Long Island brogue into my Mississippi-speak but I think we will be alright at the end of the day. Don't you think so, Peter?
- Our funding resolution seeks $8,132,028 for 2007.
- In 2008, we are requesting $8,379,849. These amounts are necessary to pay salaries for a total of 70 staff, both Majority and Minority combined, and operating expenses for the Full Committee and its six subcommittees.
- Before I continue, I would like to thank Speaker Pelosi for authorizing the hiring of 70 staffers this year.

- Last Congress, your Committee gave us the funds, for the second session of the 109th, for 70 staffers. We appreciated that.
- Unfortunately, the former Speaker never raised our cap above 60, resulting in us having to return a significant amount of money at the end of 2006.
- With Speaker Pelosi's decision to fully staff the Committee, I do not see this being an issue this Congress.
- As such, our request for 2007 reflects less than a three percent increase from our 2006 allocation. The 2008 request represents less than a three percent increase over the 2007 request.
- Most of this increase is for merit pay and COLAs for staff, which I think Rep. King would agree is the "best and brightest" on the Hill.
- Personally, I'm proud to say that the Majority Committee staff I have assembled is one of the most diverse, if not the MOST diverse, in the House.
- In addition to providing for our staff, the funding resolution assures that they have access to reliable and cutting-edge equipment and technology.
- The increase also contemplates that the Committee will travel more this Congress.
- We are planning to hold a number of field hearings and investigative inquiries throughout the country on homeland security.
- The nature of homeland security, after all, is a local matter affecting all our communities in different ways.
- A one size fits all approach to security simply will not do.
- We must be able to understand and explain such diverse things as:
    - security at the Port of Long Beach;
    - the necessity of an intelligence fusion center in Denver;
    - border security efforts in Laredo, Texas AND Buffalo, New York;
    - immigration enforcement actions in Kansas City meatpacking plants;
    - the protection of subways and commuter rails in New York City and Washington, DC;
    - safeguards at chemical plants in New Jersey and Houston; AND
    - the performance of FEMA in Mississippi and Louisiana.
- I know my time is short so I will end by pointing out that the first bill passed by the House this year was H.R. 1 -- legislation to implement the 9/11 recommendations.
- That is an indication of the importance of the Committee's work. It is not the end of what we hope to do this Congress, but the beginning.
- I hope you will support our request.
- Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. PETER KING, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. KING. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I want to thank Chairman Thompson for his statement. I concur with everything that was said. And I particularly appreciate his reaffirmance of the two-thirds/one-third ratio and emphasize again the bipartisan manner in which our committee has worked.

And I know, when Ms. Lofgren and Mr. Lungren served on the committee, we did last year pass bipartisan port security legislation, chemical plant legislation, restructuring of FEMA, and worked together on many issues.

And Chairman Thompson is now beginning a very extensive set of hearings on rail and transit security funding. So, again, the allocation of resources I believe is money well spent. It is—we are attempting to deal with an enemy which is anywhere, everywhere, and as Chairman Thompson says, works 24 hours a day.

So I again thank Chairman Thompson for his cooperation and thank this committee for its indulgence. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And I thank the two of you, because as the chairman has said, and you have reiterated, Mr. Ranking Member, you do have a challenging committee. The challenges are vast, and trying to penetrate those persons whom we really don't know, but we know what they will do and how they will do it, is really quite critical.

[The statement of Mr. King follows:]

Statement before the Committee on House Administration
Ranking Member Peter T. King
Committee on Homeland Security
February 28, 2007

- Thank you Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers, and to all the other Members of the Committee for allowing me to join Chairman Thompson today and testify in support of the funding submission for the Committee on Homeland Security.
- As my friend, Chairman Thompson has pointed out, the Committee on Homeland Security, while a relatively new committee, has already compiled a strong track record of bipartisan achievement.
- During the 109th Congress, the Committee engaged in vigorous oversight of the Department of Homeland Security, and was able to move a number of important bills through the legislative process and see them signed

into law. The Committee's legislative accomplishments include measures to secure our ports and borders, reform FEMA, and provide for the security of high risk chemical facilities.

- Of course, in each instance, we were pleased to work with, then Ranking Member Thompson, and our Democrat colleagues to develop bipartisan solutions to these pressing issues. As Chairman Thompson indicated during his statement, such cooperation has been a hallmark of this Committee, and I know that he intends to continue in that tradition.
- While we have accomplished much as a Committee, our work is certainly not done, and many challenges remain. The Committee on Homeland Security will continue to

have a critical role to play as our nation struggles with the threat of terrorism.

- I was disappointed, as I'm sure Chairman Thompson was as well, that more was not done at the start of this Congress to implement the 9/11 Commission's recommendation to consolidate and further refine the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security in a way that would have provided for more streamlined oversight and effective legislative authority.
- The Republicans began this process by creating the Committee on Homeland Security at the start of the 109th Congress, but the experience of the past two years showed clearly that further revisions to Rule X were necessary.

- Unfortunately, nothing was done to complete the implementation of this recommendation, and now, just 2 months into the new Congress, we're already encountering the counterproductive overlaps in jurisdiction that plagued us in the past.
- Democrat leadership missed a golden opportunity to improve the operation of the House and provide clear lines of authority over DHS and homeland security generally. Having said that, I am committed to work with Chairman Thompson in playing the jurisdictional hand we've been dealt.
- As Chairman Thompson has stated, the members of this Committee will continue to work together to make our nation more secure.

- I want to express my support for H.Res. 191, which will provide funding to cover expenses for the Committee on Homeland Security in the 110th Congress, and agree that the modest budget increases included in that measure are necessary to pay operating costs, including salaries for our outstanding professional staff.
- Like Chairman Thompson, I am pleased to see the authorization for additional staff. With these additional human resources, Chairman Thompson and I can pick up where we left off last Congress in pursuing important issues that we hope will lead to improved performance by DHS and enhanced security for our citizens. The additional staff will be necessary to expand the scope of our activities and continue the broad array of oversight activities the Committee has traditionally conducted.

- Hopefully, we will also be able to secure some additional physical office space to accommodate the added staff, since our current offices are already at or over capacity.
- Finally, I am pleased that, with respect to our ongoing operations, I have assurances from my friend, Chairman Thompson, that the Committee will continue to share resources and personnel along the same 2/3 to the majority, 1/3 to the minority split that has been our long-standing practice.
- I look forward to working with Chairman Thompson on a bipartisan basis, and I support the Committee expense resolution to provide funding for the critical work of this Committee.
- Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. It is good to see the collegiality between the two of you, and that spreads into your committee. And that is very good. We are happy that you are considerate of the budget constraints that we have given this year. And so we appreciate that as well.

I am happy that the Speaker was able to grant that staff allotment, and we hope that will work and help in some way. So we appreciate the two of you and the leadership that you are providing and the work that you are doing.

Now I will turn to the Ranking Member for comments.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Very briefly, first of all, I want to thank you for the commitment to the two-thirds/one-third ratio.

This committee worked very, very hard over the past 12 years, particularly the first 6 years after the Republicans took over, to achieve that form of equity. It had been very inequitable before, and this committee wants to make sure we maintain that particular equitable standard. I appreciate your commitment to that.

The other comment is, I think it is unfortunate that we don't have additional funds available. You may have heard my comments earlier about the Foreign Affairs Committee also deserving some additional funds—of those few additional funds that are being given to the Armed Services Committee; and I really think that your committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee also are extremely important and deserve recognition for that, too.

In particular, I think your committee has more necessary oversight responsibilities than almost any committee in the Congress because of the newness of the department. You mentioned some obvious failures. I think there are a number of other failures, and clearly you need the funds to do good oversight. It is not easy to do oversight, but clearly you need it.

Thank you for what you are doing and I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ranking Member.

Other members?

Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Chairwoman, just very briefly, I have had the privilege of serving on this committee since its inception, which has been a terrific honor. The chairman has done just a fabulous job, and the ranking member and he are coordinating, as you can see. It is really something Americans can be proud of. But I wanted to mention also just the outstanding staff that has been recruited.

I see the staff director, Jessica Herrera, there, but really every member of the staff, both majority and minority, is highly professional; and if we have an opportunity to keep them through salary augmentation at a later date, the country will be well rewarded for that. It is really a credit to both of you that you have been able to attract and keep some of such really high-quality people.

And I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. THOMPSON. As a comment, Madam Chairman, I think Ranking Member King and I hear from people outside of Capitol Hill that very comment. They appreciate the outreach our staff is making toward coming up with best technologies and other things. And so, it is a struggle to keep good people. Talent anywhere is highly sought after, and unless we can keep salaries and benefits competi-

tive to some degree, we stand the risk of losing good people because of that.

Mr. KING. I shouldn't say this with the people in the room, but the fact is, probably most of these people could leave tomorrow and go to the private sector and do far better, because homeland security is obviously an area where the private sector is looking for talented people.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Your thoughts have been reiterated by several chairpersons and ranking members, and we know the key to the success of any of our committees are those staffpersons who give so much and get so little. And so perhaps that is something that we will look into as we move on through this 110th Congress.

Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. I am proud to serve on this committee and I noted the comments that we had from the folks from International Relations, or Foreign Affairs, about consolidation of offices. I would just like the record to suggest we didn't even have offices for this committee for some months. We then had offices that were over in the third Library of Congress building. We then moved over to the Ford Building. We did not have an anteroom to our hearing room until just 2 months before we lost our majority. But we fixed them up very nice for the chairman who now enjoys them.

And so this committee staff has been working under some stresses and strains that others don't, just because of the nature of the newness of the committee.

Secondly, we have done a very good job in the area of aviation safety, port security. We, working with the now-chairman, produced a very good bill in terms of trucker safety.

We need to do a lot more in cybersecurity. We need to do a lot more with trains and mass transit. And we need to retain and attract staffers who have expertise in these areas, Madam Chair.

And so I would echo what has been said about the need to look at this committee maybe a little differently than others next year, when we have a little bit more money, because it had to get on its feet. It is on its feet now, but we find that the challenges are even beyond what we have already addressed, and it is very difficult.

I know there was talk about financial services being the area of tremendous expansion. Homeland security is an area of tremendous expansion, and we are competing very much right now with the outside to get good people.

So I understand the constraints we are under, but I hope this committee will seriously look at the Homeland Security Committee next year because of the unique nature of its needs. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Your thoughts are well taken, Mr. Lungren, and as we look at fiscal year 2008 we certainly will look into those things. We have heard from the chairpersons and the ranking members, and I have noted all of those. Surely a new committee, subjected to moving from one place to the other, is not conducive to productivity; and yes, they have been so productive in what they have done.

We thank you so much for your time and your tolerance and look forward to working with you as the year progresses.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I would like to just—has Ms. Lofgren left? She had mentioned how many committees were fully equipped and wired, and of the 21 committees that we have, 13 have been wired and fully equipped—or 12½, if you will, because Agriculture is on its way; we are now in the process of wiring it. But once we have done Agriculture, we will have 13 of 21 fully wired for Internet broadcasting.

So we are very pleased with that, given we are just into the 110th Congress. So we thank the Superintendent and all of those who have made that happen.

Now we have the next committee chairperson in the name of Transportation and Infrastructure, my chairman and ranking member. Welcome, Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica. And I say that because I sit on this Committee and am proud to be a Member on this panel.

Good morning to both of you, and thank you so much for your tolerance.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. OBERSTAR. Good morning, Madam Chair and members on both sides, Mr. Ehlers and Mr. Lungren, Mr. Capuano. We appreciate very much this annual opportunity to come and present our case and advocate for the budget that our committee justly needs.

You have before you our submission of documentation for our personnel compensation, our total budget request, our equipment, travel, oversight plan. And we have no plans yet for detailees, so that was left blank.

We have a full agenda of work to accomplish in this Congress, a good deal of which was left over from the last Congress. By that, I mean bills that were bipartisan in nature that had either been reported from committee or passed the House, had gone to the Senate, had not been acted on or went to conference on which conference was not concluded. So we are recapturing those issues and bringing them back with every full intention to move that legislation.

Now the House has been in session 19 days since this 110th Congress organized. Our committee has had 12 hearings, 3 markups in subcommittee and full committee; has reported 15 bills—6 have passed the House, 3 more likely to come next week. I learned this morning from our majority leader that he has agreed to our request to bring up the three water-related bills that we have reported from committee, combined sewer overflow, sanitary sewer overflow and the State revolving loan fund legislation, all of which have languished for quite some time even though they have had bipartisan support in the committee. So we look forward to moving that legislation.

We have the major reauthorization of FAA, the Coast Guard—and that will be about a $14–16 billion bill—the Coast Guard reauthorization, which runs in the range of $8 billion. We will deal with Amtrak reauthorization.

We will have a number of oversight hearings, very—all of which are listed in our oversight plans submitted to this committee for your consideration.

We have proposed a budget that stands with the practice of the past 12 years that minority is guaranteed one-third of the funding; and while we will not have a separate minority travel budget, we will continue the practice of the last 12 years to meet every request. As we were given that full consideration in the minority, we will continue that practice in the 110th Congress. We were satisfied with that approach.

We are satisfied with the budget that was submitted in the past 12 years. This budget has been developed in full coordination with the minority staff and in conversation with Mr. Mica and myself, and I submit our plan for your consideration. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And indeed you have an ambitious agenda ahead of you that you have already started on—12 hearings, 3 markups, 15 bills, 6 of which passed on the House floor and 3 still to come. That is quite an ambitious agenda, along with the major FAA legislation and—well, I have port security here because that is a very critical issue for me—but Amtrak and Coast Guard. So, you do have a very ambitious committee.

Your committee is the largest committee; am I correct?

Mr. OBERSTAR. It is the largest committee in the House.

The CHAIRWOMAN. That is what I thought. Fine.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Ranking Member, Mr. Mica.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN L. MICA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. MICA. Well, thank you, and congratulations, Chairwoman Millender-McDonald——

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. MICA [continuing]. On your important responsibilities in chairing House Administration. I have worked with you in the past in both your service here and on the Transportation Committee.

Mr. Ehlers and other members here, I have a lengthy statement. Having served I think half—over half of my legislative career on House Administration, I am going to submit this——

The CHAIRWOMAN. We thank you very much.

Mr. MICA [continuing]. For the record.

But you do have an important role, and it is important that the money that the committees spend go through this process. And people on the outside don't see this, but it is an important role of House Administration to conduct oversight and hearings and review even the expenditures of the committees in Congress.

This is a bipartisan proposal before you. It does have some modest increases, which will help us; and that is the challenge we face right now, keeping good folks on the committee and in the Congress in service. And we may have to look at that because it is getting harder and harder to retain those folks when they can go out and make double the salary almost instantaneously.

But, again, I compliment you on your good work. I will submit this, and I am pleased to be on this side of the table as the ranking member of Transportation. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Mica follows:]

Hon. John L. Mica
Ranking Republican Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Before the
Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2007
1310 Longworth Building
10:00 am

- Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you with Chairman Oberstar in full support of the Committee's budget request for the 110th Congress.

- I congratulate Madam Chairman Millender-McDonald on her new position and I look forward to working with you and Ranking Member Ehlers on this budget request.

- I also look forward to working with you on matters before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

- I also want to thank Jim Oberstar for his support in developing this bipartisan budget.

- I strongly support our budget request which is a modest increase over the funding request for the 109th Congress.

- Most of the budget is for staff salaries and the increase will be used to pay for cost of living increases, merit increases, and equipment replacement and upgrades to keep pace with technology.

- In order to conduct proper oversight we are also requesting funds for field hearings and for site visits in areas appropriate to our jurisdiction.

I am pleased that we continue to have the bipartisan 2/3—1/3 split for funding staff. I also anticipate a fair share of resources for Committee travel and necessary equipment.

- We have very important legislative responsibilities for this Congress and will need adequate funding to carry them out.

- High on our priority list is the reauthorization of FAA's grants-in-aid to airports and modernization off the National Airspace System.

- SAFETEA:LU expires in 2009. We will lay the groundwork for reauthorizing these programs in this Congress

- We have begun work on a new Water Resources Development Act bill to authorize Corps of Engineers' projects, and enact laws to help finance wastewater infrastructure projects.

Another important area is railroads. Continued oversight of AMTRAK, legislation to encourage high speed rail projects, and rail safety are important matters before us.

- The next two years, I expect to be very busy and productive. We ask that you take this into account as you consider the additional resources that the Committee requires as the largest Committee in the 110th Congress.

- Again thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you both. I have a great deal of admiration for both of you, and as I sit on this side, I still know that I am part of that panel and will come to you for those things that I need as well.

I thank you so much for the two-thirds/one-third agreement that you have put together and have agreed on, as well as the fact that we know that many committee chairs and ranking members have come to us saying that good staff is hard to find or to keep. We do recognize that, and in the very intolerable climate we find ourselves in, in terms of budget constraints, we are going to look at that. I will speak to the Speaker about this because so many of you have come before us today, to talk about good staff and how we are losing them because of salary competitiveness.

Your words and your comments have been well received.

You do know that because of budget constraints we can only go to a 2.4 percent increase, due to not having a budget last year; so we had to come in from the baseline of last year's budget and just increase that modest 2.4 percent for inflation. We appreciate your tolerance on that. If we could do more, we would have done more.

The fiscal year 2008 budget might present—and I think will present—as Mr. Lungren has asked that we look into with reference to staff increased salaries. So we will look at all of this as we move into that fiscal year 2008 budget.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Now the ranking member.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair, just very briefly I want to recognize the excellence of the committee and the excellence of the leadership, and I may be partial to this because I have been on that committee every second I have been in this Congress. It is a unique committee in two ways. It is almost entirely a bipartisan committee, it has a long history of bipartisanship, very few political squabbles. And secondly, it is the only committee I know of—I may be mistaken on this, but even though it is an authorizing committee, essentially functions as an appropriations committee on a major share of the budget when we are dealing with the surface transportation bill, for example, which is an excruciatingly difficult bill to put together. We are basically acting as appropriators in terms of allocating the money, and Mr. Oberstar has been a veteran of doing this many times. In terms of the size of the committee, if we increase it much more, it will be as large as the Senate, but even if we do that I think it will still be a lot more efficient.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Yes.

Mr. EHLERS. So I commend the committee for what they have done. I also appreciate the two-third/one-third commitment. This committee worked extremely hard to establish that over the past 12 years, and we certainly want to see that continue.

With that, I will yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member. And I agree with you. You and I both serve on that committee still and so I agree with you that it is really one of the most talented teams we have around here, and they helped me get my teeth into all of this when I came in as a freshman member and went right to the Transportation Committee. They were so helpful in providing me

with some of those things I could take back to the district and brag about.

Are there any other comments from any committee members? Mr. Gonzalez?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I just quickly wanted to acknowledge the leadership role Mr. Oberstar has played in that particular committee and commend you. I think of all the committees in my years in Congress, the most responsive has been the Committee on Transportation and especially on railroad prices and safety in San Antonio. Again, I surely want to make sure that you have adequate funding so that you hold that hearing that is scheduled in San Antonio in the month of March.

Mr. OBERSTAR. We will do that.

Mr. GONZALEZ. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you so much. I just want to say as the ranking member talked about how hard this committee worked to make sure there was a one-third/two-third ratio that prevailed with this committee, its predecessor committee back in the 103rd Congress before there was the changeover. So I recall serving that Judiciary Committee where frankly we got 11 percent of the budget and that was extremely difficult, and we looked longingly at the Transportation—well, I think it was called the Public Works Committee at the time—for the fairness of the treatment there. And it is an important thing whether you are Democrat or Republican to understand that you ought to allow the minority to have sufficient funds and sufficient staff so that they can make a real contribution to the work of the subcommittees and the committees, and this committee didn't have to wait for a turnover and the big change that was pushed by this committee before they did it, and I am pleased to see that you are continuing to do that. And thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. And Mr. Capuano, did you want to make?

Mr. CAPUANO. Thank you. No questions from me.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Just roads and bridges and harbors.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We thank you so much for coming before us. It is good to see you and continue the good work that you do. When you see my seat empty, it is because I am here trying to do the House business, but I shall be there whenever the time permits. Thanks again so much for your tolerance and understanding of budget constraints and hopefully we can do better.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, members.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, committee members, it seems that we have come to kind of a lull here before the next group of our chairpersons arrive. So we are going to recess for a while. With unanimous consent, we will recess the Committee until around 11:15 when the other set of members will be coming through. It will be about 11:15 when they arrive so with unanimous consent we will recess the Committee until then. We will see you at 11:15. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:40 a.m., the committee was recessed, to reconvene at 11:15 a.m., this same day.]

[11:22 a.m.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. Good morning. We will reconvene the Committee now to further hear from the chairpersons and ranking members who come before us this morning. We appreciate your coming before us to outline your budget and your very ambitious agendas that we have seen and have been impressed by. We have before us at this juncture the Armed Services Committee Chair and Ranking Member and, gentlemen, welcome. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Skelton, you may get started.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Mr. SKELTON. Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here with my companion Duncan Hunter, former chairman and now ranking member, and we are here on a bipartisan basis, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member, and we appreciate this opportunity to appear before you and the other members of your committee. Over the course of the 110th Congress, we are requesting for our committee budget purpose $7 million in 2007 and $8.6 million in 2008. Now, this does represent a significant increase if we were to receive it. Nevertheless, we would still be around with six other committees ahead of us with dollars. And I would like to point out, Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Ehlers, that we authorize on a yearly basis over 50 percent of the discretionary portion of the entire Federal budget plus some mandatory spending in addition thereto.

I look back, I have had the privilege of being in Congress now a good number of years, and I remember very well during the Les Aspin era when he was the Armed Services Committee chairman and at that time there was a good deal of oversight and analytical work running up to the Gulf War, 1990, 1991, and the committee staff at that time numbered 82. We are seeking to bring the staff numbers back at the end of this Congress to the level of 83 staff members, which still would leave us far below the staff members of other committees. Today our staff is at 67, increased modestly over the last two Congresses from 60 to 67. May I also point out that we have re-established the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, and we have staffed that out of hide. And when Chairman Hunter expanded one subcommittee in 2003, the committee was granted four additional staff for that, and thus far we have just staffed the new Armed Services Investigative Subcommittee just out of hide and it is quite difficult.

Now, we have a nonpartisan staff. However, we have increased the dedicated staff for the minority from 11 to 14. However, we all work very well together. You can't tell one from the other, and it is working very, very well. All committee operations, pay, equipment, travel, training, equipment, office space, everyone is treated in the same manner, and it worked well when he was chairman; and now that I am chairman.

The only other thing I wish to point out, we have some real professionals on our staff that are very, very knowledgeable and very, very good at their specialty. No one can be a specialist—excuse me—specialize in everything regarding the military and I just can't tell you the caliber we seek and that we need, and I must tell you, you have to pay them to do this. And a good number of very able

folks, because it is a public service fortunately for us, will take a pay decrease to come to join us. Nevertheless, we still have to pay them top dollar to get them. And that is why I am hoping that we can seek one more staff person this 2007 because the continuing resolution, we are somewhat limited there, but bring it up to a total of 83 in the next year, 2008. And frankly, we need them, and we are not here to have any gravy. It is all meat and potatoes. It is all the real stuff.

So I would ask my cohort Duncan Hunter to follow through.

[The statement of Mr. Skelton follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE IKE SKELTON
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

February 28, 2007

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Ehlers, and distinguished members of the committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to present the Committee on Armed Services' funding resolution for the 110th Congress. My friend and the committee's Ranking Minority Member, Mr. Duncan Hunter, joins me today in presenting our request.

The budget submission provides significant detail, so I will touch only on the highlights.

Our budget request for the 110th Congress is roughly $15.5 million – $6.8 million for 2007 and $8.6 million for 2008 – a 20.6 percent increase above the committee's authorized funding level of $12.8 million for the 109th Congress. While this represents a significant increase from our budget today, I would ask you to consider this: If you were to approve this request for the 110th Congress, the Armed Services Committee would still rank lower than the spending levels of six other committees in the ***109th Congress***, despite having far more members than all but two other committees and overseeing our military at war.

The committee's budget proposal is predicated on the need to significantly expand the committee's oversight activities. The Armed Services Committee's responsibilities – including jurisdiction over the activities of the Department of Defense, ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Department of Energy's atomic energy defense activities – regularly

result in the committee authorizing over 50 percent of the discretionary portion of the entire Federal budget. For the next fiscal year, the President has requested $623 billion for the Department of Defense alone, an increase of 4.6 percent over the current spending level. Of that total, about $142 billion is requested to fund continuing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We also ensure that our military has the right people, equipment, and investments to deter and if necessary to win the next conflict wherever that is.

The committee has outlined its expanded agenda for reviewing this request and its associated activities in our Oversight Plan for the 110th Congress, and we will carry out this plan through an enlarged committee structure that includes a reconstituted subcommittee devoted to oversight and investigations.

This is a huge mandate and, because of that, 60 of our colleagues have chosen to serve with us – making the Armed Services Committee one of the largest committees in the House. At the same time, its relative level of resources – both in terms of staff positions and funding allocated to the committee – does not fully reflect its responsibilities.

Understanding the limitations imposed on committee funding by the Continuing Resolution for Fiscal Year 2007, the committee is requesting only one additional staff position in 2007. Within our budget request, funding for staffing in 2007 will increase by 13 percent to attract and retain critical staff and to fill all available staff positions allocated to the committee. The committee will accommodate this increase within our request for a $350,000 increase in

2007 and by redirecting funds from other budget categories. However, the committee's budget does not contain sufficient resources to provide for a cost of living increase in 2007.

On the whole, Armed Services Committee staff salaries have remained below the House committee average for over a decade. This budget does make possible an increase in the committee's average salary to a level consistent with other committees, closing this long-standing gap that has made staff recruiting and retention difficult. During the 109th Congress, our committee was seventh from the bottom of all House committees in the ratio of funding per staff member. Armed Services Committee professional staff members are each highly skilled in a particular aspect of our nation's security activities and all must obtain and maintain security clearances. Attracting and retaining these skilled professionals is a significant challenge.

While the committee's jurisdiction is as wide and expansive as virtually any other House committee, we believe the committee should be allocated resources commensurate with its responsibilities. Armed Services Committee staffing increased from 60 to 67 positions in the last two congresses. Yet only two other committees have a smaller ratio of staff to committee members (Small Business and Financial Services). The Armed Services Committee ranked twelfth in overall funding during the 109th Congress. And between the 104th and 109th Congresses, our committee experienced the smallest amount of funding growth in comparison to all but two other committees (Budget and Appropriations). Eight other committees grew over twice as much as did the Armed Services Committee during this same period.

In 2007, the committee will be faced with staffing an additional subcommittee, and expanding oversight of the war and of the full range of national security activities, with virtually the same number of staff as it relied on throughout the 109th Congress. In the 108th Congress, when then Chairman Hunter added an additional subcommittee, four additional staff positions were granted. Our new Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, with its planned projects for this Congress, requires more staff. As the Armed Services Committee has 62 members and seven subcommittees, providing support to both sides of the aisle simply requires more resources.

For 2008, the committee is requesting fifteen additional staff positions to fully accomplish our expanded oversight responsibilities. This would return the committee to the staffing allocation it had during the 103rd Congress (82 positions) when, under Chairman Les Aspin, the Armed Services Committee was known for its oversight and analytical work in the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War. These new positions will be fairly allocated between the majority and minority.

Our request for salary funding in 2008 is 26 percent greater than our salary budget for 2007. This increase includes a cost of living adjustment for staff in 2008 as well as appropriate selective merit increases necessary to retain the technical expertise essential to the successful operation of the committee.

The committee's budget request also contains sufficient resources to meet the information technology needs of our highly skilled staff. Our equipment purchases will hold

steady the average age of a committee workstation. We will be working with House Information Resources (HIR) to migrate our network to the Active Directories backbone that has been established by the House. We will continue working with HIR to take full advantage of the remote operating location to establish off-site storage and remote access options to enhance continuity of operations. And, we will be seeking to stream video of our hearings over the Internet in addition to our current capability to webcast audio.

As you know, the Armed Services Committee operates with an essentially nonpartisan staff, within which Mr. Hunter maintains control over fourteen slots. For purposes of all committee operations – pay, equipment, travel, training, supplies, office space, parking, etc. – Mr. Hunter's staff is treated in exactly the same manner as the rest of the staff. And our staff works together on most matters, including preparing this budget request. We have retained a large number of the staff members from the 109th Congress in our staff for the 110th Congress. Virtually every matter that comes before our committee is handled in a nonpartisan manner – when it comes to the welfare of the men and women we send into combat or to the wise expenditure of taxpayer dollars, we are focused on the national interest, not on partisan advantage.

The committee has long been accustomed to doing more with less. As a bipartisan team, our staff helps us produce a National Defense Authorization bill that can be signed by the President each year, a tradition I intend continue that dates back to the mid-1970s when we first began passing consolidated defense bills.

In summary, the committee's request for the 110th Congress reflects a level of resources that I believe is necessary to perform our oversight mission, allowing the committee to attract and retain the skilled staff required to do the job. As noted above, the committee has traditionally maintained one of the smallest staffs in the House relative to its extensive jurisdiction, broad oversight responsibilities and committee size. And the committee has historically managed its resources wisely, a tradition I intend to continue under my leadership.

Although he will certainly speak for himself, Mr. Hunter has assured me that he supports the request before you today.

Ms. Chairwoman, I look forward to working with you in my new capacity as the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and your support of this request is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before your committee today and I stand ready to answer any questions you might have.

COMMITTEE RESOURCE COMPARISONS
109th Congress

Committee	Funding ($M)	Funding Rank (High to Low)	104th-109th (% Change)	Growth Rank (Low to High)	Members	Staff	Ratio of Staff to Members	Staff to Member Rank (Low to High)	Ratio of Funding to Staff ($K)	Funding to Staff Rank (Low to High)
Appropriations*	50.6	1	2.6%	2	66	166	2.515	18	305	20
Government Reform	20.5	2	21.3%	9	41	121	2.951	20	169	2
E&C	19.9	3	16.4%	5	57	99	1.737	12	201	10
T&I	18.1	4	33.1%	16	75	84	1.120	5	215	14
Ways and Means	17.8	5	39.1%	17	41	94	2.293	17	189	6
International Relations	16.3	6	30.4%	15	50	95	1.900	13	172	3
E&W	15.5	7	29.2%	14	49	77	1.571	11	201	11
Judiciary	15.3	8	27.5%	13	40	79	1.975	15	194	8
Financial Services	15.2	9	40.7%	18	70	69	0.986	2	220	16
Resources	14.5	10	20.8%	8	49	64	1.306	9	227	18
Homeland Security	14	11	-		34	66	1.941	14	212	13
HASC	12.8	12	12.3%	3	62	67	1.081	3	191	7
Science	12.3	13	17.1%	6	44	62	1.409	10	198	9
Budget	12	14	-3.2%	1	39	47	1.205	8	255	19
Agriculture	11.3	15	21.5%	10	46	52	1.130	6	217	15
House Administration	9.6	16	24.7%	12	9	65	7.222	21	148	1
Intelligence	9.5	17	66.7%	19	20	42	2.100	16	226	17
Veterans	6.5	18	22.6%	11	29	32	1.103	4	203	12
Rules	6.4	19	16.4%	4	13	37	2.846	19	173	4
Small Business	5.6	20	19.1%	7	33	32	0.970	1	175	5
Standards	4.3	21	72.0%	20	10	12	1.200	7	358	21

*FY vs. Calendar Year Funds

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DUNCAN HUNTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman and Mr. Ehlers and my good friend Susan Davis, who I know will give a good plug for us as a member of the Armed Services Committee. I want to just join Ike, Mr. Skelton, my great friend, and we are partners in this endeavor to protect our country, and we have an extremely bipartisan committee. When partisan issues come up and you see us on the House floor on some of the national issues, we arm wrestle. On the other hand, we resolve back into our committee to find common ground, to protect our troops, to give them what they need for quality of life, to make sure they have the equipment for their mission. And it is a lot of work, and we have now—we have always had a major budget.

Mr. Skelton, Chairman Skelton talked about this big piece of the discretionary budget. It really is the majority of the discretionary budget and now bigger and now more complex because of the two war fighting theaters in Iraq and Afghanistan and the global war against terror. And against that backdrop, we have this great team of professionals, many of whom have continued in service for a number of years whose average salary is less than most of the professionals in the committees on Capitol Hill, and we have the lowest number of staff in proportion to the size of our committee and certainly in proportion to our budget authority. I think that we have a lower number of staff members than almost any committee in the House. I believe Financial Services and Small Business may have a lower ratio, but they are the only two. So we have enormous work in front of us, and we need the extra—I totally support Chairman Skelton's request for additional money and for additional staff members. We have an enormous oversight burden, and you know, we have lots of issues, and we send—our people get into these issues. And they get into issues on force levels and on being able to protect our troops, equipment systems that are extremely complicated.

So we have got a lot of work to do, and we have wonderful folks helping us. So I think if there was ever a time in history when the Armed Services Committee needed more resources, this is it.

So let me just add my thanks for having us before you, and I strongly support all of Chairman Skelton's requests, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Hunter follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DUNCAN HUNTER
RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

February 28, 2007

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Ehlers, and distinguished members of the committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to support Chairman Skelton and the Committee on Armed Services' funding request for the 110th Congress.

Our budget request for the 110th Congress is roughly $15.5 million – $6.8 million for 2007 and $8.6 million for 2008 – a 20.6 percent increase above the committee's authorized funding level of $12.8 million for the 109th Congress. This request represents a significant increase from the 109th Congress and is justified for the following reasons.

First, we are a country at war. Overseeing the Department of Defense during this important period of our nation's history requires a significant investment of time and effort from both our members and our staff.

Second, the new majority has expanded the number of subcommittees to seven which creates a capacity requirement above our current staffing level.

Third, to faithfully discharge the committee's constitutional responsibility requires highly skilled professionals, able to obtain and maintain security clearances, with competencies across the broad range of Department of Defense and Department of Energy issues. On the whole,

Armed Services Committee staff salaries have remained below the House committee average for over a decade. Attracting and retaining these skilled professionals is a significant challenge. Overall this budget does make possible a continuation of this committee's efforts during the 109th Congress to increase the average salary to a level consistent with other committees.

To put this all into perspective, the Armed Services Committee's responsibilities include jurisdiction over the activities and policies of the Department of Defense, ensuring that our military has the right people, equipment, and investments to deter and if necessary to win the next conflict as well as the ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Department of Energy's atomic energy defense activities. This committee is responsible for authorizing over 50 percent of the discretionary portion of the entire Federal Budget. For Fiscal Year 2008, the President has requested $623 billion for the Department of Defense. Of that total, about $142 billion is requested to fund continuing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Armed Service Committee with 62 members is one of the largest committees in the House. With 67 staff positions, only two other committees have a smaller ratio of staff to committee members (Small Business and Financial Services). However, considering the enormity of our responsibilities, the Armed Services Committee ranked twelfth in overall funding during the 109th Congress. And between the 104th and 109th Congresses, our committee experienced the smallest amount of funding growth in comparison to all but two other committees (Budget and Appropriations). Eight other committees grew over twice as much as did the Armed Services Committee during this same period.

Our 2007 budget request will increase funding by 13 percent to attract and retain critical staff and to fill all available staff positions allocated to the committee while cutting most other budget items in materials and services. The 2007 request also reflects an increase of four staff positions. We have agreed that the first three positions will go to the majority, and therefore the remaining position is for the minority. However, I am concerned that this budget does not contain sufficient resources to provide for a cost of living increase during 2007, and this may have a detrimental impact on retaining existing competent staff.

Our request for salary funding in 2008 is 26 percent greater than our salary budget for 2007. This increase includes a cost of living adjustment for staff in 2008 as well as appropriate selective merit increases necessary to retain the technical expertise essential to the successful operation of the committee. The committee is requesting fifteen additional staff positions to fully accomplish our expanded oversight responsibilities. These new positions will be allocated in a ratio of two majority positions for every one minority position. The committee's budget request also contains sufficient resources to meet the information technology needs of our highly skilled staff and committee operations.

As has been the long standing tradition of the Armed Services Committee, we operate with an essentially nonpartisan staff. The minority now maintains control over fourteen staff positions. In all areas of operation including pay, equipment, travel, training, supplies, office space and parking, majority and minority staff are treated in the same manner. We are pleased to note that Chairman Skelton has chosen to retain most of the highly talented staff members from

the 109th Congress. I look forward to continuing the tradition of bi-partisan cooperation as we focus on the welfare of the men and women in uniform and the national security of our nation.

I ask you to support the Armed Services Committee funding request. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before your committee today and I stand ready to answer any questions you might have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you both so much, and thank you for the enormous work that you do on Armed Services. The threats that we have around the globe, the threats that we have right here at home certainly signify the great need for what you have come before us with. When the Chairman came to me and asked for extra slots as well as an increase, I found that to be something worthy of conferring with the Speaker on, and the Speaker has consented to that.

Now you are today at 67 staff positions, and you are trying to increase that to 83 staff positions, am I correct, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. SKELTON. Next year, yes. We would ask for one this year, and we will increase up to 83 next year. Yes, ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay. Fine. And the nonpartisan aspects of this—what is the ratio, did you say 11 to 14?

Mr. SKELTON. Dedicated minority. Although they act like they are—everybody owns everybody in reality, but dedicated to minority is 14, that is correct.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay. Well, one thing is for sure, when you get into the crux of the problems that you guys have in this committee, there should be no partisanship in my opinion because we are all trying to see where the threats are and trying to see what we can do to eradicate those who are threatening this country and, in fact, the world and so we are clear on that.

Now, I do know that the Committee has gotten the $500,000 increase that the Speaker had suggested that she would give, and that is to further your needs.

Mr. SKELTON. That would be for this year. Yes, ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am told that moving forward, that would go on ad infinitum. So that is something that we really do anticipate, given the fact that you have this oversight, you have re-established the Oversight and Investigatory Subcommittee.

Mr. SKELTON. Yes. And Marty Meehan is the chairman of that subcommittee and it proves to be a very active one, and we have just taken the staffing out of hide for him.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay. And the two-third/one-third ratio, you are committed to the degree that you can with the other things that are working here that you have to deal with, two-third/one-third commitment?

Mr. SKELTON. Not quite.

Mr. HUNTER. We actually operate on what we call our—have always had as our nonpartisan/bipartisan basis.

The CHAIRWOMAN. But both of you are agreeable to whatever that——

Mr. SKELTON. Yes.

The CHAIRWOMAN [continuing]. That scenario is, you are amenable to that?

Mr. SKELTON. Yes. Everybody in essence is bipartisan with the exception of 14 who work directly for Mr. Hunter. But you can't tell them by the numbers because everybody works for everybody, and it is pretty interchangeable, but technically he owns 14.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And the results are there. The results are there. The one thing that you have said, that you have stressed that a lot of members, committee chairs and ranking members have stressed, is having this extraordinary talented staff with sala-

ries that are below par. So I have taken that under advisement, I have noted that. I will be consulting and conferring with the Speaker on this because we cannot continue to have committees that are so crucial, so important as this to have turnovers. Staff have just been burned out, not necessarily because of the work that they do, but because of a salary that is not conducive to the work that they do, so we have taken that under advisement. We thank you both for being here. Let me turn now to the Ranking Member for comments that he might have.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I once again want to reiterate what we are asking every—I will wait until the chairman is free to answer this.

Mr. SKELTON. Excuse me. Thanks to my staff. We are asking for next year, for 2008, $8.6 million so we can increase the staff size, which of course would help with the oversight and investigation. For this year, $7 million which, of course, we included in that as the $500,000. But for next year so we could raise the numbers up to 83 and be back where Les Aspin was, we would seek the $8.6 million. I hope that is clear.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Ranking Member, did you want to consult with me?

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, yes. I just wanted to make sure you were finished.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I did hear what he said. And while that is the request, we are not sure we can get to that bottom line.

Mr. EHLERS. I am quite sure we can't. But next year may be a different story, and we hope to have a budget done in regular order next year.

I just wanted to reaffirm that this committee has worked very hard back in the days of Bill Thomas and Steny Hoyer and ever since to ensure that we had a one-third/two-thirds ratio from the minority to the majority. I understand you are committed to continuing that practice. Is that correct?

Mr. SKELTON. Excuse me. We never have worked with two-thirds/one-third. Just that we have had dedicated numbers to the minority, but everybody works for everyone. You go in and just grab a staffer and in all probability they will be a professional staffer that assists both Democrats and Republicans. I am not sure how much clearer I can be. Duncan.

Mr. HUNTER. Yeah. Let me make a point here. If you look at the numbers, you would think that the Republicans would be critical here because we have got—with the number of staff members that we have under what you would call minority control, that is folks that are kind of dedicated to us at 14, and we would get—ostensibly we would get more if we had a two-thirds/one-third majority. But what we have, Mr. Ehlers, is we have a tradition of working in a bipartisan way where everyone, all the staff members actually work for everyone and are very responsive. And it is almost as much cultural—so it is a little tough to explain it when we are dealing with ratios. It is as much cultural and as much a product of what I would call the bipartisan ethic that is demanded of Armed Services because we are all supporting the troops, as it is, anything that is a function of a ratio. So even though in theory if we went to a hard two-thirds/one-third thing, we could have more

staff dedicated to us, we like the idea—a lot of folks that do a lot of the hard work and the meat and potatoes work of this committee and developing what we need for the Armed Forces are really staff members who respond to everybody. So you do have to have staff that are dedicated to you because when we do have a split on a principle and we do need to each have our sides and we need to have the representative of the respective support for our positions, and we do need to have quick response, both Republicans and Democrats, we both like this system. In fact, when I was the chairman, Mr. Skelton testified in favor of it, even though ostensibly he could have had more people who by name were considered to be Democrat staff members. And in fact we have a number of members who are considered to be majority staff members now who were considered to be majority staff members when the Republicans had the Chair in the committee. So it has worked very well. I think the real recipient of this, the beneficiary has been the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States.

It works well, and the chairman and I work well together. Our subcommittee Chairs work well together. We have so much work to do and we always get a defense bill out, which is a massive bill, we have so much work to do that we have to have this culture of cooperation. And so this has always worked for us.

It is a little tough to explain in terms of ratios because it looks like the minority is getting short shrift, but we really aren't, although I can assure you that I will now lean on Ike to get more people dedicated on the basis that I have defended his position here.

Mr. EHLERS. Well, if you are happy, we are happy. But I would recognize it is a unique circumstance in your committee.

Mr. SKELTON. At the end of the day, it does work.

Mr. EHLERS. Okay. Now the question is, do you have detailees from the services branches on your staff?

Mr. SKELTON. No, sir. I am not sure—maybe once upon a time we did, but it has been quite some time.

Mr. EHLERS. Okay. That answers my questions.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member. Under the House rules it has been such where we have had partsian and nonpartisan professional staff, and it has worked to the betterment of the Committee as a whole for the work that you do that is in a sense a nonpartisan type of a work that hopefully we can all recognize and appreciate, and so the House rules permit this to happen.

Mrs. Davis, do you want to make comments?

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair, I would be happy to do that, and to Mr. Ehlers as well. I wanted to say that as a freshman and now as someone who has been on the committee for a few years, I really appreciate the help of the staff. I mean, I think what is a little unique about this committee, which is not to say that other committees don't need members to get up to speed, but whether or not you have been in the State legislature or whatever you have been doing, you might have touched on issues of health or education, what have you. I think what is unique is that very few members come into that committee really being schooled in the issues that we deal with, and so we have to rely on staff to bring people up to speed, and I personally can speak

of my learning curve and I can't imagine having done that, and that was certainly under Mr. Hunter and the majority staff at that time. That was very helpful.

The other thing that I saw being played out was the fact that we have to go on a number of field visits, as you will. Our field visits are to Iraq and Afghanistan and to places that we need staff members there to help us out as well. So I want to speak to the fact that I think the staff is unique in that regard and I have never been able to distinguish. Quite frankly, I know who sort of the head staff are on the majority and minority, but I really just felt that everybody was there all the time. The other thing, just to mention, is how important the continuity is of the staff, and without that continuity, I think we would all be at a great loss. You can't have that continuity unless you have people who don't feel drawn to the private sector, and clearly that is a real problem as well.

So I wanted to just mention that, to thank all the staff for being so tremendously helpful to me and that bipartisan nature that they represent. I think people respect one another a great deal, and we know we have tremendous work to do with great sensitivity to our troops and to the families that we all represent. So I want to thank both Mr. Skelton and Mr. Hunter for representing that through their staff. And I know, Madam Chair, I don't know how much of that you got, but I just feel so strongly that the continuity on the staff—that is important, not to draw people away and the need that they have to help all of us get up to speed as new members on that committee and continuing members where we have not probably in the past with the exception of some new members this year I think who really have such a deep acquaintance with the issues that we have to face.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I couldn't agree with you more. And with the vast complexity of the issues that are before this committee, you certainly do need those professional staff members irrespective of whether they are partisan or nonpartisan. And of course the rules suggest that you will have nonpartisan as well as partisan staffers. But we are happy that we were able to increase staff to the levels that we were this year. And if the appropriators come up with a magic trick, or pull something out of a hat, whether it's a bunny rabbit or whatever, we will certainly give strong consideration to the Committee again.

We thank you both so much for being here. We appreciate the work that you do for all of us Americans.

Mr. SKELTON. Thank you.

Mr. HUNTER. You are very kind, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you, Mrs. Davis, for your kind remarks too. We appreciate it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Now the hour has come, and the Chairman of the Education and Workforce Committee is here; welcome, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member. Mr. Ranking Member, thank you for your tolerance in waiting the few minutes for the Chairman to get in. We thank you both for being here this morning to present your budget and your agenda. We have been quite impressed with the outline that you provided for us, and one of the great committees that we have looked forward to presenting their statements.

So at this point, we will listen to the Chairman and then to the Ranking Member for your statements.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GEORGE MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. MILLER. Well, thank you so very much, and this is my first time before this committee with you as Chair, Madam Chairman. Congratulations to you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. MILLER. It is quite exciting to see you sitting there, knowing your long history in election reform and fairness, which will be critical in front of this committee this year after you pass our budgets, which is very critical to us, but it will be very exciting for you as Chair of this committee, and we both congratulate you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. MILLER. We have worked with your ranking member Mr. Ehlers before and when I was the ranking member, and this committee I think has made many changes in the committee budgeting process that have been very good for this institution. And I am delighted to be joined here with my senior Republican, Congressman McKeon, in support of this request.

As we have in the past, we have tried to work in this budget process on a bipartisan basis, going back and forth with the professional staff, trying to determine the needs of what our committees on both sides of the aisle will be. We have tried to adhere to the requirement of one-third/two-thirds and also the idea of the shared staff, where possible, to work on that in a joint fashion, and I think that is why we have been able to submit to you a budget that is very lean, but I think it deals with the needs that we have to conduct the committee business through this year, which includes a heavy legislative oversight schedule.

As you know, we have a number of major pieces of legislation before this committee, the No Child Left Behind, the Higher Education Act, the Innovation Agenda, job training, Head Start and a number of other issues, and also a pretty robust oversight schedule anticipated. So I want to thank Congressman McKeon for his support on this, and we look forward to answering whatever questions you might have.

[The statement of Mr. Miller follows:]

Statement of the
HONORABLE GEORGE MILLER
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Budget Request
February 28, 2007

Madam Chairman and members of the Committee, I appreciate having the opportunity to appear this morning with Senior Republican member, Congressman McKeon, in support of our joint funding request which has been submitted to you and introduced by both of us.

I want to offer special congratulations to my California colleague, Congresswoman Millender-McDonald, on her recent appointment as Chairwoman of this important Committee. I know that the activities of the Committee, and particularly election reform and fairness, have long been crucial issues for her, and we are very fortunate to have her in such a key position.

I want to say, as I have in years past, that while Mr. McKeon and I sometimes disagree on legislative matters before our Committee, when he was Chairman he administered the Committee in a fair and balanced way. I intend to do the same, and appreciate that he is joining me on this committee funding request.

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald and Congressman Ehlers have been vigorous supporters of the proposition that the Minority caucus of each committee should be allocated one third of the resources, and I am glad to say that once again, our committee budget reflects that proportionate allocation. Except for shared and administrative personnel, the breakdown of staff is two-thirds/one third as both the Majority and Minority has long asserted it should be. The same is true of other financial resources for equipment and other expenses.

The budget we submit today is very lean in keeping with our efforts to control the cost of government. Considering the very heavy legislative and oversight schedule for this committee as we deal with several issues of national importance, such as reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act, the Higher Education Act, the Innovation Agenda, Job Training, Head Start and a host of other issues, I urge committee to give our request fair consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, members of the committee. This is also my first appearance here. In my short tenure as chairman, I never had to have this opportunity. I want to thank you for having us here today. I am not going to read the statement that I have in the file. Let me just say that I am in total agreement with Chairman Miller on this issue, and I really appreciate how he has worked with us and it has been a bipartisan basis, and I appreciate that he has let us be a part of it, and I also want to commend him for being very frugal in his request. I think, as I have reviewed all the committees, he has asked for the smallest increase, and I think it is needed, especially with all of the things that he has in store for us.

So I urge the committee to give your fair consideration to our request, and I am prepared to answer any questions.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I thank you so much. And I do appreciate the bipartisan nature by which you two work. I am happy to know with this robust agenda you have, of course No Child Left Behind has been buzzing throughout the country for over a year or so. So you now have the opportunity to make good of it. Along with the Higher Education Act and the innovation agenda, Head Start is also important. So you do have an agenda that speaks to the needs of the American people. Your budget is very lean and while we recognize that, we also recognize the fact that we did not have a budget last year, and therefore, we are coming in on your budget from the last year baseline and then increasing that by a very modest 2.4 percent for inflation which perhaps may not come up to the levels that you might want, but that is the best we can do, given the budget constraints that we are under.

So we appreciate your tolerance and your consideration for that. If something else comes down the pike, you will be among those chairpersons who are considered for that. I am happy to know that you are a two-thirds/one-third commitment committee that works very well together because it is important that that happens. So with that, I will allow the Ranking Member to say a few words.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I agree with Chairman Miller that it is exciting to see you in the Chair here, and it is a great honor. Somehow I found it more exciting when I was in the Chair, but nevertheless we are happy to see you there.

[The statement of Mr. McKeon follows:]

Statement of the
Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Before the
Committee on House Administration

February 28, 2007

Madam Chair:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Committee on House Administration. I am proud to have the opportunity to join with Chairman Miller in submitting a budget that I believe to be an accurate and fiscally responsible representation of the Committee needs for the 110th Congress.

Our request recognizes the Committee's legislative responsibilities at a time when issues within our jurisdiction are in the forefront of the Congressional and Administration's agendas.

I appreciate that my friend and colleague Chairman Miller has followed the past practice of the Committee in the budget development process and has provided me total autonomy over how my share of the budget is used. I am also pleased that our proposed budget meets the goal of providing one-third of the funding and staffing to the Minority.

I am also pleased that Chairman Miller has maintained our past practice of sharing our information technology staff and additional support staff. This cooperation has ensured a smooth transition from the 109th to the 110th Congress and will continue to ensure that both the Majority and Minority stay current with advances in technology.

Currently, the majority of my staff is located in the Ford House Office Building, so if space becomes available in closer proximity to the main Committee Room in the Rayburn Building, I would ask that our Committee be on the top of the list for additional space.

Many of the President's priorities include issues within our Committee's jurisdiction. And candidly, because so many of the bills within our jurisdiction were NOT acted on by the Senate in the last Congress, we must re-do most of what we did. As a result, we have planned for the necessary resources to ensure that our legislative priorities and obligations receive thorough review.

Our Committee anticipates an extremely active agenda in the 110th Congress. Our funding increase will enable us to carryout the necessary functions of a successful Committee, which in turn will allow us to fulfill our responsibilities to this Congress and to the people of the United States.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. EHLERS. I agree also with the Chair on the two-third/one-third ratio. We worked very, very hard to reach that level, and we want to make sure we maintain it in the future no matter who is in the majority. So we appreciate your commitment to that. It is an excellent committee. Mrs. Davis from California is on the committee as well as I. It is a highlight to be on that committee because we are dealing with I think some of the most important issues in the Congress, and that is educating our kids for the future. It is going to be a very difficult, very uncertain future in many respects, and I am just pleased the committee is taking it that seriously.

I wish we could do better for you. I am hoping that we don't have another aborted appropriations process for the next fiscal year, and we hope that we can do better because what you have outlined is truly necessary for the committee. We hope we will be able to get you there in another year, but this year we are constrained by the continuing resolution which did not adequately fund the committees. So with that, I will yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Thank you, Madam Chair, Mr. Ehlers as well. I have an opportunity to sit on the Education Committee. It has been a great experience for me, and I appreciate what the staff has done in bringing members along and helping us to deal with the complexities that we really face in education and labor. And as you mention, Mr. Ehlers, there is nothing closer to people. There is nothing more important to them than the education of their children. And so I think it is this kind of moral imperative that we do what is right by our country in educating the young people who I know are going to take over from us and I hope are going to do so in a way that really engages the public and helps them to see how important this issue is as well.

So I actually was a little surprised that our chairman hasn't come here, you know, screaming and yelling and saying, you know, we need additional money because we have an added commitment this year in the reauthorizations. They are critical. No Child Left Behind certainly is, and we just had some time to look at that issue outside of here as well. So I commend them for being as frugal and as direct at this as possible, but I would say that if we can find some additional resources that would be wonderful.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, we hope that we can find them under rocks or whatever. But one thing is for sure, when you think about education you think about the future. And that is what is so important about this committee.

Mr. Lungren, do you have any comments? No comments. Thank you both so much for being here, and thank you for your lean but mean posture in these budget constraint times.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you. If I might, I know you were trying to build a tradition in here and a standard on this one-third/two-thirds, and I would just say I was extended that courtesy when the committee changed over under John Boehner, and I think it is very important. I think that we do build this legacy of some fairness here, and whatever happens in the House and what have you, we function as an institution, and I was also extended the same cour-

tesy that I hope I extended to Buck during this budgetary process by then Chairman Boehner on this committee. We like to think we are the seed of bipartisanship, but we are working at it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, indeed you have enhanced the collegiality. Thank you both so much both for being here. Mr. Waxman and Mr. Davis, thank you both for being here and welcome.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. HENRY WAXMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Chairwoman, I am pleased to have this opportunity to testify before you the first time as the Chair of a committee, and I congratulate you on your assignment.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Ehlers, congratulations to you as well for being the ranking member. I don't notice that any of the members of the committee are on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. So many of you indicated you were on the Education and Labor Committee but I am hopeful that because there are so many Californians on this committee, it may serve our interests.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Duly noted.

Mr. WAXMAN. For whatever it is worth. Mr. Davis and I are here together to submit this budget. We have worked together during the time that Mr. Davis was chairman in fulfilling his pledge to provide the minority with one-third of the committee resources, and we intend to approach allocating our resources for the minority in the same way. Also during his tenure as Chair, Mr. Davis established a professional and respectful working relationship with the minority. We were able to work in a bipartisan and effective manner on a number of important legislative and oversight matters, and I hope to continue this cooperative and bipartisan relationship as we go forward.

Our committee unfortunately is facing a budget squeeze. The Oversight Committee received significantly less funding than other committees over the past 6 years. The fact is the Republican leadership did not provide the increases we had hoped. Since 2000 the budgets of other House committees have grown at an average rate of nearly 6 percent per year, over twice the inflation rate. But during the same period the Oversight Committee's budget grew by less than 1 percent per year. In real dollars, the budget shrank by more than 12 percent over the last 6 years.

The reduction in funding the Oversight Committee has experienced has had a direct and predictable impact on our ability to do our job. At the full committee level, we have eight slots for professional staff, over 15 percent of our professional staff positions that we cannot fill because we don't have the funds to pay for additional staff. The election of 2006 certainly sent a strong message that the American public wants Congress to do oversight, to hold government accountable, and we look at our committee as taking on that primary oversight role.

We have an aggressive oversight agenda that includes probes of waste, fraud and abuse in the reconstruction of Iraq and other Federal contracting, corporate profiteering, politicization of science, the healthcare system and other pressing matters. But we won't be able to do what the Congress and the public expects us to do with-

out adequate funding. Oversight is resource intensive. Agencies and companies under investigation are already trying to bury the committee in hundreds of thousands of pages of documents. And we need manpower to wade through these document dumps and to interview and depose witnesses. To meet our oversight and legislative demands, the committee is requesting a 4 percent increase for 2007 and a 12 percent increase for 2008. Even with the increases, the committee's budget would still be lower in real terms in 2008 than in 2000.

We are trying to be as economical as possible in this budget request. The committee is not requesting any increase in funding for travel, equipment or supplies for 2007. We have asked some of our new hires to come here and take a pay cut of over 50 percent. We are going to stretch our salary budget by taking into account that our new hires are not joining the committee all at once. But to enable the committee to fill its investigative staff positions, we will need more resources, especially in 2008 when the real crunch hits.

As you weigh our request for funding, I urge you to keep in mind that the work of our committee can lead to substantial savings for American taxpayers. During just our first week of hearings, the Defense Department announced that it would withhold nearly $20 million in improper payments to Halliburton. This $20 million savings to the taxpayer, which was a direct result of our committee's oversight alone, covers nearly 90 percent of our 2-year budget request.

Let me close by saying, I recognize the funding constraints the House Administration Committee faces, and we have tried to present as small a budget as possible that would enable the Oversight Committee to carry out its core responsibilities. If budgets were not so tight, the committee could effectively use significantly more resources than we are requesting. Once again, I want to thank you for this opportunity to testify before the committee and hope you will look favorably on our request, and we look forward to working with you in this Congress.

[The statement of Mr. Waxman follows:]

Statement before the Committee on House Administration
Funding Request for the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
110th Congress
Henry Waxman, Chairman
February 28, 2007

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Committee on House Administration and to thank you, Ranking Member Ehlers, and the other members of this Committee for the opportunity to testify on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's budget proposal for the 110th Congress.

I am pleased to be here with the Committee's Ranking Member, my colleague and friend, Tom Davis. During his tenure as Chair of the Committee, Mr. Davis fulfilled his pledge to provide the minority with one-third of the Committee resources. As the new Chair of the Committee, I intend to continue this approach to allocating resources for the minority.

During his tenure as chair, Mr. Davis established a professional and respectful working relationship with the minority. We were able to work in a bipartisan and effective manner on a number of important legislative and oversight matters, such as the Committee's inquiry into steroid use in baseball. I believe Mr. Davis and I will continue this cooperative and bipartisan relationship as we go forward.

Unfortunately, the Committee is facing a budget squeeze. The Oversight Committee received significantly less funding than other committees over the past six years. The fact is, the Republican leadership had little appetite for oversight of the Bush Administration and this was reflected in the budgets the Committee received.

Since 2000, the budgets of other House committees have grown at an average rate of nearly 6% per year, over twice the inflation rate. But during the same period, the Oversight Committee's budget grew by less than 1% per year. In real dollars, our budget shrank by more than 12% over the last six years.

The reductions in funding that the Oversight Committee has experienced over the last six years have a direct and predictable impact on our ability to do our job. At the full Committee level, we have eight slots for professional staff – over 15% of our professional staff positions – that we cannot fill because we don't have the funds to pay for additional staff.

The election of 2006 sent a strong message that the American public wants Congress to restore oversight and accountability to government. Much of the responsibility for reinvigorating congressional oversight falls to the work of our Committee, which is the primary oversight committee in the House. And we have an aggressive oversight agenda that includes probes of waste, fraud, and abuse in the reconstruction of Iraq and other federal contracting … corporate profiteering … the politicization of science … the health care system … and other pressing topics.

But we won't be able to do what the Congress and the public expect us to do without adequate funding. Oversight is resource intensive. Agencies and companies under investigation are already trying to bury the Committee in hundreds of thousands of pages of documents. We need manpower to wade through these document dumps and to interview and depose witnesses.

To meet our oversight and legislative demands, the Committee is requesting a 4% increase for 2007 and a 12% increase for 2008. Even with the increases, the Committee's budget would still be lower in real terms in 2008 than in 2000.

We are trying to be as economical as possible in this budget request. The Committee is not requesting any increase in funding for travel, equipment, or supplies for 2007. We have asked some of our new hires to take pay cuts of over 50%. We will stretch our salary budget by taking into account that our new hires are not joining the Committee at once. But to enable the Committee to fill its investigative staff positions, we will need more resources, especially in 2008 when the real crunch hits.

As you weigh our request for funding, I urge to keep in mind that the work of our Committee can lead to substantial savings for the American taxpayer. During just our first week of hearings, the Defense Department announced that it would withhold nearly $20 million in improper payments to Halliburton. This $20 million savings to the taxpayer, which was a direct result of our Committee's oversight, alone covers nearly 90% of our two-year budget request.

Let me close by saying that I recognize the funding constraints the House Administration Committee faces and have tried to present as small a budget as possible that would enable the Oversight Committee to carry out its core responsibilities. If budgets were not so tight, the Committee could effectively use significantly more resources than I am requesting.

Once again, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Committee and hope that you will look favorably upon the Committee's request. We look forward to working with you in the 110th Congress.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM DAVIS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Thank you very much, and I ask my entire statement be put into the record, and I will try to summarize it briefly. First I want to express my strong support with Chairman Waxman for the committee funding request for the 110th Congress. I think we have established the kind of relationship that ought to be the norm in Congress. It is a relationship based on open communication, candor and respect. During the 109th Congress, our committee and its seven subcommittees held 256 oversight hearings on everything from contracting in Iraq to steroids in baseball. We ordered 359 reports, testimonies and briefings in support of oversight investigations and program reviews. And according to the Government Accountability Office, the committee's efforts saved taxpayers $6.5 billion. We more than paid for ourselves. And of course the propensity is when the power party in Congress is the same as the party in the executive branch, the investigations don't tend quite to be at the same norm as they are with the opposition in each end of government, in each end of Pennsylvania Avenue. If you need to do oversight and investigations at this point, I think it is going to have to be beefed up considerably because I think our budget, as Mr. Waxman noted, actually went down vis-a-vis real dollars during the last 6 years. And in terms of other committees, we structured the least for the reasons I just put forward.

I think we have done a pretty good job. I know Henry has a very ambitious oversight agenda. We are going to need resources to counteract him. But this is a committee that many of you are not aware of all the legislative accomplishments we have had. But the oversight role is critical, and we need investigators.

[The statement of Mr. Tom Davis of Virginia follows:]

Statement of the Honorable Tom Davis
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
before the
Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2007

Thank you Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Ehlers and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today.

I want to begin my expressing my strong support for the Committee funding request made by Chairman Waxman for the 110th Congress. I also want to thank him for pledging to continue what was the practice under my chairmanship – providing the minority with 33 percent of the Committee's resources.

Over the years, Chairman Waxman and I have established the sort of relationship that should be the norm in Congress. It's a relationship based on open communication, candor, and respect. We may not always agree, but we do make every effort to hear each other out, to extend professional courtesies, and to not sweat the small stuff. And much of the most important work we have done has been done in a bipartisan way.

Our committee has passed serious legislation and conducted serious oversight. We've taken on tough tasks. We've saved taxpayers' money. We've made the government more efficient and business-like.

Chairman Waxman and I share common goals: streamlining the federal government; rooting out waste, fraud and abuse in government programs; and protecting the rights and interests of the American taxpayer. We share a commitment to good government.

During the 109th Congress, the Government Reform Committee and its seven subcommittees held 256 oversight hearings on everything from contracting in Iraq to steroids in baseball. We ordered 359 reports, testimonies, and briefings in support of oversight investigations and program reviews, and, according to the Government Accountability Office, the committee's efforts saved taxpayers $6.5 billion.

Oversight matters because it is a primary constitutional responsibility of the legislative branch to be watchful of how the public's money has been spent. We have been watchful. For example:

We investigated the Department of Interior and oil companies after discovering that offshore oil leases from 1998 and 1999 failed to include price thresholds, costing the government more than $10 billion over the life of the leases. Those contracts are now being renegotiated.

We cast light on the error-prone pay and benefits systems of the Army National Guard and Reserves. That work led to a hearing two years ago on the hardships visited on already-wounded soldiers by uncoordinated and uncaring processes at Walter Reed and other Army hospitals.

We've kept a close eye on contracting problems in Iraq, identifying mismanagement where appropriate.

We have examined, and must continue to examine, government agencies and programs on GAO's "high risk" list.

We've helped pass good government legislation as well.

We established a searchable database for all federal contracts and grants. We restructured the General Services Administration to streamline government procurement and authored provisions in the DOD Authorization bill to consolidate the civilian boards of contract appeals into a single board.

We passed legislation to bring the postal service into the 21st century, something others had tried to do for more than a decade. We reauthorized the Office of National Drug Control Policy, making it more effective and true to its original mission. We've improved financial management practices at the Department of Homeland Security by strengthening the agency's CFO. We've bolstered information security practices at federal agencies to better protect sensitive personal data under their control.

Already this year, we've passed legislation that enhances whistleblower rights and strengthens lobbying disclosure rules in the Executive Branch.

Madam Chairman, it's no secret that our committee holds dozens more hearings each year than any other. The work we do requires resources, and the increases we're requesting for this year and next are relatively modest. Even with the increases, the committee's budget would still be lower in real terms in 2008 than in 2000. Without the increases, Chairman Waxman and I will likely be unable to fill critically important staff positions or conduct the type of rigorous, bipartisan oversight the American people demand.

The return on your investment in our committee will be significant. Under my chairmanship, and I'm confident under Chairman Waxman's, this committee saves taxpayer money. We've tried to recognize and respect the funding constraints your committee faces. Believe me, we could effectively use more resources than we're requesting.

We're not asking for an increase in funding for travel, equipment, supplies, or other non-personnel expenses for 2007, and are seeking only an inflation-related increase in these areas for 2008. Rather, we're focusing on our most important asset: our people. At current funding levels, at least three minority positions will remain vacant and many

staffers who took pay cuts to remain on board may be forced to leave. We cannot afford to lose their experience and commitment.

Without the ability to fill now-vacant positions and deliver merit pay increases, our work will suffer. With this budget proposal, Chairman Waxman and I believe we can meet the committee's oversight and legislative agenda and continue our good work stamping out waste, fraud and abuse across the federal government.

Thanks again for the opportunity to testify before the committee. I hope you will look favorably upon our request, and we look forward to working with you in the 110th Congress.

The CHAIRWOMAN. That is it, Mr. Ranking Member?

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. That is it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay. Fine. Thank you very much. I do say you have an ambitious oversight agenda, much of which I have looked at on C–SPAN, and I commend you for that type of oversight, which has been sorely missing, and the public tends to thank you too, thank you for that because they too think it is long overdue for this committee to look into certain things that have, as you outlined, Mr. Waxman, allowed the withholding of nearly $20 million—and I got that out of your statement—for improper payments to Halliburton.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Those kinds of things come because of the ambitious oversight agenda, and I regret that your new staff hires have come in with a salary cut. We have heard from so many chairpersons and ranking members that this is happening to them.

We have to operate from the baseline of last year's budget with a very modest increase of 2.4 percent for inflation. So while that does not bode well with you, I am sure, your request for a 12.8 percent increase for fiscal year 2008 is something we are going to look into, because we do understand the critical need and also the critical importance of this committee and the results that you are getting from what you are doing.

With that, I will note this and take it to the Speaker and see if we can perhaps increase this. I am sorry to say that because of the constraints, we are only able to give you what the appropriators have recommended that we give you for this year. But next year, 2008, we will look and see just what is in store, and hopefully, it will be to your satisfaction.

The Ranking Member.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. It occurs to me that maybe you would be better off acting as a bill collecting agency and working for a percentage of what you are able to recover through your oversight.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. It is dangerous enough as it is.

Mr. EHLERS. We could never do that, but you have been a real bulldog on it, sometimes more like a small terrier. At any rate, we appreciate the work on the committee and what they do.

I just want to reinforce that the two-thirds/one-third allocation, this committee worked very hard to achieve; and we are very determined to continue to maintain that. So I am pleased you have committed to continuing that relationship.

Mr. WAXMAN. Yes, absolutely.

There was a time when we were in the minority where we couldn't even get the one-third, but this committee urged it upon our committee, and under Chairman Davis we had that relationship. And I think it is one that is good to have spelled out.

Mr. EHLERS. Right, and we were determined to accomplish it. It took a number of years, particularly in those committees in which the minority had been very small under the Democrat majority, and so it took longer to bring those up.

But that is history. We are determined to keep it the way it is now. We think that is fair.

Other than that, I have no questions at this point.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.

I did note, too, that you are not requesting any increase in funding for travel or equipment and other things, and so you really certainly have cut as much as you can.

The 15 slots that you spoke about, Mr. Chairman, that are without staff, this will be in addition to what you already have?

Mr. WAXMAN. That is for this year that we are not able to fill.

The CHAIRWOMAN. You are not able to fill, which were there the previous years?

Mr. WAXMAN. Yes.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay, fine.

Well, that is regrettable, but we are trying to see how we can move through these constraints, too. And, again, a bright light hopefully for you is that we will look into the 2008 budget in terms of your increase requests and see where we go from there.

Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

As you know, I was gone for a few years from here. Is the committee that you have now, is that the successor to what used to be known as Government Ops?

Mr. WAXMAN. It is the successor of three committees, I think, when you were here. There was the District of Columbia Committee, the Post Office and Civil Service and the Government Operations; and they were combined into one committee.

Mr. LUNGREN. All right. I was just looking at the 1994 committee staff ratios, and there the minority was given on Government Ops 21 percent, and I think D.C., a little less than one-third and Post Office was 24 percent. So I am glad that we have established as a matter of principle that there should be one-third no matter who is in charge.

The second question I had is this: Obviously, we are not giving anybody anything that they want because of the budget that we have. But you talked about cuts, and I was looking through the numbers, and unless my numbers are wrong, your committee has the largest number of staff, I believe, of anyone. Is that correct, 118? Is that what it is?

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Probably. I think that is correct. Remember, it is the major investigative committee of the Congress.

Mr. LUNGREN. That is the other question I have. I have been the one that has always banged on Congress for not having enough oversight, but I always assumed that all of our authorizing committees were supposed to be doing oversight. And I know the name of your committee and I know what you do, but could you give me an idea of how you believe that you do oversight relative to the authorizing committees?

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Let me start.

The Government Ops Committee was put together in the 1950s after a series of special committees were put together to investigate waste, fraud and abuse in government; and so they put it under one committee in the House and the Senate. And the reason they did this is because we are not close to the authorizers in the executive branch in the way that the Agriculture Committee may be or Education and Labor or whatever else. And so this was to look at waste across the government; that was the concept.

In 1995, they added the additional legislative responsibilities for the District of Columbia—which this committee has done a lot on, I might add—and for Post Office and Civil Service. And we just passed a major postal reform bill last year after 40 years of trying. So we have had additional legislative responsibilities.

Traditionally, when you have—when President Clinton was in, the staff was beefed up far greater than it is today. Republicans doing investigations of the Democratic administration at that point. When President Bush took over, those numbers came down, and we moved some investigative slots, candidly, to the legislative side because we had a legislative backlog that hadn't been fulfilled, as well, if—well, if that gives you a perspective.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Lungren.

As I look back, because of other committees who have come before us talking about staff slots, you are correct. They have the largest staff of any other committee that I have been able to go back and check on. So it gives us even more, I guess, pause as to the critical need for this committee to have what it needs to do its work.

Ms. Davis, I think your hand was up.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just would say, as I said earlier in the discussion, I think that when you have—when you have a strong investigative arm, as this committee does, then members, for one, need to be up to speed in a way that may be different in some other committees. And also you need to be able to counteract those who are functioning in that regard all the time.

So your committee is looking at so many different issues, and you may be up against folks who, their only issue is to basically, in some ways, work against what you are trying to just discover and work with. And so I think that it is critically important that you have the resources that you need—understanding, of course, that I don't think any of the committees are going to have the resources that they need. But this is a great need.

We have also talked so much about interagency coordination, and in some ways, I think some of that does fall to the committee because you look across the jurisdictions. And I applaud you for the work that you have done.

There are a lot of—a lot of words have described Mr. Waxman, I think—probably Mr. Davis, as well—and "dogged" is one that comes to mind. I think that is important, and we want people who can do that.

Mr. WAXMAN. Other people mind.

Mr. LUNGREN. I have, probably, other words.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I think really the keywords are "no nonsense," and this is a committee that is no nonsense because they are about the work of the government and the people.

And so as we look at those committees that have the investigatory arm, really, we do need to look at that more seriously in terms of staffing, because you do a lot of discovery and have to go out and do those things that a lot of other committees aren't doing and do not have the role to do.

So that is something that I have noted now and will talk with the Speaker about.

But in the meantime, we thank you for the work that you do. I can't think of any other committee that has as many oversight hearings as this committee has begun and will continue to do. And kudos to you for that, Mr. Chairman, and the Ranking Member.

Mr. WAXMAN. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

Well, that concludes the first half of this all-day funding hearing. We will again recess for the afternoon slots of time, and we will resume at 2 o'clock for the beginning of the second part of this funding committee.

At this point, the Committee is in recess.

[Whereupon, at 12:22 p.m., the Committee recessed, to reconvene at 2:00 p.m., the same day.]

[2:30 p.m.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. Good afternoon and thanks again for your patience as we resume this hearing today on committee funding for all of the committees. We are most appreciative to those chairpersons and ranking members who have come before us to give us the outline of their budget as well as their agenda. We are quite impressed by what we have before us by way of Ways and Means. Of course the votes delayed us from continuing. But at this time we would like to do just that.

We have before us today the Chairman of the Ways and Means, Mr. Rangel, and the Ranking Member, Mr. McCrery, to present their budget and their agenda.

Welcome to both of you.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. RANGEL. Thank you, Madam Chairlady, and as you know this is the first time I have had the honor to sit before you as our Chair, and I just can't begin to tell you how proud I am to see you sitting there and how pleased we are to come before you with what we think is a very modest budget in view of what the fiscal situation is in the House of Representatives.

We have worked together in terms of trying to bring a bipartisan budget before you, and we have made the allocations that traditionally our committee has been able to do over the years.

Previously the minority was given their one-third. We will continue to do that. In terms of real dollars, the amount that we are proposing is still less than that of 1994. For year one, 2007, we have proposed a 7 percent increase from 2006, which totals 9,785,128. For year two we have proposed a 5 percent increase from 2007, for the total for both years of 12.5.

In the 104th Congress, our committee was cut by 37 percent. Personnel was cut by more than half, and it was the only committee that survived that took a cut of that weight.

We are asking for six additional staffers since both the minority and the majority agree that we can take on the problem of Social Security, taxes, to some extent. Health is certainly an issue, as is trade. We do intend, as the Speaker would want, for us to increase

our oversight. We don't intend to be a traveling committee, but in view of the enlarged legislative agenda that we have assumed, we did put in some money for travel.

I also would like to add, as most of the House knows, that the majority and the minority have started off this session in trying to see exactly what it is that we can accomplish, where we do have agreements and not the extent of the disagreements that the parties and members of the committees have had in the past. We are very pleased with the progress that we have made. So the budget, as in other areas of the jurisdiction of the committee, we have worked very closely with Mr. McCrery, and I would like to yield to him at this point in time.

[The statement of Mr. Rangel follows:]

Statement for Chairman Charles B. Rangel
Committee on Ways and Means
Before the Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2007

We understand that since funds are limited that we may be functioning under either a continuing resolution allowing no increase in allocation for a number of months, or a 4% increase. Our Committee Members approved the Committee funding proposal by unanimous consent at our organizational meeting on January 17. Funding has not been a partisan issue in our Committee. There have been disagreements, but this has not been one of them. Previously, the Minority was given their third of the allocation, and they will continue to do so.

In terms of real dollars, the amount we are proposing is still significantly less than that of 1994. For year one (2007), we have proposed a 7% increase from 2006, totaling $9,785,128.60. For year two (2008), we have proposed a 5% increase from 2007. The total for both years will be around a 12.5% increase over 2006.

In the 104th Congress, our Committee was significantly cut. Not only was funding cut by 37%, but the number of personnel was cut by 51%. This was the largest cut of any Committee that continued to operate. In terms of staff slots, the Committee was allotted an additional two slots in the 109th Congress to bring the funding level to a complete 2/3-1/3 split. With this proposal, we are asking for 6 additional staff slots to help with a growing agenda, including trade and taxes, health and Social Security, and family security programs.

The Speaker has asked that Committees increase their oversight. Since travel was never one of the former Chairman's priorities, travel was never built into previous budgets. We propose to remedy that with this proposal. With this budget, we have accounted for not only travel, but also the transition and overhead costs (communications and equipment) of running the Committee which have grown more than usual. Also, we have accounted for staff salaries.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JIM MCCRERY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

Mr. MCCRERY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Ehlers and members of the committee. I appreciate having the opportunity to appear this afternoon with Chairman Rangel in support of our budget proposal for the 110th Congress. I want to express my appreciation to Chairman Rangel for working with me and my staff as he developed the Ways and Means budget request.

We were consulted in the preparation of the budget proposal, and under this budget the minority has full control of one-third of the budget and resources. Both the chairman's and my staff have worked hard to ensure a smooth and seamless transition. Whether it was the logistics of moving office space, transferring computer files and equipment or assigning parking permits, we were able to effectively coordinate so that the committee was prepared to begin working once Congress convened.

I support the committee's budget proposal. An increase in our current budget will assist in providing the necessary resources needed to tackle the committee's historically aggressive agenda. It is consistent with the requested increases of the past several Congresses, and I should note was approved by our committee unanimously on January 17, 2007.

Thanks again for the opportunity to testify, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

[The statement of Mr. McCrery follows:]

Statement for Jim McCrery, Ranking Republican
Committee on Ways and Means
Before the Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2007

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Ehlers and Members of the Committee, I appreciate having the opportunity to appear this afternoon with Chairman Rangel in support of our budget proposal for the 110th Congress.

I want to express my appreciation to Chairman Rangel for working with me and my staff as he developed the Ways and Means budget request. We were consulted in the preparation of the budget proposal, and under this budget, the Minority has full control of one third of the budget and resources.

Both the Chairman's and my staff have worked hard to ensure a smooth and seamless transition. Whether it was the logistics of moving office space, transferring computer files and equipment, or assigning parking permits, we were able to effectively coordinate so that the Committee was prepared to begin working once Congress convened.

I support the Committee's budget proposal. An increase in our current budget will assist in providing the necessary resources needed to tackle the Committee's historically aggressive agenda. It is consistent with the requested increases of the past several Congresses, and, I should note, was approved by our Committee by unanimously on January 17, 2007.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify again, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you both so much for outlining your agenda and your budget. You both understand that we are in an environment that is not conducive to increases beyond the very modest 2.4 percent that the appropriators and the Budget Committee have given us because last year we did not have a budget passed. And because of that we have to operate from the baseline of last year's budget with just that mere increase, that would be 2.4 percent.

While we do recognize and appreciate the extraordinary services that you provide, with the very talented personnel that you have, and as I look back on my notes and look at the subcommittee's oversight in terms of IRS operations, you are also looking at tax relief for individuals and families. Those are the things that the American people want us to look at and to do.

And yet, in spite of all of that, we have such dismal budget constraints that at this time we are unable to provide anything other than that 2.4 percent.

I am encouraged by your work with the Ranking Member, Mr. Chairman, and bringing about the two-thirds/one-third agreement and commitment that has been set forth in the rules, and we are happy that you are working in a bipartisan way to do that.

We do not feel good about your personnel that was cut by more than half and your need for additional staff. Now there are many committee chairpersons who have come before me today and said that if we don't do something about the staffing and about the salaries, we are going to lose out on these very professional, very talented people who will go elsewhere to work where they will have a salary conducive to their talent. So I will take this back to the Speaker to talk with her. I can't guarantee you anything will happen that will perhaps increase at this juncture, but what I will do is report back on the extraordinary work that you are doing.

We understand your large legislative agenda and all of the other hearings that you have outlined here in your presentation, but in light of all of that, we are still unable to do at this time anything outside of that modest increase.

And so with that, I will go to the Speaker to talk about this critical need for additional staff and what will happen in the long run if we do not at least address that issue.

I will now ask the Ranking Member for any comments that he might have.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I am pleased to hear your reassurance you will honor the one-third/two-thirds. We are getting that commitment out of every chairman and ranking member that come before us today, and we are doing it jointly because it was very hard to develop that. We have developed it over the past 12 years. We are bound and determined to make sure the committees stick to that.

One other thing, Mr. McCrery, it sounds from your comments as if this entire project of developing the budget was a joint effort between you and the chairman and that you both worked closely together on it. Is that correct?

Mr. MCCRERY. Yes, sir.

Mr. EHLERS. That is a good model to follow. We have heard from a few committees, well a very few, but a few that do not follow

that. I think that is a good approach and I commend Chairman Rangel for doing that as well.

With that, I have nothing further to say.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ranking Member. Any member wishes to speak or make any comments?

Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Chairman, I just very quickly got to know Jim when we served for an endless number of years on the Ethics Committee together and I know really the bonhomme you have and it is great to see you working with the chairman and I am so happy to sit here and be able to say, Mr. Chairman Rangel, it is a pleasure to follow our Chair's lead but really a pleasure to see you, Mr. Chairman, for the first time in this committee.

Mr. MCCRERY. Thank you.

Mr. RANGEL. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you both so much. Any other comments? If not, we will certainly do our due diligence in addressing and speaking to the Speaker on the issue of staffing.

Mr. RANGEL. Because you have said that, Madam Chairlady, I would like to add something, and Zoe probably knew Jim McCrery better than I did because it was a different atmosphere in that committee. I would like to say that I have come to know, respect, and look forward to working with him.

In that respect, I would like to say, briefly since you will be talking with the Speaker, that you might as well know that Jim and I have been working very closely with the Administration to see what areas of the big ticket items that we could possibly tackle to bring credit upon the Congress and certainly our committee. We haven't taken anything off the table, whether it is Social Security, trade, simplification of taxes, and we even thought about touching some parts of health the best that we could.

We also agreed that the issue that we can get a handle on, the one we can get a consensus on, is going to be our priority.

You can tell the Speaker I don't think we are going to be hitting successes in each one of those areas. But I can tell you one thing, that if it does happen, we won't be able to do it. As good as the staff is, each one of these problems that I mentioned are just tremendous in terms of size and what we will have to do in terms of hearings. And so, we will be forward but somehow—and I don't know how it works since I am new at this—but somehow I just can't believe that if we start moving on those issues that the whole country is waiting to see movement, and we have had none for a decade. We also agreed that we are convinced that even if we are not successful, that at the end of this term it is going to be much easier for those who follow us to know that these issues have to be dealt with no matter what the political pain is.

So I appreciate that you are taking it back to the Speaker.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And I appreciate your comments. I have duly noted your comments now. So I can mention and speak with her on that because those big ticket items that you mentioned, we have not even gotten into that fully, yet they are upon you in your committee.

So thank you so much.

What I would like to reiterate is what the Ranking member said, and it is very true. You have worked so well with one another, and that is the beginning step to success on any committee. So we thank you for sharing your budget, and for speaking about personnel traveling and hearings. You have worked in concert, and that is to be commended and thank you for coming before the Committee today.

Mr. RANGEL. I thank all of you.

Mr. MCCRERY. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We would like to now call up Chairwoman Velázquez and the Ranking Member, Mr. Chabot, from Small Business. It is indeed a pleasure to have a woman at the helm of any committee, but certainly Small Business and we appreciate the work that you have done in your position as Ranking Member, and now you have been honored, and we are honored by your being here and we are also honored to have with us the Ranking Member, Mr. Chabot.

So would you like to get started now, Madam Chairwoman?

STATEMENT OF THE HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you, Madam Chairman Millender McDonald and Ranking Member Ehlers. I appreciate the opportunity today to come before the House Administration Committee and discuss the budget submission for the House Small Business Committee in the 110th Congress. The committee requests these funds to address the critical issues facing small businesses in this Nation.

With the help of Mr. Chabot, the committee has already adopted an aggressive oversight plan that will significantly increase its legislative and oversight role. This budget submission was developed in full consultation with Mr. Chabot's office. The committee seeks a 12 percent increase in funding from the last Congress. In terms of dollars, this increase request represents the third smallest of any of the committees.

And I want to repeat that, because I don't want for you to be impressed with the 12 percent request, but since 1994 basically the budget of the Small Business Committee was decimated, and we are still trying to recover from the impact that that cost to the Small Business Committee.

I would like to note that our committee will change how the funds are allocated to the minority. Unlike previous Congresses, the minority will have control over the full third of the budget, including travel as opposed to just salary and personnel. I think it is important that Mr. Chabot and his staff have the flexibility to determine their spending priorities.

The increase in funding is particularly necessary because of the committee's change in jurisdiction. When the House adopted its rules package this year the Rules Committee made it clear that the Small Business Committee shall have an increased jurisdiction beyond the SBA and its programs. That means that the committee will consider issues such as the technology, agriculture, and other legislation that have a significant impact on small businesses.

To keep up with these issues, the committee has hired experts in the various areas to ensure the interests of entrepreneurs are protected. We are also seeking funds to provide dedicated staffing to assist the five subcommittees. They request six additional funding and three additional slots to have dedicated staff to assist the new subcommittee Chairs. This budget would make sure that that happens.

The committee also plans on holding a number of field hearings so that we can speak with small businesses directly. Millions of small businesses do not have the ability or their budget, their money, resources to express their concerns or to hire high priced lobbyists to come before Members of Congress. By doing hearings across the country we will create the opportunity to have members listen to their concerns and identify ways to improve the business environment.

The budget also incorporates the equipment needs of the committee. We requested a total of eight new computers for 2007. Since this Congress started, we have already ordered five new computers to accommodate this staff. We will need at least three more new computers when we are fully staffed. The committee will also need a new copier. The main majority office is currently operating without one.

I will also like to mention make mention of an item of importance that is not included in our committee's budget submission. The committee hearing room is in desperate need of major renovations. It badly needs upgrades to both the audio-visual system and the overall setup. The current setup is such that we can only have about half of the committee members seated at one time. In terms of technology the audio system is virtually unworkable and the room does not have the capacity to take advantage of new technologies. I will seek your assistance in helping address this problem.

In conclusion, the committee plans on using the requested resources to conduct rigorous oversight and work in passing legislation that will improve this Nation's economy. We have a number of important issues, which includes addressing the $12 billion of small business contracts being awarded to large companies, making sure that the Federal marketplace is open for small businesses in America, improving oversight and making changes to the SBA disaster loan program which failed during Hurricane Katrina. We will also undertake a measure, reauthorization of the Small Business Administration and its problems that have not been changed in over a decade.

I appreciate your time and will be willing to answer any question that members of the committee may have. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Velázquez follows:]

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ, NEW YORK
CHAIRWOMAN

STEVE CHABOT, OHIO

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business

2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515–6315

Statement of Chairwoman Nydia M. Velázquez
Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Funding Hearing
March 1, 2007 2:10 pm

Thank you Madam Chair Millender-McDonald and Ranking Member Ehlers.

I appreciate the opportunity today to come before the House Administration Committee and discuss the budget submission for the House Small Business Committee in the 110th Congress.

The Committee requests these funds to address the critical issues facing small businesses in this nation. With the help of Mr. Chabot, the Committee has already adopted an aggressive oversight plan that will significantly increase its legislative and oversight role.

This budget submission was developed in full consultation with Mr. Chabot's office. The committee seeks a twelve percent increase in funding from the last Congress. In terms of dollars, this increase request represents the third smallest of any of the committees.

I would like to note that our committee will change how the funds are allocated to the minority. Unlike previous Congresses, the minority will have control of a full third of the budget – including travel as opposed to just salary and personnel. I think it is important that Mr. Chabot and his staff have the flexibility to determine their spending priorities.

The increase in funding is particularly necessary because of the Committee's change in jurisdiction. When the House adopted its rules packages this year, the Rules Committee made it clear that the Small Business Committee shall have an increased jurisdiction beyond the SBA and its programs.

That means the committee will consider issues such as technology, agriculture, and other legislation that have a significant impact on small businesses. To keep up with these issues, the committee has hired experts in the various areas to ensure the interests of entrepreneurs are protected.

We are also seeking funds to provide dedicated staffing to assist the five subcommittees. The request seeks additional funding and three additional slots to have dedicated staff to assist the new subcommittee Chairs. This budget would make sure that happens.

The committee also plans on holding a number of field hearings so that we can speak with small businesses directly. Millions of small businesses do not have the ability to express their concerns to us in Washington. By doing hearings across the country, we will create the opportunity to have Members listen to their concerns and identify ways to improve the business environment.

The budget also incorporates the equipment needs of the committee. We requested a total of eight new computers for 2007. Since this Congress started, we have already ordered five new computers to accommodate the staff. We will need at least three more new computers when we are fully staffed. The committee will also need a new copier. The main Majority office is currently operating without one.

I would also like to make mention of an item of importance that is not included in our committee's budget submission. The committee hearing room is in desperate need of major renovations. It badly needs upgrades to both the audio/visual system and the overall setup. The current setup is such that we can only have about half of the Committee Members seated at one time. In terms of technology, the audio system is virtually unworkable and the room does not have the capacity to take advantage of new technologies. I would seek your assistance in helping address this problem.

In conclusion, the committee plans on using the requested resources to conduct rigorous oversight and work on passing legislation that will improve this nation's economy.

We have a number of important issues which includes:

Addressing the $12 billion of small business contracts being awarded to large companies;

Improving oversight and making changes to the SBA's disaster loan program which failed during Hurricane Katrina;

We will also undertake a major reauthorization of the Small Business Administration and its programs that have not been changed in over a decade.

I appreciate your time and would be willing to answer any questions that Members of the committee may have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. Mr. Chabot.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. STEVE CHABOT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Chairwoman Millender McDonald and Ranking Member Ehlers and the other members of the committee. I am pleased to join my friend, the Chair of the Small Business Committee, Ms. Velázquez, in submitting our committee funding request for the 110th Congress. As my colleagues know, the Small Business Committee receives the smallest allocation of any full committee and has historically received the lowest funding increase of any committee since the 104th Congress, or back in 1995.

The Chair of the House Administration Committee is of course a senior and respected member of the Small Business Committee and knows that our committee carries a full legislative load and will take on even more work this year as our jurisdiction expands. I believe the committee funding request is a fair one and hope you will give it every consideration.

I look forward to working with Chairwoman Velázquez in support of our Nation's small businesses and with your distinguished committee as well as we move forward. I thank the Chair and ranking member and all the other members of this committee, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you both so much for your great outline and presentation on small business.

Of course I sit on this Committee, so I know the clarion call of this chairwoman when she was ranking member on the disproportionate way the budget was set. It has always had the lowest infusion of funding.

However, we all recognize that there was not a budget passed last year, therefore we have to operate from the baseline of last year's budget and bring in the increase of about 2.2, 2.3 percent.

Now I will say this. The increase that we are giving all Chairs is across the board. So that in no way diminishes your numbers in terms of the increase. But we do not have the propensity at this moment to do anything else because of the lack of funding that the appropriators and budget folks have disallowed. You said your main office is without a computer, did I hear you correctly on that, and your hearing room does not have capacity to seat all members at one time? Those are issues that I have asterisked so that I can look into those. Although we know that space is a premium in this place, and that has been the cry from all chairpersons and ranking members; that they need additional slots. You need 3 additional slots, I have that outlined here.

It has become quite problematic. We regret that we have to tell you this and wish that we could tell you something else that has a rosier outcome, but that is the way it is. That is the position we are in with the CRs that went through.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Chair, I would ask that when you discuss the budget submission with the Speaker that you take note to the fact that the Small Business Committee jurisdiction has been expanded. With that comes more responsibility and therefore in order for us to do our job, we should be given more consideration when it comes to the budget.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I couldn't agree with you more, and of course I am only a lone voice of many who go to the Speaker to talk with her. But I will carry that with me knowing that you have always been as, one would say, short-changed in terms of your budget since 1994, as you so eloquently outlined, that that has impacted your budget.

I was amazed and really quite pleased to know that you are bringing in agriculture because one does not readily think small business agriculture. But it is definitely a fit.

I am also very appreciative to you, Madam Chairwoman, because it seems like there was somewhat of a tug that you had when you were ranking member for the two-third/one-third agreement. And you have done that in very open forum and you have done that with ease and so I applaud you on that because Mr. Chabot has worked very well with you and continues I am sure to work well with you, and also the travel and personnel that you are expanding along that line.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Chairwoman.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, please.

Mr. CHABOT. I would just like to note that the Chair has been very fair and very cooperative and very gracious. The committee staffs are working together and the members as well, so we are very pleased with the working relationship that we have and we have every reason to believe that it will continue.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I tell you, those are refreshing words coming from a ranking member. But then those are the words that we have heard all day today from ranking members and so we have had at least the pleasantry of sitting here hearing that there is cooperation between the chairperson and the ranking member. And that is a good thing. So we thank you for that.

And with that, I will turn it over to the Ranking Member.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, let me join in congratulating you for working together on the budget and presenting it jointly, and I appreciate that sort of cooperation. I especially appreciate the two-third and one-third ratio because this committee worked very hard for a dozen years to establish that principle. Both the ranking member and I are committed to maintaining the two-thirds/one-third tradition.

What is the definition of small business now?

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Well, you know, that is one of the issues that we still have pending with the Small Business Administration given the fact that in the last 6 years their budget has been cut by 40 percent. They don't have the manpower to be able to define what a small business is because it has to be based on the different industries. What is for the restaurant industry is not for manufacturing, and so on. So it is kind of confusing, but we are trying to do our best.

Mr. EHLERS. Well, I appreciate that, and I was not trying to lay a trap. I am curious because I have heard so many things over the years.

I think we all know and we all agree that small business is the greatest job creation that we have in this Nation. I think it is very important that we protect the small businesses. Perhaps maybe

you can take on the issue of the estate tax as well because it affects small businesses more than anyone else. Farmers and small businessmen, I hear from them all the time. So perhaps in your spare time you can work with the Ways and Means Committee and come up with a solution to that.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. If I may, that issue is part of our oversight plan. But let me just say you know every place we go or every person that you hear, they talk about how small businesses are the drivers of our economy. They create 80 percent of all new jobs. But when it comes to providing the resources for all to do the job of helping small businesses to do what they do best—and that is creating jobs—we need resources.

With expanded jurisdiction, we want to go do field hearings. They don't have the resources that would allow for them to pay lobbyists to come and talk to us. So it is great if we can do field hearings across America, rural America and urban America. We go and we listen to them.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I must say that America is waiting for small business to come across the country because they do want to hear from you and want to really have you hear from them. You are absolutely right, everyone talks about small businesses being the engine and yet they do nothing about it. So that is what we call doubletalk. I am sure you two are fed up with the double-talk and want something other than that and want something productive.

Are there any other Members? Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Chairwoman, I have never served on this committee but I have heard a lot about it from the now chairwoman. I do congratulate her and the ranking member. I served with her 13 years on the Judiciary Committee. I am confident that you will have a good Congress working together.

I just—not having served on the committee, I am struck by the comments and I do remember that there was not necessarily as pleasing a relationship in the last hearing as we see here today. And I am glad that we have—you have established what we think is the right thing, which is the minority gets their third, and they get to control their third. And that is the way it should be. And I compliment you for living up to that, even though there were some issues about that when you were in the minority.

On that, I mean, we understand that there is a limit, Madam Chairwoman, of 2 percent. But if a committee such as this one—if a committee such as this one really was down unusually low, I would certainly support your efforts to make some kind of accommodation for that. Because doing it across the board when there was something weird, weirdly low to begin with, it doesn't seem exactly right. And more than just right, it defeats our mission, which is, you know—I just know from my own area and I am sure this is true across the country—there is some oversight that needs to be done on these SBA programs and small businesses aren't necessarily getting what we think they are getting. And I think that both the chairwoman and the ranking member would want to do that because it is—I mean this is not a partisan issue. This is about the small business people of America.

So I just wanted to support whatever efforts you make to get a little bit of a bigger bump-up. The idea that you don't have enough room for every Member of the committee to sit, how can that be acceptable? So I think that some adjustment would need to be made, and I thank the gentlelady.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I thank the gentlelady for her comments, duly noted. I think that is an issue that we should look into and address with the Speaker. When I go I will have a long laundry list of things that the Speaker at least will hear me out.

Do any other Members wish to speak on this? Yes. First Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Very quickly, Madam Chair, the continuity we spoke about in other committees certainly would apply here as well. I would be interested in knowing whether it is tougher to keep some of your staff partly because you may not be accommodating them as well as some other committees. Has that been a problem?

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Basically, my staff and the staff that was serving with me before still remain, yes.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. So they are loyal.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Yes, they are.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. They are loyal and——

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. They are loyal but there is a point where, you know, the private market out there is seeking for people with a type of expertise and knowledge that they have.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. And we all rely upon that as well, certainly on the Armed Services. The Department of Defense, we deal with contract bundling all the time and the importance of bringing in small business. So I appreciate the work that you all are doing. So thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you all so much, Ms. Davis. Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I apologize for getting here late. I just wanted to add my own observation, having served on Small Business when I first got to Congress and having rejoined recently. It is an important committee whose work has been neglected, and I believe this—and I don't mean to sound partisan because I believe you have members on both sides of the aisle agree with the observation that the bulk of the work has to do of course with the Small Business Administration and the many programs that are dedicated to the proposition that small businesses are very important and we should support them to the extent and the degree that we must in order to have a robust economy.

However, the Small Business Administration has truly been the stepchild of the administration, in my opinion. If you look at the declining budgetary dollars, declining emphasis on the programs and so on, not to lay the blame at anybody, we need to fix the problem. And I know that the ranking member joins the chairwoman in that endeavor.

So I would like to associate my comments with those made earlier by Congresswoman Lofgren. If at all possible—and I know we have had other Chairs and ranking members come before us—but if we look at small business and look at the present situation being

experienced, if there is anything that we can do to assist them, again, just in the way of resources, and main facilities or to meet the tremendous burdens and challenges that they actually face, and with that I thank you and I thank the chairwoman and ranking member, Mr. Chabot.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much and your words were duly noted. It does seem, as the Chairwoman said, and it has been reiterated, that if you have a hearing room without the capacity to seat the panel of the members, I think that in and of itself is something to be looked at.

Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just very quickly, your introductory statement, Madam Chair, you made a comment that you took a big jolt some years ago and were trying to get back up. And I didn't realize the jolt was that big until I looked at the chart and saw it and the staff verified this. In the 103rd Congress, you were at $5,775,000 and some change. And under this proposed new budget you will be at $5.965 million and change. This means that for next year it will be the first time that you are getting more money than you did in the 103rd Congress. So it took you only 14 years to recover from the cut.

I think you can make a pretty strong case—we are limited this year because of the lack of appropriations—but you may be able to make a case to the Speaker that you should get plussed up a little bit. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. If only a physicist would be able to look at that. Thank you folks so very much for being here today, and we look forward to working with you. Good luck.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. The next panel chair and ranking member that we have here are Chairman Filner and Ranking Member Buyer from Veterans' Affairs.

It is my understanding that they were next. Thank you both for being here, good afternoon to you. It is a pleasure to have you come before the Committee to speak on your budget as well as the great work that you do and are doing for our veterans. I can't think of a committee that is more worthy to be praised than that of Veterans' Affairs. And so we are very pleased with the work that you do. We welcome you. Mr. Chairman, if you want to get started.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BOB FILNER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. FILNER. Thank you, Madam Chair. It is nice to see you in the Chair's position.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. FILNER. And all my California colleagues here. And I am so glad you have had such unity.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We let a few of the others come forward.

Mr. FILNER. I am so glad you had so much unity up to now because I think Mr. Buyer and I have not come to an agreement on our personnel budget. But we will get into that. My full statement is submitted to you. I am just going to say a few words.

It is a fairly simple budget. I heard some of the other Chairs asking for more. What we are doing is to assume a flat line for 2007 and we have the exact same personnel and administrative budget distributed in the exact same way as occurred in the previous Congress.

We were tasked, I think we were told we might get a 2 to 4 percent increase for next year. I kept hearing 2 percent while I have been here. We assumed the 4 percent and just raised everything 4 percent.

Over 90 percent of our budget is obviously in personnel and the rest in travel and IT, printing, those kinds of things. So clearly, we have to stay the same for 2007. We projected the 4 percent. And it is that simple for you.

I would like to reserve the right to just answer any questions that Mr. Buyer raises. But, again, our staff slots, our personnel, everything stays the same, and with the percentage increase for fiscal 2008.

And that would conclude my remarks, Madam Chair.

[The statement of Mr. Filner follows:]

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Statement
Chairman Bob Filner
before the
Committee on House Administration

February 28, 2007

Thank you Madame Chair for this opportunity to appear before your committee to present our budget submission for the 110th Congress. Ranking Member Steve Buyer joins me here today to discuss the VA Committee's request.

As you know, we have oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA is the second largest federal agency, employing over 218,000 people with budget authority of over $80 billion.

The VA Committee's total budget request for the 110th Congress of $6.9 million will provide us with the funds to continue to hire and retain the finest staff.

This budget will also allow us to continue to provide the highest quality oversight to ensure our veterans who access the VA have the highest quality of care. This is of the utmost importance, particularly at this time in our nation's history. This budget provides the oversight that ensures the men and women transitioning into the VA health care system are able to do so quickly and effectively. Our troops deserve a seamless transition from active duty to the VA system. Additionally, we will continue to ensure that those already in the system are adequately provided for.

The committee has an aggressive agenda and focus on several areas of concern:

- A Budget Worthy of Our Veterans

    - Medicare Subvention
    - Third Party Reimbursement
    - Assured Funding
- A GI Bill For The 21st Century
    - Updating Benefits
    - Recognizing the new force structure
- Welcoming Home Our New Veterans
    - Seamless Transition
    - A PTSD Initiative
    - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
    - Jobs, Jobs, Jobs!
- Justice For Our Older Veterans
    - WWII (Filipinos, Merchant Marines)
    - Korea and Vietnam (Agent Orange)
    - Gulf War (Gulf War Illness)
    - No Offsets (Concurrent receipt, SBP/DIC)
    - Long Term Care
- Cleaning Up The Benefits Backlog

We hope you will look favorably on the modest amount we have included in this request.

Travel:

The funds we request will enable us to travel to many of more than 1,000 VA hospitals, outpatient clinics, nursing homes, national cemeteries and regional benefits processing offices within the VA system. Our request for travel funds has increased for the 110th due to more frequent travel and the cost associated with the travel. Madame Chair, there are 9 new Members of the VA Committee, and many of them have approached me about travel to VA facilities in their areas and the need for thorough, in-depth field hearings on the state of VA Benefits and Health care. When Members travel to each other's districts they are able to learn so much about the needs of veterans in local communities. Careful attention will be paid to keeping travel expenses reasonable and responsible to the demands of the taxpayer.

Equipment:

The Committee's request for equipment funds is in line with previous requests. There are some major purchases necessary

over the next two years to replace copiers, invest in a document management system and replacement of one-third of the hardware inventory according to the CAO's "end-of-life" cycle program. Computer software is also due to be upgraded to maintain House technical standards.

In the formal submission to your Committee prior to these hearings, we have outlined the hardware, software and services that we plan to purchase in the 110th Congress beyond centrally funded alternatives. As we take advantage of technology, purchase and utilize portable and remote communication devices, such as the House Blackberry program, our technology and telecommunication costs also rise accordingly.

Staffing:

The professional full time staff comes to work everyday in the service of veterans and deserves the modest merit increases and COLAs included in this budget. They are a driven, professional

staff – and we need to look after them with the same diligence we do our veterans.

Administratively, we split our salary allotment by two-thirds to one-third, with the Minority controlling their payroll within their allotted one-third of the budget. Following the guidance of this committee, our budget for this year is exactly identical to the budget of last year in the 109th Congress.

Closing:

As VA Committee chairmen before me have always emphasized during this Funding Resolution process, we are talking about an obligation by this country, to real people here - not just office and medical buildings with the VA logo.

Madame Chair, we have always been a small Committee with big responsibility. There are 24 million veterans in this country who are directly affected every day by the work that we do

here. They and their dependents, 63 million Americans, nearly 1/4 of our population, are potential VA beneficiaries.

As a small committee we work smartly to offer the finest legislative initiatives to maintain and improve the lives of veterans and their families. Your own caseworkers can verify the VA workload they handle, the incredible waiting times for medical appointments and adjudication of claims and other problems that veterans face every day with the VA.

Madame Chair, let me assure you with great pride that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs gives the Congress and the veterans of this country their money's worth everyday.

I am happy to answer any questions you might have today.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay, fine, thank you. Mr. Buyer.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. STEVE BUYER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. BUYER. Thank you, Ma'am. Representing this Nation's veterans is a very important job. So first I must say you will make me feel very comfortable if you have the staff take the United States Flag and place it in its proper position in the righthand side behind you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. You are absolutely right and that is the first order of business after all of this is over today. Thank you.

Mr. BUYER. I wish I could sit here with envy as I listened to the testimony of the others come before you and talk about their warm and gracious working relationship that they had. I cannot testify that we have that at all. I cannot concur with proposed budget at all. I was not consulted. When I heard that Mr. Filner wanted to adopt the very same budget that Lane Evans and I had come up with before, I said—even though I was at home still on drugs recovering from surgery, I called Bob and tried to explain to him what the rationale was for that budget. I don't believe he was in a very good listening mode, and said that is our budget and that is the way it is going to be.

The first time the two of us had an opportunity to sit down and discuss was about 2 hours ago, and it was not one of the more pleasant meetings I have ever had here in Congress. And so it is with a heavy heart that I have to testify and nonconcur. Because the Veterans' Affairs Committee is one of the greatest committees you can serve on in this Congress. And I have made a plea to Bob that, you know, if we can't even agree on the simplicity of a budget between us how are we going to work on the big issues?

And this committee—let's throw it on the table here. There was—the Republican leadership put a squeeze on the Veterans' Affairs Committee when they had some challenges with Chris Smith. And then when I became the chairman I said I will accept this chairmanship but you need to make an investment in the infrastructure because it is lagging very far behind, Chairwoman, and this committee did that.

And I didn't get it all in 2005, but they did it in 2006.

And so when Jim Holly, who is the Staff Director for the minority and Lane Evans, what we decided to do was that we would sacrifice on the personnel side and make all the investment in our infrastructure, and we did that.

So you gave us the money to do that. We made huge investments, you know all of it—you name it, from laptops to servers to printers, even had our offsite. It is where it needs to be.

And so to say, well, the budget for which I am asking, the testimony—I wrote down the words—is the exact disbursement, the same as in the last Congress. That is not accurate at all. Because even there were some payments that I took out of my personnel side, now have slipped into the other services. It is accurate to say that the number that the minority is receiving is the exact same number that the minority received in January of 2006. That is correct. And that the Democrat majority is saying we are living under

the exact same personnel number as the Republican number in 2006. That is correct.

But what has been broken here is when Lane Evans and I agreed to make all this investment in infrastructure to then sacrifice on personnel—it is hard for me to say what are you going to do with now with all the extra money? And there is some pain involved at this committee at the moment. There is real pain in our committee. The pain is there because you, the Democratic Caucus, went through a fight with regard to who would be the chairman of the committee. And Lane Evans supported Mike Michaud. So anybody who was supported, was hired by Lane Evans who supported Mike Michaud, they are gone. So the senior experienced leadership out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee are gone. People I have known and worked with for the entire time I have been here are gone.

So it is very easy for Mr. Filner to testify and say, well, I don't need any of that. Well, yeah, these people have been gone. You have been operating under a shoestring. But we, on the minority side, sure, we pared down, but we still have pain. And it is time to hold to that deal and move to the personnel side. If you actually do disburse extra dollars to the committee, how do I have any faith that the chairman is even going to turn it to personnel? And what is he going to hold it on to? When Lane and I said let's put money into travel, really, well, the travel thing never really got utilized because when we travel we travel on the VA's dollar like you do on the Armed Services Committee with the DOD paying for it.

So we have 50,000 lying in that account, and Mr. Filner wants to go to the Philippines on that money.

I am challenged and it is—I am very disturbed that I have to be here and nonconcur because this is supposed to now to be one of the most bipartisan committees. And if we cannot even agree on a committee budget—I am going to use your words. It is the starting point. And those are the words that I also share with Mr. Filner. They are the starting point. And if we can't even agree to this budget, how are we going to agree on the big issues? So it is a heavy heart that I have right now.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Chair, if I may respond.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FILNER. Thank you.

I, too, agree that we haven't come to agreement on this. I guess he blames it on me and I blame it on him.

But the real issue, Madam Chair, is we were given a flatline budget. We consulted with the previous staff and all the paperwork, which we have submitted to you. And we just said we will divide it up the way it was before, which is exactly what we did, divide up the personnel budget and the services budget exactly as it was before. Apparently, because you know there was pain on the minority side, they had to cut their staff in half. His upper staff was paid at very high levels. So he could not fit his staff into the budget that was given to us the previous year and he had before. So he wanted more money. And I said, well, we have to live within our budget.

And then he claimed that the minority really had $50,000 more, which is what we want. And it turned out that at the end of the

budget year the staffs agreed on a bonus procedure. The majority at the time got 100 grand. The minority got 50,000. And the staff distributed bonuses.

I didn't have any say in that. I didn't know what was going on. But we don't know whether we will have that surplus in all our personnel budgets. If we have surplus, we would like to reward staff who have done better, or if we pay them low because of our budget. So that could be distributed as bonuses at the end of the year. But we don't know that at this point. So I don't know the problem except that he has overpaid his staff and he wants us to cover that. And I don't think that is our role, certainly at the beginning of a budget year, to say that we are going to exceed our budget. The fiscal conservative minority is not being too fiscal conservative at this point.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Chairman, it seems to me like there has to be a starting point here.

Mr. BUYER. Right. And it doesn't start by insulting my staff.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, we are not going to point fingers back and forth. What we are trying to do here now is help resolve this issue. Both of you know that your committee is extremely important. As I look at some of the itinerary items for your committee, you are going to be investigating the status of veterans' benefits. You are going to be investigating the national cemeteries systems operation. You are going to be looking at the national veterans service organization conventions and investigate the veterans health administration network impact.

There are very critical issues confronting the two of you leaders. Not to mention Walter Reed has now come upon us, and we must look at that.

We cannot talk about what is in the past, whatever that may have been and whichever side was advantaged by that or not. What we have to do is move forward. Going forward, it is my suggestion as we try to wrap this up, present a resolution on the floor, because we are late in getting this committee budget into resolution form to present to the floor so that we can then be in regular order, if you will, at least begin to present the committees with their funding so that they can move on their issues and their initiatives.

It would be my suggestion that the two of you talk. It seems like that is the one thing lacking here, that you have not sat and talked about what you do have.

When I hear, "well, I don't know, I am not sure what is going on," that is a clear indication that communication has broken down. I would suggest that you do communicate with each other. Good strong leaders can disagree on many things but agree on one thing, and that is your budget. So I would suggest, and if I might do that, that the two of you please get together on your budget so that we can then move forward in solidifying this resolution with the Veterans' Affairs budget in it signifying that the two of you have come together with an agreement, and I think you have the two-thirds/one-third. Am I correct on that, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. FILNER. Yes, Ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. But you have funding from travel that was never taken of 50 thousand. Am I correct on that?

Mr. BUYER. Correct.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Chair, if I may, I was not a ranking member when this budget, previous budget was drawn up. I am now chairman. We looked at our needs. The VA told us that they would not be covering the travel as they apparently did in the past. I don't know what happened. So we had to build in our travel expenses.

And I would not like you to take away from the testimony the characterization that we have not communicated. Mr. Buyer is just wrong about the number of times that we talked. We talked several times. But our staff has been in communication for hours and hours on this.

We have a basic disagreement. He wants more money than the budget allows us to do. It is as simple as that. And he hasn't come up with any compromise. He hasn't come up with any suggestions. He just said, I want the 50,000 because that is what you had last time.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Let me ask you, Mr. Chairman, have you come up with any type of conciliatory agreement here?

Mr. FILNER. Again we are starting with the exact same budget as Mr. Buyer has said. And when we come to all these other expenses, if we don't need the money for travel, if we don't need the money for copiers, if we don't need the money for computers, then we have some money to talk about. We don't know that at the beginning of the fiscal year.

The CHAIRWOMAN. This is the very reason why you should be communicating because whether or not the Veterans' Affairs Department or the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs or whomever has cut off your travel, you might want to go to them and see why they have done that. There could be an explanation that clears all of that.

All I am saying to you is that we certainly don't want you to go away from here with a misunderstanding of the issue. The issue is the two of you must come together in agreement for this budget to work. You must come together in order for us to move the resolution for final passage.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Chair, do I understand the rules of the House such that in the event that the minority does not meet the budget that is given in the resolution, does the chairman have the authority to take steps that will put that staff into budget compliance? We checked with the Parliamentarian. We checked with the rules of the House. And I think the Chair has that authority. I just want to make that clear.

The CHAIRWOMAN. It could be that understanding, Mr. Chairman. The thing of it is, though, we are working outside of a budget for this committee. And this committee has—the functionality to have a budget and to work within that budget.

I would say to you that in having not met with this type of issue before, but I clearly do understand in personnel management that I have had, that in order to resolve this the two of you must come to the table to resolve this. It cannot be resolved in this committee. It has to be resolved between the two of you. And the two of you, I think, would like to get this over and done with so that we can put you in this resolution and move forward in submitting this resolution.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Chairwoman, I don't permit anything like this to defocus my job in serving the Nation's veterans. But you just got a flavor—you just got a flavor of what I am dealing with, an insult to my staff saying that they are overpaid. And then, when I turn and ask his staff a particular question he turns and says you don't have to respond to him.

So when you are saying, Steve, get together, work these things out, I want you to know that I have made that effort. And you know I can't talk to a wall. I don't know what to do. If anybody can help me here, help me. I would be more than happy to. I want to get on with business.

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Chair, could I ask——

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, but I need to go to the Ranking Member if you don't mind, Mrs. Lofgren, and then I will get to you. Mr. Ehlers.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Seems about every 4 years we have a dust-up like this from one committee or another.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I have been here and I didn't see the dust, Mr. Ehlers.

Mr. EHLERS. Obviously we can't get into a refereeing situation here on this committee, but it is our responsibility to try and make sure that you get this resolved because we have to put some numbers in. It seems to me the basic difference here is: you are meeting the two-thirds/one-third ratio, but that fact is not concluded in what I believe is the agreement that Mr. Buyer had with the previous chairman—or I am sorry, the previous ranking member—which resulted in replacing equipment and building of the infrastructure of the office. Given that, there should be very little need in the budget to do that this year. Perhaps there is some money there that could be used to ameliorate the situation.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Ehlers, that is an assumption that Mr. Buyer made. We haven't made that decision yet, but we don't know——

Mr. EHLERS. I am not saying you have made a decision.

Mr. FILNER. But you are telling me we don't have any equipment needs. We don't know that, and you don't know that.

Mr. EHLERS. No, I don't. I am speculating. I am simply saying that the issue here is really what the result of that agreement with Mr. Evans was. I don't know. I am saying that has to be part of the discussion, but as I am saying, we can't referee this. We are going to have to end up putting something in the resolution that goes before the House.

The other factor that I want to mention, it especially concerned me, is not getting agreement on such an important issue. By that I mean it's important to so many veterans in this country. It is something that you simply have to get an agreement on. If it is impossible for you or your staff to work out an agreement, then try to involve the good judgment of the minority leader and the Speaker. You could have some of their staff meet with you, ascertain the facts, and try to help you get an agreement. Or if there is someone else that you want to pull in from the outside who can help.

It seems to me that you are not too likely to get agreement between the two of you in the short time we have before we have to present a resolution to the floor. So I think the two points I am

making are simply, very simply, one is that the agreement with the previous Chair has to be factored into the discussion and, secondly, I hope you can resolve this between the two of you in some friendly fashion.

With that, I will yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member. I was just getting counsel on the Committee to talk with me. Mr. Chairman, your question is whether or not you can present your full budget to the Committee for functionality without having the minority approve it? Am I kind of in the ballpark about that? When you said that the rules and the Parliamentarian have both ruled on this?

Mr. FILNER. No, I said if their salary, their monthly salary allocations come to me for my signature and they are above the budget that I have been given, then I have no choice but to reduce those salaries to the existing budget.

Mr. BUYER. Extra 50,000 I gave to the Democrats in December, I used that in the calculation of the one-third/two-thirds.

The CHAIRWOMAN. But you see, now the Chairman would have the authority to reduce that to be within the construct of the budget and what he is talking about. The 50,000 that you are talking about, Mr. Buyer, I am not sure. Is that still money that is in this committee? That you say you gave, you gave 50,000 back to the Democrats?

Mr. BUYER. Yes, I did, in addition. So if you were to say, all right, Steve, what was the allocation majority and minority in 2007, I don't know what the final number was. He wants to use the number that was given in the January of 2006. So at the end of the year—I had Jim Lariviere back here, Marine colonel went to Afghanistan. So we had some extra dollars. And I moved those dollars, 50,000 over to the Democrats in December. And then other dollars were allocated to the majority. I don't even know how they broke out. So the question that you just asked is because, what I tried to share with Bob is that Bob—what Vern just hit on the head—when Lane and I said we are going to spend the money on infrastructure and sacrifice on personnel, it is now time to move it back on the personnel column, I said, I have gotten, I have got this extra 50,000 I already gave to the minority, I am going to use that in the calculation.

That is why he is now asking the question, saying, well, I guess what I will do to Buyer now is I will really hammer him. I will go in there and fire somebody on his staff and I will get him to his number. That is really going to be pleasing to relations, isn't it? But that is the purpose of his question to you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am not sure of that——

Mr. BUYER. Oh, yeah.

The CHAIRWOMAN. But I am sure that the Chairman does have control of that budget at all times. And the 50,000 that you gave back to him coupled with the travel funding of 50,000 that is still in there, there has to be some type of an agreement that you can work together to try to find common ground.

Ms. Lofgren.

Ms. LOFGREN. May I ask, this isn't making sense to me I am afraid because we are in the 110th Congress. We start new in the 110th Congress.

And unfortunately, apparently the chairman and ranking member are now not singing Kumbaya right now. Maybe that will change. We hope it will. But we have seen that before. I mean in the last Congress some of the chairmen and the ranking members did not hit it off either, and we hope that that doesn't happen but sometimes it does happen. And when that happens, the default position is the minority is entitled one-third. And the position—this didn't always happen in the 109th Congress, but it was supposed to happen, that normally the minority is entitled to one-third and they are entitled to control one-third, not to have to go and beg the chairman for their one-third. They should have their one-third, and they get to control their one-third.

So, the question is, is the minority being given one-third and control of one-third of the whole budget?

Mr. FILNER One-third of the personnel part of the budget.

Mr. BUYER. Right.

Mr. FILNER. No. One-third of the personnel.

Ms. LOFGREN. One-third of the personnel budget.

Mr. FILNER. Which is exactly the way it was done for the last decade or more.

Mr. BUYER Worked out.

Ms. LOFGREN. That may be but that is not the way this has worked out. I had to chastise some of the Democratic ranking members in the last set of hearings because I think that it really works better personally for the minority to control its own budget, but some of the ranking members made deals with the Chairman and did other things, and I guess if there is a deal that people want to make, you can disrupt it.

Mr. FILNER. It is not just the question of deals, Ms. Lofgren. For example, we have a couple of IT people. Those are shared expenses that don't come out of the personnel; they come out of the administrative part of the budget. So we are sharing that because the computers are all served by the IT contractors—so it is not a question of black and white of who has control. There are all kinds of expenses that the committee as a whole has.

Ms. LOFGREN. Right. The committee room and the furniture and the like.

Mr. FILNER. Exactly.

Ms. LOFGREN. But most of the things that I was concerned about in the last Congress were ranking members who really had made, I think, significant accommodations that I wouldn't have made, but I guess it was up to them to make.

That is not the case here. I think personally that putting aside things that can't be divided, such as your IT professionals that is going to be, in the best possible Silicon Valley way, a geek and a nerd and hopefully not a member of any political party, but anything that is really substantive where you two might not agree, there really does need to be the one-third/two-thirds, I think.

Mr. FILNER. If that was looked at, exactly. And one-third of the IT budget, I am not sure they could do their stuff because it is a whole.

Ms. LOFGREN. I guess part of what—if you could agree, and maybe we will have to agree for you, that there are some things that are so nerdish that you have to agree to share, like the IT guy.

Mr. FILNER. Ninety-two percent of the budget is personnel. So that is one-third/two-thirds, and they have full control of it.

Ms. LOFGREN. I had understood from the written material that it was one-third/two-thirds completely. So maybe we do need some more illumination on this, and I thank both the Chairman and Ranking Member for their——

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Ms. Lofgren. One thing is for sure, if this is not resolved, we can then exclude this committee from the resolution, and you can go to the floor with your argument and see how that comes out. That is the one thing, if I am hearing correctly, at the end of the year that we are speaking of, the 2006 year, there was $150,000 that was not spent; $100,000 went to Mr. Buyer for staff bonuses; then $50,000 was given to Mr. Filner.

Mr. FILNER. No. It was given to the Democratic staff for bonuses. I was not the Ranking Member at the time. I had no knowledge of this, and I suspect Mr. Evans didn't either.

Mr. BUYER. He did.

The CHAIRWOMAN. If there is funding left over, who should then accept the one-third of that funding?

Mr. FILNER. I am sorry? If there is money at the end of the budget year?

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes.

Mr. FILNER. Then we will get together and figure out how to use that. But obviously we are at the beginning of the year. A budget is a planning document. A budget is taking into account the best estimates you have at this time of personnel and travel and copy and IT and all that. And we made our budget as we did, because we are under a CR. We started with the same planning document that we did last year when we were in the minority. We have the exact same planning document to start with. We don't know how it will end yet. We are just in the first month.

The CHAIRWOMAN. No funding is left over from that year, Mr. Filner?

Mr. FILNER. I don't know of any. I don't know if there was, if we can use any, but nobody told me there was any budget left over.

Mr. BUYER. May I ask a question?

The CHAIRWOMAN. So you are not sure whether there was funding left over from that year?

Mr. FILNER. Does committee funding move over from year to year? I don't know.

The CHAIRWOMAN. No, it cannot.

Mr. FILNER. So there is no money. They used it for staff bonuses.

The CHAIRWOMAN. So the $50,000 that was transferred over is not there because it has been resolved here.

Mr. FILNER. Exactly.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Fine.

Mr. BUYER. What would be the number of the available dollars that we said would be split among the committees to an allocation—what is the number to the Veterans Affairs Committee?

The CHAIRWOMAN. You mean in dollars and cents?

Mr. BUYER. In dollars and cents.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I would have to calculate that out.

Mr. BUYER. Somebody have that in a chart?

The CHAIRWOMAN. I have a chart here with me, stating how much you will be getting for this year, given the 2.2, 2.3 inflation, that is $3.5 million and some-odd dollars, and that is what you are getting for the 2007 year.

Mr. BUYER. So if that allocation—let me just throw this out. It seems to be really helpful. If any allocation over and above on the budget from which Mr. Filner has presented to this committee is allocated to personnel, that goes a long way in helping to resolve this. If you are looking for areas, grounds of compromise, wherever you can move forward, I just throw that out on the table. I have no idea what Mr. Filner would feel about it or what his ideas would be.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. McCarthy wants to speak. Mr. McCarthy.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a couple of questions. I am a freshman but I used to be the Republican leader in the State Assembly and I would negotiate all the money for all of our committees. My only recommendation, one thing I would say, I had some very heated debates, but once we got the budget done, I found we agreed on a lot more things on the floor, that we came to a much better agreement. But my one question for Chairman Filner: Are you doing any evaluation currently on what your needs will be for computers?

Mr. FILNER. Of course.

Mr. MCCARTHY. And how far along? And when will that be done?

Mr. FILNER. We made an initial assessment and things are not as I heard described to Mr. Buyer; that is, we don't have any more needs. But that process is ongoing and should be done soon.

Mr. MCCARTHY. How soon?

Mr. FILNER. Let me just ask my staff director if I may.

Mr. BUYER. Could I respond for a second?

Mr. MCCARTHY. I will come to you in one second.

The CHAIRWOMAN. To whom are we waiting for?

Mr. MCCARTHY. He is getting his answer right there.

Mr. FILNER. In our statement that I had provided you—

Mr. MCCARTHY. I have it right here.

Mr. FILNER. It says equipment. And we talk about our 2-year plan and the document manager system, replacement of one-third of the hardware, et cetera, et cetera, update the computer software. So that was included in the budget that we gave to you.

Mr. MCCARTHY. So you have—you are done with your assessment then? Because I do see in here computers and stuff.

Mr. FILNER. Yeah. There are other decisions—for example, as it turns out, I didn't know that the committee is not on the same system as the rest of the House in terms of its software. They aren't on the Quorum system. We have to decide whether to make that change or not. I mean, those kinds of decisions have not been made.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Maybe I am not asking properly, you tell me. I am just wondering—and part of the debate I heard, you said, as you referred back to the Ranking Member here, you weren't sure yet because you don't know what the needs are for computers. And here I read equipment needed. So I am just wondering is there an ongoing assessment? If there is, when will the date be there?

Mr. FILNER. We made our assessment. There are changes that occur. The whole point of a budget is you make an estimate, and then things change. Salary savings may occur, computer savings may occur, software savings. We don't know. So we did our best judgment of what our needs are, and then we evaluate those periodically.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Maybe I am not asking properly. I am just responding to something I heard from you. I am wondering—are you doing an assessment currently? Because that is what I thought I heard. If I heard differently, just tell me. I am just wondering is that coming? Earlier you said yes, and it is going to be done soon. I am just wondering is there a date set? If it is not just say no.

Mr. FILNER. I don't know what you heard. The statement we have made, a preliminary assessment of our software and hardware needs. That is in the statement I gave you.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Oh, so you are done with your assessment?

Mr. FILNER. Well, it is always ongoing. You know that. Things change. You make your best statement at the beginning of the budget year, and then you constantly reevaluate.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Okay.

Mr. FILNER. I mean, what is the budget process when you first open an office? The same exact thing. We decide what we think we need, and it turns out we should have bought two computers, and we didn't, so we have to make some changes.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We have them here. Mr. McCarthy, have you finished?

Mr. MCCARTHY. I have some more questions, if I may.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. McCarthy, may I respond to that, then?

Mr. MCCARTHY. Yes, please.

Mr. BUYER. I believe Lane Evans and I fulfilled our obligation to this committee when we testified for those dollars. We spent $206,754.04. We bought four printers, a lease on a backup server, purchased eight laptops, leased 12 laptops and leased a copier. That was $60,000 in 2005.

In 2006 we did a lease buyout package and that terminated the lease on the backup server. Knowing that I am going to the minority, I bought out all the leases. I wanted to leave whoever the next Chairman was going to be in the best position. So we bought 20 desktops, 5 laptops for the alternate site, 16 portable drives, 1 medium-duty copier, 15 BlackBerries, 9 label printers, CMS upgrades, an additional server, backup power station for service. The total buy: $206,000-plus dollars. That is a lot of money.

Mr. MCCARTHY. You actually answered my question, how much did you spend.

Mr. BUYER. He said, well, it is in our budget, here is what is happening. Come on.

The CHAIRWOMAN. You have to wrap it up here, gentlemen.

Mr. BUYER. There is a pad number. He pads it. So you pad it $13,000 on anticipated equipment for 2008. Then he pads another one over here by $10,000. That is a $23,000 pad. Now why would you do a $23,000 pad? Those are the numbers that Lane and I talked about.

As we go into the next year, those dollars are there for the personnel because we would sacrifice on the personnel side. So,

Madam Chairwoman, your words to me I embrace. The challenge which we face—we need that additional staff to do the job, to take care of these veterans and do the investigations.

So I am really perplexed. We come to the committee, we ask for additional moneys to do all these upgrades in infrastructure, sacrifice on personnel, and now is time to do the personnel to take care of veterans, and I can't get access to the dollars. Mr. McCarthy, that is my challenge.

Mr. MCCARTHY. So you spent $206,000 last time on equipment.

Mr. BUYER. That would be 2005–2006.

Mr. MCCARTHY. My only question, Madam Chair, does this committee have the jurisdiction and power to set their budget?

The CHAIRWOMAN. We only set the aggregate dollar amount that you see here. We cannot decipher just what in terms of incrementally or itemization of what they need. That is the decision of the Chairperson, along with the Ranking Member.

Mr. McCarthy, I think we have exhausted this to the level that, as we see it, money that is being requested is money that is in the new budget to bring back to do something that was done in 2006. I am not sure that can be done. The $50,000 that was given. Money does not go over. So we are talking about all new money going forward, and money going forward is outlined here and the money that I have just given you. So I am not sure whether or not any other funding that you are requesting for any other reason can come from one pot or the other, unless the two of you sit and talk about that.

But that is new money. It is not old money. You have no old money. Lane Evans and no one else can bring back any money that was once here. We do not have any more money. Now, if you want to conclude, I will——

Mr. MCCARTHY. If I could just conclude. I think the way I hear it is not that the minority is saying there is any money left over. I think what the word I heard was, the budget is being set with what—the January money, not with what was truly set between the minority and majority at the end of the day. And the only concern that I would have and I don't want to put any words in anyone's mouth, so I would just ask the Chairman: The question from Ms. Lofgren was, at the end of the day if money is left over, is that split one-third/two-thirds? Would that be the case? Or no?

Mr. FILNER. We haven't come to that situation. They decided to split the money personnel-wise. I mean, if we decide we have money that we can do extra stuff with, it could be personnel, it could be equipment, it could be either of those. Those decisions are way down the line. They made the decision 11 months down the line for that. I don't know what is going to occur.

Mr. MCCARTHY. But in your mind, if there is money left over, it is not one-third/two-thirds, it is negotiated. I am not putting words in your mouth; I am just asking.

Mr. FILNER. If we decide it goes to personnel, it is one-third/two-thirds.

Mr. MCCARTHY. If you decide. Okay. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. First of all, there is no money left over. Let's make sure we define that. There is no money left over.

Mr. BUYER. Nobody is claiming that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. You start anew with new fresh money. There is no money that is left over from the year prior to this year. So you go forward.

Mr. BUYER. We know that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. With your new budget funding.

Mr. BUYER. We know that.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And it is predicated on what you and the Chair wish to have as your priorities in terms of personnel, travel, equipment, etc. There is nothing from 2006 that we are operating with in 2007.

It seems to me like you are saying that, given that money was given back to the minority in 2006, that that money be represented in the new budget. That is not the way it goes. What does go, is that we cannot continue to dwell on this.

I would like to ask if we can get financial experts to sit with the two of you to try and resolve this issue so that we can move forward with a budget that will be amenable to the two of you, with two different outsiders independently coming together to work with you.

Mr. BUYER. I accept anybody.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. FILNER. I am perfectly willing to do that. As I said, we were perfectly willing to talk about this before. There was a mischaracterization of those prior meetings.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Then I will take back my mischaracterization that you are not communicating. But from what I see today, maybe there is another definition for this. So I will say that simply you have not resolved the issue.

Mr. BUYER. Right.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And the issue has to be resolved. So I am asking, Mr. Chairman, are you willing?

Mr. FILNER. I am willing. You said the situation was not resolved. I presented the committee budget, as it is my responsibility to do. It is resolved as far as I am concerned. If somebody has a different suggestion for me, I will be glad to take it, but we were asked to come to you with a budget. We did. It was exactly the same as last year's. And there is a disagreement. Well, that doesn't mean there is no communication. Disagreement just means disagreement. And your committee has the ability to take my budget and pass it or not.

I will be happy to talk further if that is what you would advise me as the Chair, although what I am telling you is that I gave you the budget that our committee decided upon.

The CHAIRWOMAN. What I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, is that typically the budgets that we put in the resolution are budgets that have been agreed upon by both the Chair and the Ranking Member. There is some disagreement here somewhere.

Mr. FILNER. But it is possible disagreements are never resolved, right?

The CHAIRWOMAN. In this case we have to come to some resolution.

Mr. BUYER. Your recommendation is very good.

The CHAIRWOMAN. May I then ask the two of you to meet with me and the Ranking Member after we have seen all chairs today?

Mr. BUYER. I accept.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FILNER. Sure.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I will be happy to do that. Thank you both, gentlemen. Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Just a second, because I am new to this committee. The first thing is, what are the options? What can we do? Maybe Mr. Filner is right. This is the budget. Maybe we live with it or we don't; we approve it or we don't approve it.

I think I heard the Chairwoman indicate, though, that we can excise this from the resolution and go to the full floor and let the whole country see this, which I don't think you really want the whole country to see this. But I do think there is something fundamentally wrong here, and I am trying to see if I am getting this right.

Again, I don't want to misinterpret or mischaracterize anything. But are you asking Bob to abide by an agreement and the terms of which he was not a party? He is the chairman now. As a matter of fact, he is not even coming as the new ranking member. He is coming in as the new chairman. There is a new majority. So I think we have to respect that.

So I don't know if you had agreements with Lane or whatever, but I think the Chairwoman has indicated we are starting totally anew and whatever agreements may have been reached in the past with a different member of the Democratic Party, at that time the ranking member, I can understand Bob's position. But by the same token, this is not a divorce, and you guys are going to stay married at the end of this whole process. You are going to have to live with each other. It would be great if it was a divorce because then we would split up the goodies and you all can go your separate ways.

But we do have to work and I respect both of you all. I know both of you. We have served on the same committee, Steve, for a number of years and Bob is a personal friend. I just again—embracing the spirit that is being demonstrated by all members here on both sides of the aisle, of the dais, is to come together on this thing. Surely you all can come to some agreement and—the thing is though, Steve, again, you understand that Bob probably would not be bound, no one wants to be bound by an agreement reached by someone else, a third party. And I think I understand that.

Mr. BUYER. The real challenge when I first spoke with Bob was is that he said, Steve, I am taking the budget that you and Lane had last year. And that is when I said, wait a minute, you don't have—would you like to know how Lane and I came up and the rationale why we came up with that budget? Because that doesn't fit. It just does not fit. We will have so much in excess dollars because we made all this investment in infrastructure. So we will have that much left over. We would have a lot of leftover money at the end of the year.

So the question that you asked, on what would the allocation be in December? I couldn't spend all that money. It is not even possible to be able to spend how much money we are going to be left behind, because we sacrificed on the personnel side. And that is the rationale that I tried to share with Lane. I understand that he is not a party to that. And I understand that they are not carryover

funds. But I am trying to press the point to the chairman that the sacrifice that Lane and I had agreed to make, because we testified to this committee and asked you to upgrade the infrastructure.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Will Mr. Gonzalez yield for a second?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I will yield to the Chairwoman.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Buyer, the agreement you made with a former ranking member——

Mr. BUYER. Yes?

The CHAIRWOMAN [continuing]. Cannot be a party to what is going on in this particular——

Mr. BUYER. Yeah. But we don't operate in a vacuum. All those computers and everything are sitting over there ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We are not asking you to operate in a vacuum. But you keep saying, this is what Evans and I did, but Evans is no longer that party with you. So now you have to deal with the Chairman, who is Mr. Filner.

Mr. BUYER. But that is my challenge. He said I am going to take the budget you and Lane gave. Well, then, let me tell you what Lane and I did.

The CHAIRWOMAN. If no further questions by Mr. Gonzalez?

Mr. GONZALEZ. I yield back. Thank you ma'am.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

May I please see the two of you after the committee hearings?

Mr. BUYER. I will. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Mr. FILNER. And the principal's office is where?

The CHAIRWOMAN. I am by no means trying to admonish you on this. I am just trying to see whether we can be accommodating. Thank you so much.

Mr. BUYER. Do you have an estimate of time?

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Chair and Ranking Member, can you come back in an hour?

Mr. BUYER. Yes.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Now we have before us the Chairman of Energy and Commerce, Mr. Dingell, and the Ranking Member, Mr. Barton. We thank you so much for your tolerance and your patience. And you may proceed, Mr. Chairman. I know there is a time constraint that you have too.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN D. DINGELL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. DINGELL. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would ask unanimous consent to place my full statement in the record, and I will try to summarize.

The CHAIRWOMAN. So be it.

Mr. DINGELL. First of all, it is a privilege to be before you, and thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. I am delighted to be here with our Ranking Member Joe Barton, and the two of us join together in requesting the resources necessary to ensure effective consideration of the committee's business and operations of the committee over the next 2 years. I want to commend Chairman Barton for the superb job he performed in running the committee, given the limits placed on him by his leadership. He was an outstanding Chairman and is a great friend of mine.

This budget, Madam Chairwoman, is a preview of the one which will be formally considered and adopted by the committee tomorrow. You are aware that we were forced to postpone a meeting of the Commerce Committee to approve our budget requests because of the death of our colleague from Georgia, Congressman Charlie Norwood. Our funding resolution will be introduced shortly after the committee acts, and I promise you that that will be done with all speed.

This budget reflects both a significant increase in the workload of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the need to retrain and attract skilled staff. The committee is off to a fast start and moving forward with an ambitious and broad agenda. We are developing a substantive, balanced and thorough record on climate change and global warming, including eight hearings this month, and we expect that we will produce significant legislation, moving forward on children's health, the SCHIP program, Medicare payments, prescription drug and medical device user fees, consumer protection and privacy, environmental programs, telecommunications, and a host of other legislative matters.

We will be also carrying out important investigative and oversight activities, and already the committee has launched oversight hearings into nuclear safety issues, prescription drug safety, and we are continuing a number of investigations begun earlier under my friend and colleague, Chairman Barton.

Since January the committee has held seven hearings and two meetings, in addition to its role in the first 100 hours, in the stem cell research, prescription drug negotiation legislation and the 9/11 Commission recommendations. The committee has planned an additional 28 hearings, 6 markups and meetings over the next 4 weeks, for a combined total of 42 hearings and meetings before we reach the district work period. It is already clear that our resources are stretched very much without any increases in funding.

I would like to cite three areas driving our budget numbers. First, personnel. In our efforts to recruit excellent top-notch committee staff who are experts in their areas, we compete not only against the more lucrative jobs downtown where beginning attorneys look forward to starting salaries of upwards of $150,000 or better, but also with the salary levels of many senior staff in the executive branch. Many of the staff we have recruited to work with the committee during this Congress have accepted significant pay cuts to serve the Congress and the public. We do need more staff, and in the first 2 months in the majority, the committee staff has worked an excessive number of hours to accomplish the work before us.

We are currently under a staff cap of 108. We requested for this committee an increase of five slots for 2007 and an additional four slots for 2008, for a total of 118 in the second session. Three of these nine slots would be assigned to the minority. And I want to make it clear, Madam Chairwoman, that we will see to it that the rules of one-third/two-thirds are honored fully in this committee. I am committed to providing the same resources Mr. Barton made available to us in the last Congress, and we will give him his share of whatever additional staff members or funding is made available to the committee.

Third, increases in cost. In every category we find the cost of services and products is going up. The committee's technology needs would include significant upgrade of our computer system, replacing aged copiers and fax machines. And I report with embarrassment that our copy machines have precluded us from having you the statements and supporting papers that we had hoped to have for you, and are required under the rules, because of the failures of our copying systems.

We will also be purchasing licenses and other software uses to enable this technology to be in compliance with House and industry requirements. In the case of the committee's computer system, the House Information Resources no longer supports some of the critical applications we use. Therefore, the committee must now upgrade these programs unless we find ourselves without technical support from the House if problems arise.

There have been increases, as you well know, in travel expenses which all the committees incur in needed field hearings and in the conduct of investigations, to bringing witnesses here to testify, and to attend policy conferences. And we have seen this push our budget numbers upward.

While we try to anticipate spending in these areas, events occur in our country which require action by the committee and which oftentimes require unanticipated spending of committee funds, such as the case of Enron, the BP oil disaster and Hurricane Katrina. Committee actions in response to a crisis should not then translate into leaving a staff position vacant to make up the difference.

Because of these things and because of the workload facing the committee, I ask the serious consideration and the sympathetic consideration and your support, Madam Chairwoman, and that of the committee for our request for funding for the 110th Congress. I thank you very much for your cooperation.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

[The Statement of Mr. Dingell follows:]

STATEMENT
OF
THE HONORABLE JOHN D. DINGELL
BEFORE
THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE 110TH CONGRESS

February 28, 2007

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers, and the Members of this Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear today and ask your support of the Committee on Energy and Commerce's operating budget request for the 110th Congress.

I am pleased to have the Ranking Member of the Committee, Joe Barton, join me in our request for the resources necessary to ensure the effective operations of this Committee over the next two years. And I want to commend Chairman Barton for the excellent job he performed, running the Committee, given the limits placed on him by his leadership.

I am presenting this budget request as a "preview" of the one that will be formally considered and adopted by the Committee tomorrow. Due to the death of our colleague from Georgia, Rep. Charlie Norwood, a distinguished Member of our Committee, we postponed the meeting in which our budget request would have been adopted in open session, as is the Committee's tradition. While I am not anticipating any changes, if any are made you will be so advised, and our funding resolution will be introduced shortly after our Committee has acted.

This budget reflects both the significant increase in workload for the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and a need to attract skilled staff and provide the tools for them to work. We believe the requested sums are necessary and desirable. The Committee has gotten off to a very fast start and the Committee and its six subcommittees have more than a full plate. Since the 110th Congress convened in January, we have moved forward with an exceedingly ambitious agenda on a wide range of topics of concern to Americans.

- The Committee has much on its "to do" list -- developing a substantive, balanced, thorough record on climate change that we expect will produce significant legislation;

- Addressing issues in energy policy, health care, consumer protection and privacy, environmental programs, telecommunications, and a host of other legislative matters;

- Carrying out important investigative and oversight activities -- already the Committee has launched oversight hearings into nuclear security issues and prescription drug safety. A number of investigations are being developed at this time, and some of these investigations were begun under Chairman Barton.

Since January, the Committee has held 7 hearings and 2 meetings, in addition to its role in the "First 100 Hours" with this Committee's part in the Stem Cell Research bill, the prescription drug negotiation legislation, and contributing to the 9/11 Commission recommendations.

The Committee has planned an additional 28 hearings and 6 markups and meetings over the next 4 weeks for a combined total of 42 hearings and meetings before we reach the Spring District Work Period.

It is already clear that our resources are stretched very thin without an increase in funding. And as a former Member of the Minority, I can attest that a busy Majority will ensure an equally busy Minority. I ask for these increases to ensure funding for both sides to get the job done and done well.

I wish to raise three key areas that are driving our budget numbers – themes I am sure you have heard often in this hearing:

First, personnel. Those of us returning to the new Majority status are again confronted with two realities - realities I suspect my Republican colleague knows only too well – (1) you get what you pay for; and (2) the challenge of being able to provide salaries that attract talented staff with professional skills on par with those who serve the other branch of Government. In our efforts to recruit excellent, top notch Committee staff, we compete against not only the more lucrative jobs downtown, where beginning attorneys look forward to starting salaries of upwards of $150,000, but also with the salary levels many senior staff earn in the executive branch – where I know more resources are committed to ensure these agencies and departments have experienced, seasoned staff.

To recruit staff who are experts in the fields of telecommunications, energy policy, the environment, and other complex areas of the Committee's jurisdiction, and to pay them at a rate that allows them to live reasonably in this region, is another challenge. The administrative staff, as well, who are needed to support the Committee must possess technological skills and training that are in high demand in the private sector. All told, the overwhelming portion of our budget goes toward personnel expenses.

Several of the staff that we have recruited took pay cuts to join the Committee staff. And while the individuals who choose to serve as Congressional staff understand that the salaries here may be considerably less than in other job sectors, they have moved their careers here not only to serve the Congress, but also the American people, and to be a part of public service. That said, we seek resources that both provides fair compensation to staff, as well as assists us to hire the most capable to ensure good work in the Committee, and for the Congress.

Second, minority resources. As one who has recently stood in the place of my friend Mr. Barton, I am committed to providing the same resources he made available to us in the last Congress. Our goal is to continue the similar allocation of a third of the resources to our minority. This budget request not only contains the resources the Committee majority requires, but also funds to fulfill the goal of one third allocation.

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, we also need more staff – in the first two months in the Majority, Committee staff have worked an excessive number of hours – in some cases 50 to 70 hour per week – to accomplish the work before us. It is clear that additional staff will allow us to more evenly distribute the workload and support the operations. We are currently under a staff cap of 108. We seek an increase of 5 slots for 2007, and an additional 4 slots in 2008, for a total of 118 staff in the 2nd session. Three of those 9 slots would be assigned to the minority.

Third, increases in cost. In every category, we find the cost of services and products going up. Not surprisingly, with the transition of offices between majority and minority, the aging equipment and need for upgrades were more evident than ever. The Committee's technology needs would include upgrading our computer system, replacing aging copiers and fax machines, providing and upgrading blackberries and their associated cell phone expenses, and purchasing licenses and other software to use this technology in compliance with House and industry requirements. And in the case of the Committee's computer system, the House Information Resources no longer supports some of the critical applications we use. The Committee must now upgrade these programs, less we find ourselves without technical support from the House if problems arise.

The increases in travel expenses, which all Committees incur to hold needed field hearings, conduct investigations, bring witnesses here to testify, and attend policy conferences, have further pushed our budget numbers upward. And while we try to anticipate the spending in these areas, events occur in our country that require action by this Committee, and often requires the unanticipated spending of Committee funds, such as in the case of Enron, the BP oil spill disaster, and Hurricane Katrina. Committee actions in response to a crisis should not then translate into leaving staff positions vacant to make up the difference.

Because of all these things, and because of the workload facing the Committee, I ask for your serious consideration and support of our funding request for the 110th Congress. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. BARTON. Well, Madam Chairwoman and Members of the committee, I will make this easy. Mr. Dingell and I are in agreement. We are supportive of the budget. It is a very modest increase over last year. It is fairly apportioned between the majority and the minority, and I will be happy to answer questions.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. When you say fairly equal, does that mean the two-thirds/one-third agreement?

Mr. DINGELL. That is correct, Madam Chair. We will honor that precisely.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Very well. And I am hearing your budget will be approved tomorrow.

Mr. BARTON. Praise the Lord.

Mr. DINGELL. Yes, we will, Madam Chairwoman.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I would like to ask unanimous consent that we include their budget in the record and in the resolution once it has been approved. Hearing none, so be it.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Chairwoman, you are most gracious. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you. And we just know you are doing great things. You talk about seven hearings, and 42 before the district work period. My goodness, you need rollerskates to keep up with you two. But we thank you for what you are doing.

Let me have comments from the Ranking Member, and you will be on your way.

Mr. EHLERS. Just very briefly. First of all, I wanted to thank you for the firm commitment to the two-thirds/one-third. This committee worked in a bipartisan way over the past decade to achieve that level, and we want to make sure it continues. So we appreciate that. We appreciate the spirit with which you are working together. I personally apologize for the delay you had to endure because we were having a problem with two chairmen who didn't work together; and that is pretty rare, but it does happen.

Mr. BARTON. It is tough around Mr. Dingell. He has got a lot more people waiting to see him than I do. It was good we had him waiting back here.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Barton has been a good friend for a long time. He always treated us fairly when we were in the minority, and I will see to it that he is treated with all the fairness and all the decency that I can muster because——

Mr. EHLERS. I still remember the very fine speech he gave on your behalf when we celebrated your 50th anniversary, and it is clear that there is a deep and abiding friendship here. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. And thank you, gentlemen, for the collegiality that you reflect in your working together. Good luck to you both.

Now we have Mr. Spratt, the Chairman of the Budget Committee. And I am hearing, Mr. Spratt, that while we were trying to settle some issues here at the committee, your Ranking Member has left, is that correct? Is he here?

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Ryan was here just a minute ago. He had to go to a meeting.

The CHAIRWOMAN. He had to leave for another meeting?

Mr. SPRATT. Yeah.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Then you will——

Mr. SPRATT. We concur, though, in everything. I think I can safely say that, and I will make our presentation quickly.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Why don't you go on and do that, Mr. Chairman, and then I will ask unanimous consent that we receive your testimony, and devoid of your Ranking Member being with you.

Mr. SPRATT. Your staff has a copy of it, I assume?

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, we do have it. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Chairwoman, thank you for this opportunity. Mr. Ehlers, Ranking Member, thank you also for the chance to testify before this committee regarding the Budget Committee's funding request for the 110th Congress. For each session of the 110th Congress, the Budget Committee requests the funding level that is frozen at last year's total. That is, we were requesting the same funding for 2007 and 2008 as we had in 2006. In fact, this is the same amount that we had in 2004 and 2005.

As a result, our request for the 2-year period of the 110th Congress reflects no increase from the 2-year period of the 109th Congress. Looking at the funding requests on an account-by-account level, the largest account by far is the personnel account. I should explain that in the last Congress our personnel accounts turned out to be less than anticipated. There were vacancies because the chairman was term limited, expected not to be coming back, and there was an expectation that the new chairman would wish to make personnel decisions of his own.

In the 110th Congress, considerable progress has been made in filling these vacancies with highly qualified staff, and our personnel costs will increase decidedly. Nevertheless, our request should provide sufficient resources for personnel costs in the 110th Congress.

When we as Democrats were in the minority, we had a mutually agreeable arrangement with the Chairman of the committee, the previous majority, and we consulted with that minority and intend to continue this practice in the 110th Congress. That is, the minority controls a third of the total budget for personnel, meaning a third of the available staff slots and a third of the line-item money for personnel expenses.

Additionally, we will continue the committee's past practice of upgrading the minority's equipment out of the overall committee budget. I think we have a good working relationship.

We have a mutual agreement from this budget, and as an example of the rest of the Congress, we are simply saying we will get by with what we have got. And I am glad to make a request to that effect. But we do need what we were requesting, around $12 million. As I said, that is the same money we have enjoyed for the last 4 years.

[The statement of Mr. Spratt follows:]

John M Spratt Jr.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

February 28, 2007

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and Congressman Ehlers, for the chance to testify before this Committee regarding the Budget Committee's funding request for the 110th Congress.

For each session of the 110th Congress, the Budget Committee is requesting a funding level that is frozen at last year's level. That is, we are requesting the same allocation for 2007 and 2008 as we had for 2006. In fact, this funding level is the same that the Committee had for 2005 and 2004, as well. As a result, our request for the two-year period of the 110th Congress reflects no increase from the two-year period of the 109th Congress.

Of course, additional resources are always useful for a Committee, but in light of the fiscal challenges facing the federal budget, I am pleased to report that a continuation of the funding level provided for last year should be sufficient for our Committee in the 110th Congress.

Looking at the funding request on an account-by-account level, the largest account by far is, as usual, the personnel account. In the last Congress, our personnel costs were less than anticipated. There were vacancies because the Chairman was term-limited, and there was an expectation that the new Chairman would wish to make staffing decisions. For the 110th Congress, considerable progress has already been made in filling these vacancies with highly qualified staff, and our personnel costs will increase as a result. Nevertheless, our request should provide sufficient resources for personnel costs in the 110th Congress.

We have made some adjustments in different categories to allow for small increases in transit benefit recipients and small reductions in supplies and materials.

Our estimated travel expenses remain unchanged relative to the last two years, and our request in that account therefore reflects the same allocation as for the 109th Congress.

Our equipment budget allows for a continuation of regular upgrades of computer hardware and software and other equipment.

When we were in the minority, we always had a mutually agreeable arrangement with the previous majority, and we have consulted with our minority and intend to continue this practice in the 110th Congress. The practice is that the minority controls a third of the total budget for personnel, meaning a third of the available staff slots and a third of the line-item for personnel. Additionally, we will continue the Committee's past practice of upgrading the minority's equipment out of the overall Committee equipment budget.

I would look forward to answering any questions that you might have about our Committee's request.

[The statement of Mr. Ryan follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE PAUL RYAN
RANKING REPUBLICAN, COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
28 February 2007

As the Budget Committee's Ranking Republican, I am pleased to testify here concerning our committee's funding resolution for this 110th Congress.

It is my intention to support Chairman Spratt's request for the committee, and I have every expectation that he will continue a bipartisan tradition for the Budget Committee concerning the allocation of resources between the majority and minority. Our committee has long been characterized by vigorous policy debates, coupled with mutual respect and courtesy – and I am confident this pattern will continue.

When the funding was shared with us – on February 16th, a few hours before it was introduced – I found the overall levels acceptable, as I do today. The proposal is modeled, in fact, after Chairman Nussle's request from the 109th Congress. Chairman Nussle proposed, and the House adopted, a two-year freeze in the Budget Committee's overall allocation at the level of the second session from the prior Congress. It wouldn't surprise me if we are the only committee requesting a zero funding request – at least I know that was the case when Chairman Nussle submitted his request in the past Congress.

I recognize that the burden of the freeze may fall slightly more on the minority. This is because we will have limited resources to pay the salaries of the staff we can accommodate in our office space. Still, as the stewards of our nation's budget, we have an obligation to set an example in our own budget. If we intend to rein in the government's spending growth – which threatens our economic viability over the long term – we should start right at home, and live with the same amount of resources we had in the past Congress.

Within that level, the committee has a bipartisan tradition of making at least one-third of the personnel budget to the minority. Equipment for *both* the majority and minority then comes out of the common fund, on the same schedule, and with the same quality, for both sides. I am confident that Chairman Spratt will continue this practice in the 110th Congress. On that basis, I support the request and urge the Committee on House Administration to do likewise.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Chairman, one thing is for sure, you recognize the fact that we have budget constraints, and there is no one better than you to know that. Operating from last year's baseline and then increasing your budget by a mere 2.2 percent is all that we are offering in terms of your increase this year.

Given that your Ranking Member is not here, may I just ask, is there an agreement between the two of you for the two-thirds/one-third? I may have been talking to staff when you mentioned that.

Mr. SPRATT. Yeah.

The CHAIRWOMAN. There is an agreement?

Mr. SPRATT. Yes, ma'am, there is an agreement to that effect.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay. Fine. Mr. Ranking Member, do you have comments?

Mr. EHLERS. Just following up on that, I understand that both of you worked together on this budget and you both are approving of what you submitted; is that correct?

Mr. SPRATT. Yes, sir.

Mr. EHLERS. All right.

The last point I would like to make is that I appeared recently to testify before your Budget Committee on a very important issue and gave a superb heartfelt plea. Unfortunately you weren't there to hear it. I won't take your time here now, but I will have to talk to you later about that.

Mr. SPRATT. Okay.

Mr. EHLERS. I am not trying to coerce you at all. It is only your budget that depends on it.

Mr. SPRATT. All right, sir. Could I say one thing?

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, please.

Mr. EHLERS. I am just jesting, but I appreciate the difficult task that you have to do.

Mr. SPRATT. It is indeed. I am the second ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee. Ike, of course, is the Chairman of the committee and I am second in seniority to him. And I would like to make a pitch for that particular committee. They will be presiding over a budget this year, when you include the supplementals of $643 billion dollars for 2008—that is the largest amount of money we have spent on defense in constant dollars at any time since the Second World War.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Say that again.

Mr. SPRATT. $643 billion. That includes DOE and DOD. Defense and Energy, $643 billion. It is $501 billion for the base budget and $140-odd billion for the supplemental for 2008. They need additional staff. And part of the problem we have got with that committee is at a time when the staff and the Congress were growing abundantly in the late 1970s, mid-1980s, early to mid-1980s, our committee was chaired by people who were satisfied with what they had in the way of committee staff, and we were not aggressively building up our staff at a time when that was possible and when the funding was available. And we are now suffering the consequences. But we have an enormous responsibility for the stewardship of $643 billion, the conduct of the expeditionary deployments in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere.

And of all the committees in the Congress, I don't know about the other needs, but I can tell you right now, they need additional

staff, and anything you can do to help them I think would be very responsible and very much appreciated.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, we will take that under consideration, Mr. Chairman, and certainly there are many things that I will be taking back to the Speaker to consult with her on, and that is one that we will be taking back with us.

Now, are there any comments from either one of the members who are presently here? Mr. Spratt, given the fact that your Ranking Member had to go to a meeting, I will have to ask unanimous consent that his testimony along with yours be submitted for the record and have them agree to that being sufficient testimony for your being here and the absence of the Ranking Member.

Is there unanimous consent from the members? All votes present, aye. So thank you, Mr. Spratt.

Mr. SPRATT. Thank you very much indeed.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so very much and thank you for your patience here today.

Mr. SPRATT. That is fine. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Goodlatte, I see you are here, and your Chairman is on his way in.

Gentlemen, let me first thank you so much for your patience. You have been exceedingly patient throughout our attempt to come to some agreements with some of the issues that were presented before us. One thing is for sure, you have a big issue coming before you, and that is that farm bill, so we don't want to talk about it. We want you to present your budget and your statement.

Mr. Chairman, welcome. Ranking Member, welcome. You may proceed Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you Madam Chairwoman and Ranking Member. And I appreciate the chance to be with you today and also appreciate my ranking member, Mr. Goodlatte, for joining me here to outline our committee's proposed budget for the next 2 years.

The Committee on Agriculture has long had a history of bipartisan cooperation that was upheld with distinction during Mr. Goodlatte's chairmanship and I trust that that will continue in the 110th Congress.

It has been noted that we have a very important year coming up in the Agriculture Committee as we are going to be writing a new farm bill which authorizes our Nation's farm conservation, nutrition, and rural development programs. The current farm bill was written in 2002 and many of its provisions are going to expire by the end of September. So we are going to be facing a major task over the next few months to get a bill ready before the current bill expires.

In addition this year, our committee has added an additional subcommittee. So we now have a total of six subcommittees. The expanded subcommittee structure will help us and be useful in writing this new farm bill as we conduct what I hope to be a very active oversight program, which we have outlined in the attached

oversight plan. We are focusing in a couple areas with these new subcommittees, one of them in the energy area, where we will be doing a considerable amount of work in the research and development of feedstocks for cellulosic ethanol. And we have also made a Horticulture and Organic Agriculture Subcommittee, and the focus on organics is going to be one of the things that we are going to be looking at that we haven't really—well, we have worked on it before, but we are going to put more focus, because I believe there is a real opportunity in organic agriculture for the folks that want to go into that. And we are going to focus on that.

Our committee has had a strong tradition of offering outstanding service and research materials related to legislation not only for the committee and its members but for other Members of Congress. And, you know, we are excited about the opportunities that are in front of us. I have been in and around agriculture all my life, and I have never seen a time where there is so much optimism, so much excitement in agriculture as is going on right now because of the opportunities in renewable fuels and ethanol and biodiesel and these areas which are—in Minnesota, has been a huge success. And it has brought young people back to the farm, and we want to try to expand that experience all across the country.

Given the increased workload that the committee will assume this year, we propose a modest but necessary increase in funding. Due to the expanded subcommittee structure and the additional workload expected for the committee, these resources, we believe, will be essential for the committee's success in the 110th Congress. Many of our responsibilities this year will require additional effort from our staff, and I expect—I have already told them that they can be expecting to work weekends starting here pretty quick, all the way through September. I told my committee members that they shouldn't plan too much for the August break because we may be doing conference committee during that period of time.

So we are going to be putting in a lot of hours. But after careful consideration, I believe that our existing committee staff structure is sufficient, and I have not requested any additional positions at this time. And in our request we have carefully weighed and balanced, we think, the committee's growing needs with the important goal for myself and a lot of our members, and that is fiscal responsibility.

The committee's responsibilities in the 110th Congress have implications for all Americans, and our proposed budget will allow us to craft a farm bill that meets the needs of our Nation's agriculture producers and the consumers that we produce for.

We have basically kept the structure of the committee exactly like it was when Mr. Goodlatte was chairman. As I have said, we have a great working relationship. We just flip things around, it was staff 32/16 for the Republican way. Now it is 32/16 for the Democrat way. So we kept things exactly the way it is.

Once the farm bill is over with, we intend to spend some significant time on doing oversight. I have got some concerns about the organization of the Department and some of the levels of bureaucracy and so forth over there that I think haven't been examined as much as they should. So we will have a lot of work to get to once

we get done with the farm bill. So we would appreciate your consideration, and appreciate the chance to be with you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And thank you. We appreciate your outlining this very active agenda that you are putting before us.

[The statement of Mr. Peterson follows:]

Testimony of
Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin C. Peterson
Before the House Administration Committee
February 28, 2007

Madame Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. I appreciate Ranking Member Goodlatte for joining me to outline our committee's proposed budget for the next two years. The Committee on Agriculture has a long history of bipartisan cooperation that was upheld with distinction during Mr. Goodlatte's chairmanship and that I hope to continue during the 110th Congress.

This is a busy and important year for the House Agriculture Committee, as we write a new Farm Bill that authorizes our nation's major farm, conservation, nutrition and rural development programs. The current Farm Bill was written in 2002, and many of its provisions will expire at the end of September. Writing the next Farm Bill is a major task for the Committee that will require a great deal of staff work and resources to complete successfully and on time.

This year, our Committee has added an additional subcommittee, and we now have a total of six subcommittees. The expanded subcommittee structure will be useful as we write the Farm Bill and as we conduct a very active oversight program, which is outlined in the attached oversight plan.

For the 110th Congress, our six subcommittees are:

- Conservation, Credit, Energy and Research
- Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry
- General Farm Commodities and Risk Management
- Horticulture and Organic Agriculture
- Livestock, Dairy and Poultry
- Specialty Crops, Rural Development and Foreign Agriculture

The Agriculture Committee has a strong tradition of offering outstanding service to Committee Members and providing thoroughly researched materials related to legislation under the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee has recruited and retained a highly qualified

staff that provides the kind of analysis and expertise that serves us well and that will be even more important as we write the Farm Bill this year.

In addition to the traditional role of agriculture in providing food and fiber, the growing demand and expanding market for agriculturally-based energy sources, including ethanol and biodiesel is an exciting new challenge that the Agriculture Committee will address in the Farm Bill this year. The excitement about biofuels extends far beyond rural areas, as our colleagues from across the country in urban and suburban districts are also excited about their potential to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign energy sources. As interest in renewable fuel grows, the Committee must establish smart policies that will encourage the expansion of biofuels. This is just one emerging area of policy that will require significant resources to be sure that the Farm Bill gets it right and establishes practical programs that work.

Given the increased workload that the Committee will assume this year, we propose a modest but necessary increase in funding. Due to the expanded subcommittee structure and the additional workload expected for the Committee, these resources will be essential to the Committee's

success in the 110th Congress. Many of our responsibilities this year will require additional effort from staff, but after careful consideration, I believe that our existing Committee staff structure is sufficient and have not requested additional positions at this time. In our request, we have carefully weighed and balanced the Committee's growing needs with the important goal of fiscal responsibility.

The Committee's responsibilities in the 110th Congress have implications for all Americans, and our proposed budget will allow us to craft a Farm Bill that meets the needs of our nation's agricultural producers and consumers.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and I am confident that with the resources requested, the Agriculture Committee will successfully complete our ambitious agenda for the 110th Congress.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Goodlatte.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BOB GOODLATTE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

Mr. GOODLATTE. Thank you Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Ehlers, and members of the committee. It is a pleasure to be here today to support the Agriculture Committee's 110th budget request alongside Chairman Peterson. As Collin said, our committee has enjoyed a long history of bipartisanship and I look forward to a continued environment of cooperation as we proceed with the work of the committee in the 110th Congress.

The committee's primary focus in the last Congress was to gather information from America's farmers and ranchers in preparation for reauthorizing the 2002 farm bill which expires in September. Since this omnibus agricultural legislation is only reauthorized every 5 to 6 years, it was important that our review be as pervasive and inclusive as possible. Throughout a series of 19 full and subcommittee field hearings, we heard from 178 farmers and ranchers, in addition to the nearly 3,000 comments we gathered via our Web site from producers and nonproducers alike. Our goal was to find out what in the current bill was working and what aspects could be improved. Today's producers are facing new challenges that weren't in play in the run-up to the 2002 farm bill. We asked our farmers and ranchers for their candid feedback and they answered loud and clear. Although the feedback varied by region and commodity, producers had one thing in common: they want to continue to produce, and they need our help. Now that we have gathered the information, our next step is to formulate the content of the bill and put it down on paper. The bill we will write later this year will encompass most of the areas under the committee's jurisdiction, including farm programs, forestry, food stamps, pesticides, and commodities trading regulation, rural development and the farm credit system. This will be a significant undertaking that will require all our staff resources and I am confident the committee staff is up to the challenge.

In addition to its history of bipartisanship, the Agriculture Committee has a strong history of fiscal responsibility. The modest spending and cooperative nature of our committee spans back more than two decades under the control of both parties. It is my intention to work with Chairman Peterson and the members of the committee to ensure that this tradition is continued, and ask that you grant us the funds needed to reach our goals.

And let me say that in the first 2 months, Chairman Peterson has lived up to his comments and we have worked in a bipartisan spirit. And in fact, given the fact that the majority moving to a minority status has to make certain adjustments, we have looked to those; and I think we have also helped the majority in a number of ways to help them in their new status. So we look forward to their cooperative efforts and to your support of those efforts. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Goodlatte follows:]

Testimony of Agriculture Committee Ranking Republican Bob Goodlatte
House Administration Hearing on Committee Budgets
February 28, 2007

Madame Chairwoman, Ranking Member Ehlers, and members of the committee, it is a pleasure to be here today in support of the Agriculture Committee's 110th budget request alongside Chairman Peterson. As Collin said, our committee has enjoyed a long history of bipartisanship and I look forward to a continued environment of cooperation as we proceed with the work of the committee in the 110th Congress.

The committee's primary focus in the last Congress was to gather information from America's farmers and ranchers in preparation for reauthorizing the 2002 Farm Bill, which expires in September. Since this omnibus agricultural legislation is only reauthorized every five to six years, it was important that our review be as pervasive and inclusive as possible. Through a series of 19 full and subcommittee field hearings, we heard from 178 producers, in addition to the nearly 3,000 comments we gathered via our website from producers and non-producers alike.

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The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. You have just said those things that are music to our ears, and that is the cooperative spirit between the two of you in a bipartisan effort to make sure that this works. Of course, you have the big farm bill that is ahead of you, the other one expiring in September.

I am just really pleased to know that the youth are coming back to farmland. That is not only optimistic and exciting, but it is the future and it is the future of our farmers. Your opportunities are vast. And as you spoke, Mr. Chairman, on organic agriculture, that seems extremely exciting, something a young person in college would love to get their hands around.

Mr. Goodlatte, when you talk about forestry and food stamps, you tend to not think that they are congruent. So it is just amazing how these things all come together for the good. It is indeed a privilege to have the two of you before us this afternoon, and again I don't have to ask but I will for the record, Mr. Chairman. The two-thirds/one-third plus your willingness to work within the borders of that and even outside of it is what you have committed to?

Mr. PETERSON. Yes. Excuse me. Yes, absolutely. We are committed to that, and that is how it will work.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much. Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you Madam Chair. I want to thank you also for the commitment. In most committees I talk to, I say we had to work very hard to reach the two-thirds/one-third ratio, and you are one of the few committees that met that requirement before.

Mr. PETERSON. We didn't have to work very hard.

Mr. EHLERS. Yeah. Before the Republicans took over in 1995, you already met that. You will be interested to know that the staffing back then was not 32/16, it was 66/44. So your staff has been slimmed down quite a bit since 1993. But I appreciate the spirit with which you work together.

One quick question. If the farmers are doing so well, does that mean there is going to be less expenditure under the farm bill?

Mr. PETERSON. Less spending?

Mr. EHLERS. Less expenditures?

Mr. PETERSON. Yes. Well, the commodity title is down $60 billion from 2002.

Mr. EHLERS. Really?

Mr. PETERSON. Over the 10-year baseline, we had $140 billion in 2002 projected. The projection for the next 10 years under the the baseline is $80 billion.

Mr. EHLERS. That is good.

Mr. PETERSON. So we will be able to maintain the safety net that we put in place for less money because prices are better.

Mr. EHLERS. Yes.

Mr. PETERSON. And the farm bill worked the way it was supposed to. We saved $17 billion so far over the life of the bill below what was projected, and they are projecting out a $60 billion savings.

Now, in other areas, the budget is up. In the food stamp and school nutrition, it is up 54 percent because we are getting more people to understand about the availability and get more use of it; and this is a very good use of our government resources to make sure that kids are getting meals, and we are looking at some new

ideas about trying to get more nutritious food into the schools and making sure that people that need food have food.

So I think it is somewhere in the neighborhood of now 67 percent of our budget will go to food stamps and nutrition. And the commodities are way down. So we are saving money in the area that most people think of when they think of the farm bill. That is, the commodity area. But we are spending more money on conservation, more money on food stamps, and we hope to be able to spend more money on research for renewable fuels, because I think that is something everybody in the country wants us to do.

Mr. EHLERS. Quite right, and I am not convinced at all that corn is the answer.

Mr. PETERSON. No.

Mr. EHLERS. I think there are a number of better alternatives out there and that is where the research——

Mr. PETERSON. We will be working on those.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Ehlers, if I might add to that, you are exactly right. We have to rush the research and rush the development as best we possibly can with agricultural policy, and the free market will determine that more than we will. But, too, other forms of other sources for renewable fuels, because corn is badly needed in other sectors of our economy for livestock feed and human consumption and so on.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Let me get back to the issue before the House Administration Committee. The numbers you cited are, quite frankly, stunning because, as of right now, we have fewer staff between the two of us than minority had; 44 that you cited in that number.

I hope you keep that in mind when you talk to other committees about what they are asking for and about what this committee is because it is a problem for us, being the fiscal conservatives that we both are and our committee has historically been. And we come in, and we identify a real need that we have from time to time, and you are listening to some of the requests that you get from some of the other committees on a more constant basis, I have got to say that it makes it harder for us, to do what we do in the fiscally responsible way that we do it when other committees are making what I think are unnecessary requests.

Mr. EHLERS. We are well aware of that.

With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, one thing is for sure, they can make the requests, but as we know, the budget has come in on last year's baseline. And the increase is very modest at about 2.2, 2.3 percent. So every chairperson and ranking member has left with the notion that that is the way it goes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. But I think, Madam Chairwoman, my point is, if you go back to looking at the numbers he cited, where we are operating with far less than half the staff, they are not operating from the same baseline and that, you know, in terms of the historic—not just 1 year to the next but historically—it would be helpful to make them reassess their overall needs. We do that every 2 years.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Duly noted, because many have come requesting more staff. So your point is well taken. Are there any other Members who wish to—yes, Mr. McCarthy.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I just want to congratulate these two. I happen to serve on this committee, and the professionalism between the two has trickled down to the subcommittees and everywhere else. The only thing I will say, and I do point out that the work that they have to do this year and by the number of people that they have and the timeline that the chairman has set out for us is very aggressive that we should take this request very seriously.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much for your comments.

Mr. Gonzalez, any comments?

Mr. GONZALEZ. No comments.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, gentlemen, so much for continuing to share your leadership in this area.

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And, again, thank you so much for your patience. Patience is golden.

Thank you so much. We have before us now the Chairman and Ranking Member of Science and Technology, Chairman Gordon and Ranking Member Hall.

Thank you so much and again, we thank you for the patience that you have shown throughout this afternoon. And you are ready to go, Mr. Gordon?

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BART GORDON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mr. GORDON. Yes. Madam Chairman, and Mr. Ehlers and other committee members, I think you probably are the ones that should be congratulated for patience. Just being around here this short time, hearing the groveling and complaining, I know it would wear on you. So I appreciate your attention today.

I also expect that there is a direct or inverse relationship between the shorter we are, the more money we may get. So I am going to hope that is the case and try to be very brief here with you.

I was surprised to see the Rollcall the other day that had all the various requests. Apparently folks didn't get the memo. I thought we were supposed to stick to 4 percent; 4 percent, we may not even get that 4 percent. So we really tried to do that with our budget. And that is all that we ask for.

And we are not unlike any other committees in terms of inflation with our travel, with our resources and things of this nature. But we are a little different in this regard, as Mr. Ehlers can very well tell you. Most committees if you have, you know, if you are very bright and you have good world experiences, then there is probably a place for you.

On the Science and Technology Committee, that is really just not the case. We not only have to have those, that element, but staff really has to have a good academic understanding of some very complex issues that makes it very difficult for us to be able to find these folks. In the majority right now, we have seven Ph.D.s, three J.D.s and nine staffers that have graduate degrees.

And that is really what it, you know, what it takes.

Another, I think, difference for us is that a lot of committees probably are slow in getting staffed up. We have one more hire because—pardon me, Mr. Ehlers—but last September, we started running ads saying that if we get the majority, that we want to go ahead and start taking applications then. So we tried to get a running start on that.

The other thing that is a little bit different is that in 1995, the Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee was done away with. We do not think that is the way we should operate. We think that oversight is the responsibility of the committee and that having a subcommittee to do that is important. And so we have added that additional subcommittee.

So I think we are somewhat different in those categories. And I ask you to keep that in mind if there is going to be some massaging later on.

I think another question that I should respond to that you haven't asked me but you should ask me is, I see that the Science Committee gave some money back the last two Congresses, so why do you need any additional money? And let me explain that. Again, I think Mr. Ehlers and I probably share a frustration that in the last two Congresses, that the majority leadership at that time was saying, do less. Our majority now is saying, do more.

And so they did not have their full staff allotment. There is really some deferred maintenance.

Already this year, we had the first open rule. We had the first bill on the Floor that dealt with renewable energy. We had the first bill on the Floor that dealt with climate change. We, as Mr. Ehlers can tell you, we marked up four bills today. We are kicking it out because we have got up, and we are running, and we have got a, you know, a good professional staff. And we need to be able to keep them and add to them. And I would hope you would keep that in mind. And if it is appropriate, yield to my friend, Mr. Hall.

[The statement of Mr. Gordon follows:]

Statement of
The Hon. Bart Gordon, Chairman
Committee on Science and Technology
before the
Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2007

I know you are very busy with this budget process, and I will try to be brief.

First of all, let me say that Mr. Hall and I have always worked well together, and I think we both expect to have a cordial and cooperative relationship in our roles as Chairman and Ranking Member.

Madam Chairwoman, the Committee on Science and Technology is requesting a 2007 budget that is approximately 4% higher than the 2006 budget and a 2008 budget that is 4% higher than the amount requested for 2007.

There are several reasons for these increases. We are currently fully staffed except for three slots, which we expect to fill within 30 days, and we expect to be fully staffed throughout the year.

Our staff continues to be comprised of highly-trained professionals with Ph.Ds, engineering and other graduate degrees—such specialization is necessary because of the many complex scientific and technical issues our Committee tackles.

Merit raises and COLAs are necessary in order to recruit and maintain our quality staff.

We anticipate that rising costs in travel, publications, office supplies and other categories, as well as overall inflation, will have a substantial impact on our budget. We currently monitor our subscriptions and switch to cheaper, electronic versions as they become available.

Travel costs continue to rise, and we keep a close eye on the expense of proposed trips and the number of people traveling; however, travel to the facilities of NASA, NOAA, EPA, and NIST, as well as other labs, is necessary for us to perform our legislative and oversight responsibilities.

In addition, with the change to the Majority, we have new Subcommittee Chairmen who need to become better acquainted with the facilities under their jurisdiction.

We plan to continue to replace computer equipment at regular intervals. We have two copiers which should be replaced during the 110th Congress--these are older models, one without scanning capabilities, and one that is just an old workhorse ready to be retired. We carefully examine the customer service and supplies offered with the purchase of such capital equipment and seek the best value for our money.

Several color printers purchased in 2004 are due to be replaced in 2008 as well.

You may be aware that we've added an Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee this Congress. This increases our expenses somewhat. There will be travel performed by this subcommittee, possible field hearings, and we plan to purchase an additional laptop, primarily for use by these staffers.

Finally, I have included in the budget package my letter to Speaker Pelosi requesting an additional staff slot for the Committee. We currently have four staffers on the Majority payroll who perform administrative duties on behalf of the entire Committee. They are the financial administrator, director of information technology, legislative clerk and printer.

An additional staff slot would allow us to hire one more legislative staffer for the newly formed Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee.

At the time of my letter to Speaker Pelosi, we had been told to work under the assumption that committee budgets would be flat-lined for 2007. As I explain in my letter, the vacancies experienced while we were staffing up in January and February would allow me to support an additional staff slot for 2007. Funding for the slot would continue in the requested 2008 budget.

I would very much appreciate your consideration of my request for an additional slot.

I hope you find our budget request as reasonable as Mr. Hall and I do. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, thank you.
Mr. Hall.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RALPH HALL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. HALL. Thank you, Madam Chairman and members, I thank you. And you know the numerical division in this committee is two thirds and one-third, and I think that carries over to presentations. He has made two-thirds of the presentation, and I will take only a half of what he took.

I can simply read the last paragraph of what they wrote for me and say, Chairman Gordon has put forth to this committee a reasonable, well documented request that will allow the Science and Technology Committee to continue to engage in important policy work. I look forward to working with him over the next few years.

But that is not all I really want to say. I want to say, the committee has a long history of bipartisan cooperation. And we have already passed several good bills and worked together on them. I am confident that the chairman and I are going to continue that condition for years.

I fully support the operating budget that he submitted, including the 4 percent increase over last year's funding level. And the modest increase, I think, will keep pace with inflation and cost of living increases alone.

So and whether we are dealing with energy research and development, American competitiveness or NASA oversight, our committee is at the center of these discussions. We have a very talented staff of individuals on both sides. Bart is a good native Tennessean, a good guy to work with. I have said a lot of times that Texas owes Tennessee our very existence. And he also always remains and says every time, a guy leaves Tennessee, it raises the dignity of both States. And I guess that is probably true.

But I leave with this, thanking you for your time and your cooperation with us, working us in at this time. And I leave, asking Bart for a copy of that ad that they ran that helped him get control of the Floor.

[The statement of Mr. Hall follows:]

Rep. Ralph Hall (R-TX)
Testimony to the Committee on House Administration
Science Committee Budget
February 28, 2007

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am happy to be here before you today to support Chairman Gordon's request for Science Committee funding in the 110th Congress.

This Committee has had a long history of bipartisan cooperation, and I am confident that the Chairman and I will continue that tradition for years to come. I fully support the operating budget that the Chairman submitted; including the 4% increase over last year's funding level. This modest increase is vital to keep pace with inflation and cost-of-living increases.

As Members have undoubtedly noticed, the work of this Committee has increased over the last few years, and promises to increase further in the coming years. Whether we are dealing with energy research and development, American competitiveness, or NASA oversight, our Committee is at the center of these discussions. We have a talented staff of individuals with significant public and private sector experience, and we must continue to attract highly qualified individuals.

Chairman Gordon has put forward to this Committee a reasonable, well-documented request that will allow the Science and Technology Committee to continue to engage in important policy work. I look forward to working with him over the next few years.

I look forward to answering any questions.

Mr. GORDON. You see why Mr. Hall is good to work with. If I could add one more thing, former chairman, Chairman Boehlert did a lot of good things. One thing that he did do also was he had a study done on making the Science Committee a model committee for energy efficiency within Congress.

We have not acted on that in terms of, we have the study. We know what to do. We are meeting with the Architect of the Capitol today—not the Architect of the Capitol. What is the proper term? Okay, Architect of the Capitol, to review those and to hopefully set our committee up as a model committee. The Senate has already started doing something like that.

I think what we will find is that, once our committee is set up and we see the efficiencies that will come forth, it will more than pay for itself. But there is going to be some additional expense in doing that also. But I think it is a good investment because you will be getting that back as other offices start to do the same and we get those energy efficiency savings.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Excellent. Absolutely excellent.

You have moved right into the 21st century and beyond, quite frankly. We appreciate both of your testimony today. I know it has been a long day for you, as it has been for us. I would just turn it quickly over. Four markups today; that is a whole lot, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. So I applaud you both on that.

Mr. Ranking Member, any comments?

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I picked up on the fact that you were both committed to the two-third/one-third ratio. We are making a big point in that because it took 12 years to establish that, and we want to make sure we don't lose it. We appreciate that both of you are committed to maintaining that.

Mr. GORDON. The Science Committee has good precedent in that. And we are happy to follow it. And I will mention, gosh, I am sorry. But one more thing since you mentioned that. One other reason that we are a little different than the other committees is that we told all the Republican staff members that if they weren't hired by Mr. Hall because he only has so many spots, if they didn't find any other place to go, that we would keep them on salary. And so that is another reason we, you know, we don't have a lot of flex early on. And what is more than that, we also told them all that they could all interview for jobs. We hired 7 of our 20 slots as the former members of the Republican staff.

And so, again, it is important to keep that institutional knowledge, that high level of staffers. We tried to do that, and we, again, spent some money that other committees didn't by keeping on the Republican folks that didn't have a place to go.

Mr. HALL. And that is not only generous of you, it is kind of you. And I admire and respect the Speaker for her recommendation early in the session to keep those youngsters on for 2 months or 3 months. And I think that failed. I haven't really gone back to see who really defeated it. But I think that was a good idea, to encourage our young to stay and support and take interest in their government because it belongs to them. And you know, old people don't fight wars and old people don't pay budgets. And I think we have to keep the youth increasingly interested in science and math.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I couldn't agree with you more on that. Absolutely. Absolutely, Mr. Ehlers.

Mr. EHLERS. Yes, I certainly agree with those comments and appreciate what you have said.

Just one quick question, Mr. Gordon. At one time, you talked to me and said you thought you could live within the dollar budgets that you are putting in, but you really needed a few extra slots. Did you request those?

Mr. GORDON. Well, again, recognizing that this is a modest budget and difficult time, we made a request for one. And, so, you know, we will, as we staff up, we may be back, but we think that if we have one additional one, that that will help us get over this hump.

Mr. EHLERS. All right. I was very ready to fight for two, but if you will settle for one. I was ready to fight for two.

Mr. GORDON. We would like to have two. We were just trying to be in the spirit of things this time.

We could sure find a place for them.

Mr. EHLERS. Fine.

With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ranking Member.

Thank you both for your great testimony and the great things that you are doing. When you have all those J.D.s, Ph.D.s and graduate degree personnel, you can't go wrong in a Science Committee. Thank you so much, and we look forward to continuously working with you.

Now we have with us the Chairman and Ranking Member of Intelligence. Chairman Reyes and Ranking Member Hoekstra.

Good afternoon. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for your patience as we move into this afternoon. I look forward to your testimony, and you may begin, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. SILVESTRE REYES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. REYES. Well thank you, very much, Madam Chairman, and ranking member. We appreciate your patience as well because we know it has been a long afternoon.

The ranking member and I are here to present a completely bipartisan budget request for the 110th Congress. This budget process was actually started back in November by committee staff under the guidance of Mr. Hoekstra and was actually finished in the last couple of weeks with guidance from me. We are requesting a very modest 1 percent increase in the budget allocation from 2006 to 2007.

In 2008, the committee will be moving down to its new location in the Capitol Visitors Center and will require a 6 percent increase to cover equipment purchases and payroll. There is absolutely no padding in this budget that we are requesting. And the requested funds are necessary to keep the committee operating in its normal capacity in conducting oversight of the Intelligence Community.

Due to the committee's spaces being colocated in the Capitol Building, the committee is very concerned with its Continuity of Operations plan. Should anything ever happen to the Capitol Building, it is almost certain that the committee would not have access to the building for several months or perhaps even years.

Thus we have begun to research, plan and budget for an offsite backup. The equipment needed for redundant secure communications will allow the committee to be stood up in the case of an emergency and is provided for in this budget request.

For the previous 30 years, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has been able to receive information, communications, budget documents and briefings, from the Intelligence Community through one secure fax machine and cleared couriers. We are probably the only committee left in the House that receives the majority of its information and oversight materials on paper.

This, Madam Chairman, will change during the 110th Congress. The HPSCI members and staff will have complete access to Secret Internet Protocol Router Network otherwise known as SIPRNET and the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System or JWICS. This will allow the committee to receive classified material electronically and will save thousands of courier hours a year. In order to implement this new capability in the 110th Congress, the committee will require a large investment in equipment.

Although the HPSCI operates on a bipartisan basis, the budget request also reflects an allocation of the one-third—of one-third of the committee's personnel compensation to staff members who principally serve the interest of the minority. The minority has controlled a third of the payroll budget since the 106th Congress, and this practice will continue in the 110th Congress.

In order to carry out its work, the HPSCI must recruit and retain highly qualified and cleared staff. Many staff members have been active in the Intelligence Community for decades and are vigorously sought after by the private sector.

The HPSCI has been given 44 staff slots since the 108th Congress. Due to office space constraints in the Capitol where we reside, the HPSCI did not have more than 40 staff at any one time. The minority is allowed 13 staff; the majority, 26 staff. And there are five shared staff. If additional space is provided or once the committee moves to the Capitol Visitors Center, we intend to ramp up the 44 staff slots that have been authorized.

So, in conclusion, Madam Chairman, we believe these increases are justified by the committee's oversight plan which seeks to ensure that the Intelligence Community is observing its legal obligations and has the resources and capabilities to carry out its critical and increasingly risky mission.

I want to thank you this afternoon for the opportunity to present this budget request, and I look forward to any questions you might have.

[The statements of Mr. Reyes and Mr. Hoekstra follow:]

Joint Statement of
CHAIRMAN SILVESTRE REYES AND RANKING MEMBER PETER HOEKSTRA
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
before the
Committee on House Administration

COMMITTEE BUDGET REQUEST
February 28, 2007

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers, thank you for providing us with this opportunity to explain and describe the bi-partisan budget request submitted to the Committee on House Administration by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) for the 110th Congress.

As this Committee well knows, the HPSCI operates on a bi-partisan basis and the budget request reflects this. As has been the case since the 106th Congress, the Minority will again control one-third of the personnel compensation budget of the Committee. The HPSCI is a Committee of 21 Members and 40 staff. There are 12 majority members and 9 minority members. Presently, 5 staff are designated as administrative support staff, and 35 staff designated as professional staff members. 13 professional staff members work principally at the direction of the Ranking Minority Member, and 22 professional staff members work principally at the direction of the Chairman.

Since September 11, 2001, it has become clear that it is imperative for the US Intelligence Community to improve its intelligence capabilities significantly so that decision-makers can be well informed as they deliberate and consider various issues affecting national and homeland security policy and direction. The output of a quality US Intelligence Community is critical to the development of sound national and homeland security policies. Failure to provide the necessary intelligence capabilities can, as we have seen, result in a catastrophic breakdown of our national and homeland security process. Strong and credible congressional oversight is necessary to ensure such failure is minimized.

Madam Chairwoman, during the 110th Congress, the HPSCI will, of course, continue its careful oversight of the US Intelligence Community, focusing primarily on the issues of terrorism, intelligence support to the policy maker and the warfighter, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, penetrating hard targets such as Iran and North Korea, and other issues of critical importance to the security of this nation. The HPSCI will consider these matters not only in terms of the threats posed, but also in terms of our nation's ability to disrupt these activities and to respond effectively to such threats, attacks, and corruptive activities.

The specifics of our budget request are directly supportive of the oversight activities we have outlined. We are requesting a very modest one percent increase in the

budget allocation from 2006 to 2007 and a six percent increase in 2008. Although we are not seeking any additional staff slots for the HPSCI, we are seeking a marginal increase above the allocation for the 109th Congress for salaries (9%). This increase is justified by our need to hire and retain highly specialized professionals who have required security clearances. HPSCI Members, indeed all Members of the House, benefit from this uniquely experienced oversight staff.

The HPSCI is also requesting a 1% increase for equipment costs. The Committee's requirement to work in a classified environment imposes substantial and unique costs on us with respect to our information technology infrastructure, hardware, and software. We must operate and maintain, in accordance with standards established by the Director of National Intelligence, two separate computer systems. These requirements are not a matter of choice, but rather they are necessary for the committee to protect the national security information in its possession and used for oversight activities. Furthermore, the Committee is in the process of upgrading its communications connectivity to the Intelligence Community in order to conduct better oversight during the 110th Congress.

For the past 30 years through today, the HPSCI has only been able to receive classified information, communications, budget documents and briefings from the Intelligence Community through a single secure fax machine or delivered by cleared couriers. The HPSCI is probably the only committee left in the House that receives the majority of its information and oversight materials on paper. This will change with the 110th Congress as the HPSCI members and staff will have complete access to the secure communications systems known as Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) and the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (JWICS). This will allow the committee to receive classified material electronically, saving thousands of courier hours and reducing tremendously the amount of paper products delivered to the House, thereby dramatically increasing the security of classified information. In order to implement this new capability in the 110th Congress, the committee will require a large investment in equipment.

In sum, this budget request is solid and responsible. It is what is required for us to properly conduct our oversight role responsibly. Our work is of critical importance to our nation, particularly at this important time in our history. The Committee, as the exclusive overseer of the US Intelligence Community in the House of Representatives, must continue to work to ensure that the Intelligence Community observes its legal obligations, and has the resources and capabilities it requires to carry out its extremely critical mission. Investing in this Committee ensures that the taxpayers' money is well spent on the intelligence programs that safeguard the nation's security and secure our individual freedoms.

We ask that Committee on House Administration look favorably upon this request.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. PETER HOEKSTRA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Ditto.

And the only thing I would add is, you know, I very much appreciate the process that Silvestre has gone through as we have gone through the difficulty of, you know, staff reductions with the transfer, but the chairman has been very, very gracious in making sure that we accommodate the needs of the staff as we have gone through that process. I think we have now completed that. And I think it has worked very, very well for the committee. And it has worked very, very well for the staff that were affected. So, as Silvestre said, this is a totally bipartisan budget. And I endorse it 100 percent.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

Ranking member.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I just want to verify you have the two-thirds/one-third rule going; everybody is in agreement there?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Yes, actually, we do, and the way the committee is set up, we also have shared positions. And that is, you know, Jane and I were in total agreement on the last Congress in how we structured that, and that agreement has carried forward.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Thank you so much.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much, and it is great to see such a committee of interest—you are just so needed in the work that you do, covert, overt, whatever, but it is still very much needed. To see the two of you are coming together in a bipartisan effort, and that is a great deal of leadership on the part of the Chairman as well as the Ranking Member, who was the Chairman early on.

We thank you so much for being here.

I do not see any further questions that are needed in this late hour. We do know that there is a modest increase of 2.4 percent because we are operating from the budget base of last year. And this year, that is a very modest increase, but nevertheless, this is what we have. This is what has been given to us by the appropriators and Budget Committee.

But we appreciate the work that you do. If there is something else that should come down the pike, we will certainly let you know, and you will be aware of that and you will hear from us.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. If I may say one thing, we thought we were going to be in the CVC already. And the budgeting and planning for that was very, very difficult. And I am not sure we would have had the money if we would have actually moved in. So I hope that we actually do move into the Visitors Center during Silvestre's service as chairman recognizing that if we do move in there, I hope we don't have any unanticipated costs, but you know, I wouldn't be surprised if there were some.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, you know, it is amazing you talk about that because we will soon have a hearing on the CVC, and we will let you know perhaps in short order as to what will be developing there. Thank you both so very, very much.

Welcome, Standards. I would like to first congratulate the new Chairwoman. It is good to see a chairwoman in the position of authority. We thank you so much for coming before the Committee today to outline your budget and to speak with us about the great things that you guys will be doing.

Of course, Ethics is on the front line, and a priority for not only this Congress but for the American people. They are looking for you to do great things, so congratulations Chairwoman Tubbs Jones. It is also good to see you, Mr. Former Chair and Ranking Member Hastings.

Because of the brevity of time, we will ask you to go right into your presentations.

And you might start, Madam Chairwoman.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mrs. JONES. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, I am glad to be with you as well. I want to congratulate you on your chairwomanship, and, Mr. McCarthy, good afternoon to you as well.

Congress is a venerable institution, one in which we have a responsibility to ensure higher standards, the highest standards of government. My colleague, Ranking Member Doc Hastings and I have been entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the House and following new ethics rules adopted in January 22, 2007, under the leadership of Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

And the wonderful thing about Doc Hastings and I, we have been working together for the past 4, 5, 6 years. And so we are not new to one another. And I believe that we will have an opportunity to do a great job as chair and ranking member on this committee.

The meetings that we hosted to organize and welcome our new members demonstrated that ethics is neither a Democrat or Republican issue. Rather it is an issue that concerns Members from both sides of the aisle and the professional nonpartisan staff members that serve.

As the committee name implies, the American people have entrusted us to uphold the standards of this House. First, the committee works to educate and advise Members and staff, and secondly, the committee investigates possible violations of the rules. And when the rules are broken, the committee must enforce them.

Despite the small staff of 13, the committee annually produces thousands of written advisories and formal opinions, provides Member and staff briefings and conducts investigations of possible rule violations. In 2007, the committee has been charged with two additional roles, to conduct mandatory annual ethics training for every officer and employee of the House of Representatives—which counts for about 10,000 employees—and to undertake the mandatory review of traveling requests to ensure that congressional travel offered to Members and staff meets the House ethics rules.

We have requested a budget request increase of 28 percent from $4.7 million in the 109th to $6.1 in the 110th; in other words, $1.35 million in additional funding. With respect to ethics, the committee has requested increased staff positions from 19 authorized positions funded in the 109th to 24 positions in the 110th. The com-

mittee was provided with funds for six additional staff members in the 109th beyond the 13 that had previously been authorized. However, due to issues that have been all in the news—and I am not going to go through them at any point—it is time for us to move forward and do the job of the committee. And I believe that Doc Hastings and I are prepared to do that.

The committee was able to, in 2006, to fill three existing vacancies to meet the staff level, 13, in the 108th. Following the passage of the 110th, the committee has anticipated need for additional—five additional positions. I am skipping through this real quickly, the $1.15 million——

The CHAIRWOMAN. And I appreciate that.

Mrs. JONES. The primary increase in the budget, $1.15 million of the 1.35 million, is for increase in personnel expenses resulting from the increased responsibilities.

Under committee rules, two of the staff members are members of personal staff of the chair and the ranking member, while the remaining 11 staff are retained by the committee.

The committee staff provide advice and education to House Members and staff in several ways, and I won't go through, but you are familiar with that. But the committee now needs to have additional staff to provide additional responsibility that has been given to us, which are to provide mandatory training to staff of 10,000 and in addition to which, to increase the function, for the first time, to preapprove all officially connected privately sponsored travel. Members and staff seeking to apply for travel are required under the guidelines to provide substantial detail.

With that, I want to say to you, the Chair and to the ranking member, I am excited about the opportunities that the committee has to provide the services necessary to the Members of the House and the staff. And with that, I am going to—I don't know if I am supposed to yield, but I do yield to my colleague.

[The statement of Mrs. Jones follows:]

Testimony

Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Chairwoman,
Committee on Standards of Official Conduct

Before the
Committee on House Administration

February 28, 2007

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Millender-McDonald and Ranking Member Ehlers. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear today on behalf of the Committee on Standards.

Congress is a venerable institution, and one in which we have a responsibility to ensure the highest standards of government. My colleague Ranking Member Doc Hastings and I have been entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the House in following new ethics rules adopted in January 2007 under the leadership of Speaker Nancy Pelosi. We take this charge seriously. Last week, the Committee met to organize and welcome its new members. The meeting demonstrated that ethics is neither a Democratic nor a Republican issue. Rather, it is an issue that concerns members from both sides of the aisle and the professional, non-partisan staff members that serve. As the Committee's name implies, the American people have entrusted us to uphold the *standards* of this House.

Historically, the Committee has been charged with two roles. First, the Committee works to educate and advise members and staff. Second, the Committee investigates possible violations of the rules, and when the rules are broken, the Committee must enforce them. The Ethics Committee has long produced a significant body of work product with modest resources. Despite its small staff of 13, the Committee annually produces thousands of written advisories and informal opinions, provides Member and staff briefings, and conducts investigations of possible rules violations.

In 2007 the Committee was charged with two additional roles - - to conduct mandatory annual ethics training for every officer and employee of the House of Representatives and undertake mandatory review of travel requests to ensure that congressional travel offered to members and staff meets the requirements of House ethics rules. The budget request before you reflects these requirements.

We have requested a budget increase of 28 percent - from $4.7 million in the 109th Congress to $6.1 million in the 110th; in other words, $1.35 million in additional funding. With respect to staffing, the Committee has requested increased staff positions - from 19 authorized and funded positions in the 109th Congress to 24 positions in the 110th.

To provide background on these requests, let me begin by stating that in the 109th Congress, this Committee was provided with funds for six additional staff positions beyond the thirteen that had previously been authorized. Increases were granted in the 109th Congress to significantly enhance the Committee's ability to expand its investigative, staff training, and education efforts, and to update the Committee's website. The Committee was faced with a variety of issues at the beginning of the 109th Congress – issues that have been discussed in the press and elsewhere at great length, and which I do not believe are necessary or helpful to address here, but which delayed the efforts to increase the size of the staff.

The Committee was able in 2006 to fill three existing vacancies to meet the staff level of 13 that had been in place in the 108th Congress, but the six additional slots remained unfilled. Following passage of the House Rules of the 110th Congress, the Committee has anticipated the need for an additional five positions to respond and assist with advisory, education, and financial disclosure requirements. These positions are additional slots needed to satisfy the mandates of House ethics rules. Importantly, the figures presented today represent the collaborative effort of my Ranking Member Rep. Doc Hastings and I, to advance *past* needs of the Committee and *current* mandates of the House ethics rules.

The primary increase in the budget -- $1.15 million of the $1.35 million – is for increased personnel expenses resulting from the increased responsibilities of the Committee. The

Committee currently has thirteen staff members. Under Committee rules, two of the staff members are members of the personal staffs of the Chairman and Ranking member who serve as shared staff for the Committee, while the remaining eleven staff members are retained by the Committee. Eight of those eleven staff members are counsel, and they provide service to the Committee on advice and education as well as investigations and enforcement.

The current staff provides advice and education to House Members and staff in at least the following ways:

- Responding to telephone inquiries seeking guidance on the House rules and standards of Conduct;
- Drafting responses to written requests for advisory opinions from House Members and staff, for review and signature by Chair and ranking Member;
- Providing ethics training by providing briefings on House rules and standards of conduct to Member and Committee offices;
- Drafting advisory memoranda of general application ("Pink sheets") to be distributed to Members and staff; and
- Reviewing and approving over two thousand Financial Disclosure Statements filed by Members, officers and covered staff, and congressional candidates each year.

Committee staff also assists in investigations and enforcement proceedings. The Chair and Ranking Member have authority under Committee Rule 18 to conduct inquiries prior to the establishment of investigative subcommittees, and Committee staff counsel assist the chair and ranking member in those inquiries. Staff counsel also assist members of Investigative subcommittees in conducting investigations to determine whether violations of rules or standards of conduct should be charged, and assist the Committee if adjudicative proceedings are required. Because of Committee confidentiality rules, no member of the Committee or any subcommittee may use their own staff to assist them in Committee work.

These existing functions alone require the additional staff approved in the 109th Congress, in order to meet the demands of the existing workload. At the beginning of the 110th Congress,

however, the House gave the Committee substantial additional responsibility, and we need more resources to satisfy those new tasks.

First, the House for the first time has required all officers and employees to attend mandatory ethics training each year, and to certify their attendance to the Committee. The House has over [10,000] employees, including several thousand in district offices throughout the country. The new requirement will only have its intended impact if the offered training is substantial and meaningful, and we intend to develop new training programs to achieve those goals. Both the development of new training programs and the implementation of those programs will require substantial additional resources, and we intend to hire additional advisory counsel to assist in that effort.

Second, the House has also for the first time required that the Committee pre-approve all officially-connected, privately-sponsored travel, and has required the Committee to issue guidelines and regulations to be used in reviewing all such travel. Members and staff seeking approval for travel are required under those guidelines to provide substantial detail regarding the trips, and Committee staff must review each trip. The Committee has already begun receiving requests for approval, and we anticipate that reviewing travel approval requests will also require the substantial additional resources we are requesting.

We welcome the additional responsibility provided by the new rules, and are committed to doing everything we can to ensure that all of the House rules and standards of conduct are understood and followed. We believe the budget we have submitted is necessary and appropriate to meet that commitment.

Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, you may yield, but I am going to yield to him any way.

Mrs. JONES. With that, I complete my testimony and ask you to refer to the full testimony. I kind of zipped through it.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes. And that is fine. We are asking everyone to submit their full testimony for the record. And you have done just as we had wanted you to do. So thanks so very much.

Mr. Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DOC HASTINGS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you with the Ethics Committee's request for the 110th Congress.

Chairwoman Tubbs Jones and I, as well other colleagues, have been called on to serve at a very serious and challenging time for the Ethics Committee.

As you know, several events through much of the 109th Congress shined a bright spotlight on the committee's very difficult work. While the challenges remain, I believe the committee's performance during the last 8 months of 2006—particularly the oversight of the page program investigation—demonstrated that, given a sincere commitment on both sides of the aisle, the committee can effectively carry out its obligations to this House. And Mrs. Tubbs Jones and I spent a great deal of time here as a member of that subcommittee in October, and I believe that we demonstrated that we can work.

As you know, as the chairwoman pointed out the committee has two primary tasks, to educate, inform and advise Members and staff about their ethical responsibilities pursuant to the Rules of the House and to enforce those rules firmly and fairly without with regard to friendship, favor or political party.

Progress on these two fronts is vital to our overarching goal to secure and raise the American people's confidence in the integrity of the House as an institution. The American people deserve and expect their elected representatives to abide by the highest ethical standards. And that is what we must strive to achieve.

I believe the recent increased interest in ethics provides us with the unique opportunity to work together and provide for successful results.

At this hearing 2 years ago, I outlined an aggressive plan to substantially upgrade and enhance the ethics education and training publications and communications with the goal of enhancing our ability to help Members and staff to understand the rules and to follow them.

At that time, I requested a substantial increase in funding for salaries, equipment and travel to fund six new positions and to provide our committee with tools to better serve Members and staff in the House. And I appreciate very much the House Administration Committee's willingness to fund that vision.

But, as you know, certain problems during the last Congress blocked our efforts to pursue these objectives that we would have liked. But I am more committed than ever to be moving forward with them. And I am pleased that the chairwoman and I share this

commitment that I just outlined, that we outlined 2 years ago. I join her today and request you once again provide these resources necessary to enhance our efforts in these areas.

In addition, in light of several significant changes to House Rules adopted in January by the 110th Congress, the chairwoman and I are preparing for the Ethics Committee to take on new responsibilities that the committee has not had in the past in the areas of gift, public travel and public disclosure. And I hope this committee will provide the resources necessary to do that, because I believe that the Members of this House need, as quickly as possible, responses from us when they ask questions. They are, in fact, customers of this committee.

So, specifically, we would ask additional funding for salaries, equipment and travel for five new positions as was outlined by the chairwoman.

So while recognizing the tight budget times that we face, we believe that this budget request is realistic and responsible. It will at least follow the full implementation of the vision that I put forth at the beginning of the last Congress that will help us meet our new responsibilities with the Rules recently passed by the 110th Congress. And most importantly, it will strengthen the trust and the integrity of this revered institution. And I think that is important to all of us.

So, with that, I stand fully behind the statement of the distinguished chairwoman of this committee. And I am looking forward to working with her this year. And we both stand ready to answer questions if you have any.

[The statement of Mr. Hastings follows:]

DOC HASTINGS
4TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS
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RANKING REPUBLICAN MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON RULES

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Testimony by

Congressman Doc Hastings
Ranking Republican Member,
Committee on Standards of Official Conduct

before the
Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2007

Good morning, Chairwoman Millender-McDonald and Ranking Republican Member Ehlers. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you and your colleagues today in support of the Ethics Committee's budget request for the 110th Congress.

Chairwoman Tubbs Jones and I, as well as my other colleagues, have been called to serve at a very serious and challenging time for the House Ethics Committee. As you know, several events through much of the 109th Congress shined a bright spotlight on the Committee's difficult work.

While challenges remain, I believe the Committee's performance during the last eight months of 2006 – particularly the oversight of the Page Program investigation – demonstrated that given a sincere commitment on both sides of the aisle, the Committee can effectively carry out its obligations to the House.

As you know, the Committee has two primary tasks: to educate, inform and advise Members and staff about their ethical responsibilities pursuant to the Rules of the House; and, to enforce those rules firmly and fairly – without regard to friendship, favor or political party.

Progress on these two fronts is vital to our overarching goal to secure and raise the American people's confidence in the integrity of the House as an institution. The American people deserve and expect their elected representatives to abide by the highest ethical standards, and that is what we must strive to achieve. I believe the recent increased interest in ethics provides us with a unique opportunity to work together to provide successful results.

At this hearing two years ago, I outlined an aggressive plan to substantially upgrade and enhance ethics education and training, publications and communications with the goal of enhancing our ability to help Members and staff to understand the rules and follow them.

- continued -

At that time, I requested a substantial increase in funding for salaries, equipment and travel to fund six new positions and to provide our Committee with tools to better serve Members and staff in the House. I appreciate very much the House Administration Committee's willingness to fund that vision.

As you know, certain problems during the last Congress blocked our efforts to pursue these objectives, but I'm more committed than ever to moving them forward and I'm pleased that Chairwoman Tubbs Jones shares that commitment. I join her today in asking that you once again provide the resources necessary to enhance our efforts in these areas.

In addition, in light of several significant changes to House rules adopted in January by the 110th Congress, the Chairwoman and I are preparing for the Ethics Committee to take on new added responsibilities in the areas of gifts, private travel and public disclosure – and I hope that this committee will provide the resources necessary to do that effectively.

Specifically, we have requested additional funding for salaries, equipment and travel for five new positions to improve the processing of the huge volume of public disclosure documents, to build upon and strengthen the quality of professional staff advice, education and training provided to Members and staff, and to enhance the communication of new ethics rules.

Madam Chairwoman, while recognizing the tight budget times that we face, we believe that this budget request is realistic and responsible. It will, at last, allow the full implementation of the vision that I put forth at the beginning of the last Congress. It will help us meet our new responsibilities with the rules recently passed by the 110th Congress. And, most importantly, it will strengthen the trust and integrity of this revered institution.

Thank you.

-end-

News From

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, February 28, 2007

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Ethics Committee Leaders Request Boost in Panel Budget

Washington, D.C. – House Ethics Committee Ranking Republican Doc Hastings joined Ethics Committee Chairwoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones today in outlining their budget request for the 110th Congress.

While testifying before the House Administration Committee, Hastings said the proposed increase will provide the resources needed to "educate, inform and advise Members and staff about their ethical responsibilities" and "enforce the rules firmly and fairly."

The budget request builds upon previous efforts by Hastings to enhance ethics education and training. In 2005, Hastings secured the first major budget increase for the Ethics Committee in nearly two decades.

The proposed budget of $6.11 million for 2007 and 2008 would add professional staff to improve the quality of advice, authorize detailees from the Government Accountability Office to help process public disclosure documents, increase ethics education and training for Members and staff, and enhance the communication of new ethics rules.

-30-

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much for your testimony.

I like that statement that you made, Mr. Ranking Member, you two were called on to serve. That is indeed true.

Because of the high integrity that you bring to the Committee, coupled with your desire to make sure that the integrity is above board and that everything that you do is above board, I think your testimony is a testament to you two being put into this assignment. So we thank you so much for your being here.

Now, I am trying to move this along because Rules has to go back to a markup, so I am trying to shorten some things. I don't think I have to ask any questions because you have said it all. I will refer to the Ranking Member for any statement that he might have.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I will just be very brief. I want to thank you two for working so well together. And as a new Member, I know you have a lot of work ahead of you, those rules and regulations, because all of those new Members are starting to ask, what are the rules? And everyone says, wait until Rules gets it—or Ethics comes out with it. So we look forward to your work.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. I know we are at a tough time here. We have time constraints. But I have a real concern. As I understand it, we are unable to give them more than 2 percent or 2.4 percent increase, and their increase request is 40-something percent for all the new work they are going to do. And as one who had to already submit a request for a relatively simple thing, the amount of work they are going to be required to do this year under these new rules is extraordinary. And I wonder if I could ask, if you just get a 2 percent increase, how are we going to be able to have our requests answered by you in a timely fashion?

Mrs. JONES. I just want to correct for the record, we really, our increase is only 28 percent. I know it was reflected in one of the newspapers that it was 40-something percent. But they were comparing apples and oranges. Our request is 28 percent. And in order to do the kind of job that you want us to do, that is what we need.

Now, if you don't give it to us, we are going to do as much as we can with what we receive. But I would say to you, and I don't know who else I have to go to, to say that in order for us to preapprove all the private requests and advisory opinions and to educate 10,000—we are not just educating Members. We are required to educate every officer of the House as well as every employee. And we are talking 10,000 people.

To do a good job at it, we need to have the money that we are requesting. I will yield to Doc because he was chair before. Maybe he can add to that.

Mr. HASTINGS. I think one way to measure this is to start with the number of employees we have, which is only 13. And so if you add that, what we are asking I think is very realistic. And I think that we can do that job. The staff has been doing an extraordinary job with essentially a static staff and the workload that we had because of all of the awareness of ethical issues in the last Congress. So they have done a remarkable job. But, frankly, I think that we can do a better job in a more timely area.

You talked about a request coming in. I view this—and the chairwoman views this—as you being our customers. You ask us for information. I think we should get that information back to you as quickly as we possibly can. And sometimes that just takes some manpower. And, frankly, with the new responsibilities we have—and I might say, I think with the concurrence of my chairwoman—they are very difficult to wade through. And I don't think that we have gotten to the end of the process yet, to be very honest with you. And I think we have to have the staff to support us in that regard.

Mr. LUNGREN. My concern is we have adopted new rules. I always viewed this as an institution—this is part of the nonpartisan nature of the institution, the ethical conduct of the Members. And if we set ourselves up for failure such that we put restrictions on ourselves and because we don't give you enough money so you can't do the responsiveness, we are going to put Members in the situation where they are either not going to be able to do something they should be able to do, or they will do it and then be found to be violative of our laws on a technical nature. And I don't wish that on any Democrat or any Republican or any Independent in this House. And I am concerned about this Institution as an Institution. And when you have put a request in for $6,119,000 and the proposed mark is a little less than $5 million, that means you are about $1.1 million under what you think you need.

Now everybody asks for what they think they need, but in this particular case where we have given this tremendous increase in responsibility and a need for timeliness for each Member's own integrity, plus the—what this House is going to look like, I am really concerned about that. And I know we have a tough situation, but this is one where we may be setting a trap for ourselves.

Mrs. JONES. That is why we are hoping, because the additional responsibility has been put upon us by the House, or relayed upon us by the House, that the House may lay an additional responsibility upon themselves to give us the additional money that we need to do our job.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Frankly, had we passed a budget last year, we would have been able then to give you more increase in your funding source.

It is because of a lack thereof we have had to start from the baseline of last year's budget and do the modest increase.

We appreciate what you are doing. We have duly noted what you are requesting as opposed to what we can provide at this juncture. But I will be going back to the Speaker talking about certain things.

And, Mr. Lungren, those are some of the things I will be proposing to her.

I cannot say anything will come from that. But at least I will let it be known that you have raised the bar, so now you must have the funding and resources to go along with it.

Thank you so very much, the two of you, for coming before us today.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you.

Mrs. JONES. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. McCarthy, and Mr. Lungren.

The CHAIRWOMAN. We know that Members are trying to get back. Rules Committee, please come forward, and while we ask for the Rules Committee, we know that the Natural Resources Chairperson and Ranking Member have some commitments, I have been told. Are they still here with us, or have they had to leave? They will come back in 10 minutes.

Okay, then we will wrap it up in 10 minutes.

May I please congratulate you, Madam Chairwoman, for being in the position that you are in. I am absolutely ecstatic. I am pleased to see you in that position. And we thank you for representing us quite well as the woman who chairs the Rules Committee. And I might add, for my California friend, we thank you for the leadership and your chairship when you were there in the last Congress. And we appreciate you coming on as the Ranking Member. So thanks to both of you, and you may proceed with your statement.

Now I would like to ask if you can just summarize and then let your complete statement be a part of the record for us.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Ms. SLAUGHTER. You will be so happy with us. We are only asking for 2 percent. So we will get right to it. I am happy to see you and Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Lungren. I am proud to come before you today as the chair of the Rules Committee for what I hope is the first of many appearances to discuss funding for Rules. Since we are under time constraints, I will get right to the heart of the matter.

Our committee is responsible for setting the parameters of debate for specific pieces of legislation, has the unique role of considering the vast majority of complex legislative initiatives before they come to the Floor and maintains jurisdiction over many other issues of critical importance to the ongoing operation of the House, everything from the opening day rules package to ensuring the House's ability to function in times of crisis.

In short, Madam Chair, the Rules Committee is the only body to have such a wide-ranging jurisdictional reach concerning House procedures while also impacting nearly every major piece of legislation that comes before it on the way to the House Floor.

Out of respect for the House Administration Committee, the budget I submit today, along with the committee's ranking member, Mr. Dreier, asks for a budget increase of no more than 2 percent of the prior year's budget level. It is a budget which will allow us to fund the daily operations of the committee while still investing to a degree in the ongoing efforts to serve the House Membership and the public.

At the same time, however, it is important to note that this committee has historically received much smaller increases in funding than almost all others. A budget increase of only 2 percent will simply continue that trend.

As such, I must express my belief that keeping the committee funding at this level may hinder us from providing the level of services to the House Membership and the public that we aspire to. Accepting the proposed guidelines for the Rules Committee

budget has led us to reprogram funds to meet growing demands and emerging priorities and essential needs.

For example, the committee's funding of travel and equipment have been cut 40 to 46 percent, respectively, to allow for money to be redirected into accounts like communication and supplies as well as to recover increased spending levels resulting from natural growth.

Such shifts will result in a budget that will more accurately reflect the actual spending of the committee based on past year-end budget numbers.

Funds have also been shifted to the category of other services to address modernization needs and software development. Both are critical to the committee's ability to increase performance and work output and to meet demand and increased access to Rules Committee information.

Mr. Dreier started the development of the Rules Amendment Tracking System software that has already yielded great benefits to the committee. He has done excellent work in moving the committee down the necessary road toward modernization and increased efficiency by investing in the RATS program. This investment must be continued in order to further increase its accessibility and usefulness. That effort will not only continue to return dividends internally within the committee but also with our daily partners, such as the House leadership and the House Parliamentarians.

Furthermore, Rules strongly desires to shift to a more dedicated paperless format as well as to modernize our technology and public outreach efforts. We will need professional help and guidance to be able to do so.

I remain confident we can continue to move forward and make progress although with the limited funds in our budget proposal, project deadlines must be extended to spread out the funding over multiple years. This will obviously delay the benefits with these investments as we continue to improve the services provided by the Committee on Rules.

And, Madam Chair, any budget that doesn't keep up with both inflation and growing costs impacts those who work under it. We do believe we can fully staff the committee with a slight increase in the personnel funding that is called for while still maintaining our work output.

At the same time, this budget will not provide for the desired growth in committee staff, for new positions or for common cost-of-living adjustments.

The Rules Committee has in the past always provided for one-third allocation of salary funding to the minority and that will be continued. Similarly, the minority will still receive one-third of the committee staff slots. But as we strive to offer more services to the Members of the House and their staff, we will need the increases in this account to provide them.

Madam Chair, the budget cosponsored by Ranking Member Dreier and myself carefully and responsibly funds priority accounts while reallocating money to more properly reflect the demands on our committee's budget in recent years.

Although we will welcome a greater investment in the Rules Committee to help us accomplish our mission, we have chosen to come before you today and present a budget that honors your request by adhering to the recommended budget constraints. Our growing need has not made us unaware of the fact that public funds are precious and must be spent wisely. That is a reality acknowledged by the modest budget we present to you today.

And at the same time, it is my hope that the House Administration Committee will keep in mind our future goals and needs when making final allocation decisions. Any further funding assistance would be a great help to both the majority and the minority on our committee as we seek to provide the best possible services to the House and to the public. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[The statement of Ms. Slaughter follows:]

Statement of Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, Committee on Rules

Before the Committee on House Administration

February 28, 2007

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers and Members of the House Administration Committee, I am proud to come before you today as the new Chairwoman of the Rules Committee for what I hope is the first of many appearances to discuss funding for Rules. Since we are under time constraints, let me get right to the heart of the matter.

Our Committee is responsible for setting the parameters of debate for specific pieces of legislation. It has the unique role of considering the vast majority of complex legislative initiatives before they come to the Floor. Furthermore, it maintains jurisdiction over many other issues of critical importance to the ongoing operations of the House - everything from the opening day Rules package to ensuring the House's ability to function in times of crisis.

In short, Madam Chair, the Rules Committee is the only body to have such a wide ranging jurisdictional reach concerning House procedures while also impacting nearly every major piece of legislation that comes before it on the way to the House Floor.

Out of respect for the House Administration Committee, the budget I submit today along with the Committee's Ranking Member, Mr. Dreier, asks for a budget increase of no more than two percent of the prior year's budget level. It is a budget that will allow us to fund the daily operations of the Committee while still investing to a degree in ongoing efforts to serve the House Membership and the public.

At the same time, however, it is important to note that this Committee has historically received much smaller increases in funding than almost all others. A budget increase of only two percent would continue that trend. As such, I must express my belief that keeping Committee funding at this level may hinder us from providing the level of services to the House membership and the public that we aspire to.

Accepting the proposed guidelines for the Rules Committee budget has led us to re-program funds to meet growing demands, emerging priorities, and essential needs.

For example, the Committee's funding of Travel and Equipment have been cut 40 and 46 percent, respectively, to allow for money to be re-directed into accounts like Communication and Supplies, as well as to cover increased spending levels resulting from natural growth. Such shifts will result in a budget that will more accurately reflect the actual spending of the Committee based on past year end budget numbers.

Funds have also been shifted to the category of Other Services to address modernization needs and software development. Both are critical to the Committee's ability to increase performance and work output, and to meet demand and increased access to Rules Committee information.

Mr. Dreier started the development of the Rules Amendment Tracking System, software that has already yielded great benefits to the Committee. He has done excellent work in moving the Committee down a necessary road toward modernization and increased efficiency by investing in the RATS program. This investment must be continued in order to further increase its accessibility and usefulness.

That effort will not only continue to return dividends internally within the Committee, but also with our daily partners, such as the House Leadership and House Parliamentarians.

Furthermore, Rules strongly desires to shift to a more dedicated paperless format, as well as to modernize our technology and public outreach efforts. We will need professional help and guidance to do so.

I remain confident that we can continue to move forward and make progress, although with the limited funds in our budget proposal, project deadlines must be extended to spread out the funding over multiple years.

This will obviously delay the benefits from these investments as we continue to improve the services provided by the Committee on Rules.

Madam Chair, any budget that does not keep up with both inflation and growing costs impacts those working under it. We do believe we can fully staff the Committee with the slight increase in personnel funding called for, while still maintaining our work output. At the same time, this budget will not provide for desired growth in Committee staff positions, or for common cost of living adjustments.

The Rules Committee has in the past always provided for a 1/3 allocation of salary funding to the Minority, and that will be continued.
Similarly, the Minority will still receive 1/3 of the Committee's staff slots. But as we strive to offer more services to the Members of the House and their staff in the future, we will need increases in this account to provide them.

Madam Chair, this budget, co-sponsored by Ranking Member Dreier and myself, carefully and responsibly funds priority accounts while re-allocating money to more properly reflect the demands on our Committee's budget in recent years.

Although we would welcome a greater investment in the Rules Committee to help us accomplish our mission, we have chosen to come before you today and present a budget that honors your requests by adhering to the recommended budget constraints.

Our growing need has not made us unaware of the fact that public funds are precious and must be spent wisely. That is a reality acknowledged by the modest budget we present to you today.

At the same time, it is my hope that the House Administration Committee will keep in mind our future goals and needs when making final allocation decisions. Any further funding assistance would be a great help to both the Majority and Minority on our Committee as we seek to provide the best services possible to the House and to the public.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Dreier.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID DREIER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. DREIER. Well, thank you, very much, Madam Chairman. Until the arrival of Mr. Ehlers, the ranking member of the committee, I was looking forward to saying that this was history making for me for the first time ever testifying before an all California panel. And so if you want to leave now, Mr. Ranking Member, I can, in fact, have my dream come true to testify before a new distinguished chair of the House Administration Committee and my two California colleagues. But I don't mind if you stay, actually.

Let me just say that the testimony that the distinguished chair of the Rules Committee, Ms. Slaughter, has provided has once again shown that she and I agree on absolutely everything. We have never disagreed on any public policy question. We have never disagreed on the structure around which issues are considered on the House Floor. And so we have done this again.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Let's not go too far now.

Mr. DREIER. And I will tell you that it was interesting that the one thing that she praised me on was, in fact, the RATS program, the Rules Amendment Tracking System.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. It could have been called STAR.

Mr. DREIER. She wanted it to be called STAR. But Hugh Halpern, our staff director, came up with the brilliant acronym RATS to describe our amendment tracking system.

I will say that I believe this is a very appropriate request. The one thing that I hope we will be able to make clear, they will be continuing the pattern that we had in the past of the one-third recognition for staffing.

I hope that, for travel and equipment and services and all that, we will be able to see the one-third allocation for the minority, which is something that I do think is very important. But as Mrs. Slaughter outlined very appropriately, the Rules Committee is basically the traffic cop for the institution. We need to be prepared at any time to consider not only the daily legislative items that we address, but as she said in her testimony, in a time of crisis, the Rules Committee is regularly called on. And so we do have very important work.

So I strongly support the effort that she has here. And since Mr. Young has told me that I am to say just that I agree and then shut up, I will now agree and then shut up.

[The statement of Mr. Dreier follows:]

Committee on Rules
U.S. House of Representatives
H-312 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-6269

Testimony of the Honorable DAVID DREIER Before the Committee on House Administration

February 28, 2007

Thank you, Madam Chair, Mr. Ehlers, and Members of the Committee. I am pleased to appear before you today in support of the budget request of the Committee on Rules for the 110th Congress.

Although I am in a different position than I was 2 years ago, I still believe that service on the Rules Committee is among the highest callings we have in the House of Representatives. The Committee on Rules is the Speaker's committee, and is the mechanism by which the Leadership controls the floor and moves our agenda. The Committee is at once the House's traffic cop and its ultimate first responder: we organize the routine business of legislating and are there when needed to respond to crises, no matter from where they originate.

THE 109TH CONGRESS BUDGET REQUEST

When I appeared before this committee in the 109th Congress, I requested a hefty increase in the Committee's resources. In many respects, this increase was to modernize both our human and technological resources, bringing our pay scale in line with that of other committees and to make very necessary investments in technology.

By and large, these investments were successful. During the 109th Congress, we changed the way the Committee did business, improving transparency in our committee reports and on the Committee's web site, which was a recipient of the Congressional Management's foundation Bronze Mouse Award for the last Congress.

We also spent considerable resources developing the Rules Amendment Tracking System (RATS), an electronic database of amendments and rules considered by the Committee. Previously, all of these records were maintained on paper, making it difficult to find the answers to questions in a timely fashion. I am pleased to see that the new Majority intends to continue to fund the development of this system along the roadmap that we initially set out.

We were also successful in reducing wasteful service contracts. One of my objectives during the last congress was to eliminate unnecessary service contracts on

computer equipment that was otherwise covered under a manufacturer's warranty. We successfully transitioned away from the old model and to one which maximized the resources provided by the Committee on House Administration.

OUR REQUEST FOR THE 110TH CONGRESS

The request Chairwoman Slaughter and I have agreed on is a very modest increase in the budget from the last session of the 109th Congress. Our request reflects a mere 2 percent increase per year, which recognizes the investments that the Committee on House Administration made in the Rules Committee during the 109th Congress, and limits our growth in recognition of the budgetary situation we find ourselves in. While we all would prefer a larger increase, particularly to fund merit increases for our staff, we recognize that because we are operating under a continuing resolution, those increases simply are not possible.

We believe that this will allow the Committee to continue to meet its obligations to the House, while continuing to fund important priorities such as staff salaries and IT development.

I am particularly pleased that the Committee's funding request funds some specific Republican priorities. In particular, the request includes funding for a Minority website. While in years past, we have avoided having separate Majority and Minority websites, the realities of communication in the 21st century require that we have our own website to communicate both with the public and with the Republican Members of the House. I know that there were points in the past where the Democratic minority began development of their own website, and we believe that it is necessary for us to use the Internet to provide our own information.

MINORITY RESOURCES

Chairwoman Slaughter has agreed to continue the past Committee practice of providing the Minority with one-third of the total funds allocated for personnel compensation, along with one-third of the Committee's slots, and funding any needs the Minority may have in the other categories, such as equipment, supplies, travel, and services. While I would prefer that the majority fully implemented their own campaign promise of providing the Minority with full control of one-third of *all* committee resources, I do not have an objection to continuing our past practice in this regard so long as the Majority will promptly fulfill our reasonable requests in these other categories.

Thank you Madam Chair, Mr. Ehlers, and Members of the Committee. I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRWOMAN. When have you paid attention to anyone, Mr. Dreier? But we do appreciate that. And we appreciate you noticing that there are all Californians here, and the Ranking Member who has returned.

Mr. DREIER. It was hard to see.

The CHAIRWOMAN. You are a very astute person. Thanks to the two of you for coming before us. You are very sensitive. You have said that you have come and you honor our request for just the 2.2 percent for inflation.

But we do recognize and appreciate your being very sensitive to that. Because there was not a budget passed last year, we had to go from the baseline and then bring in this modest 2.2 percent.

So we thank you so much. We thank you for what you do on the Rules Committee. Because, after all, you are the determining factor as to what gets to the Floor and what doesn't.

You have outlined a very ambitious, a very challenging agenda but one that you can meet with the two of you working together.

Now, there is the agreement of the two-thirds/one-third in this committee?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Yes.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay, fine, very good.

Mr. Ehlers, you have a comment.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you.

First of all, I appreciate the two-third/one-third ratio commitment. We are asking that of every committee because, as you know, it was not that way for some time. We have worked hard over the past dozen years to make sure that every committee meets it, and we want to maintain that.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. We are happy to do it.

Mr. DREIER. I hope we can do that not only for staffing allocation but, as I was saying, for equipment and travel and services as well.

Mr. EHLERS. Yes. It turns out that almost every committee negotiates something different between the chair and the ranking member. The spirit of it is indeed that we will share two-thirds/one-third, and committees negotiate different ways they handle that.

Absolutely, we just simply want the commitment here.

Secondly, Mr. Dreier, I apologize I missed the first part. I was having a little meeting in the anteroom with some other folks who needed my attention. But I have to tell you, it is worse than you thought. We have a majority of Californians on this Committee.

Mr. DREIER. My condolences to you, Mr. Ehlers.

You will survive.

Mr. EHLERS. It is not so much a problem that they are from California. It is just that, as you know, Californians never agree with each other. So——

Mr. DREIER. I have not seen evidence of that. I have never seen evidence of that.

Mr. EHLERS. So my role here is to referee between them. Be that as it may, we appreciate your testimony. You run a good committee, and I hope that I get as many amendments under the——

Mr. DREIER. I will be trying, I promise.

Mr. EHLERS. Under the new chairman as I did from you. Certainly, I thank you for your service. You probably work the oddest hours of any committee of the House.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Not anymore.

Mr. DREIER. Not anymore. I ended that, actually, 3 years ago.

Mr. EHLERS. I appreciate that. At any rate, I have no further questions. I would yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Yes, thank you so much, Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you very much. Again, I appreciate the fact that there is a one-third/two-thirds. When I served here before, I loved to serve on the Judiciary Committee, upon which I still serve, and I recall at that time we had something like 11 percent of the total budget which made it rather difficult for the minority to do its work.

And I am glad to see that, over the intervening years, there has been an understanding of a one-third/two-thirds and that this is prevailing now as we come back.

Some of my colleagues from California have kidded me about the fact that I was in the minority for 10 years. I left, and I came back, and 2 years after I got here, we went from majority to minority again. I don't think there is a cause and effect. But I also thinking that there are things to be learned from that.

And I think fairer treatment of the minority is important and providing a one-third/two-thirds expenditure, understanding it, seems to me is important. And it is helpful to the entire constituency.

Mr. DREIER. As you know, there was a change we made in 1994 when we became the majority status, and we felt very strongly. You said that 11 percent number that you had is—

Mr. LUNGREN. Rules was better. It was 17 percent for Rules.

Mr. DREIER. Right, 17 percent for Rules, but I mean, the 11 percent on Judiciary Committee, I think it is very important to note that. And we felt passionately about that in 1994 when we came. And I am very happy that we are continuing with recognition of that because, as the gentleman said, it would be very unfair to treat the minority as the minority before 1994 had been treated then.

Mr. LUNGREN. Well, the other thing is, everybody has a more recent memory of being in the minority.

Mr. DREIER. That is exactly right.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. Thanks to both of you for being here.

Mr. DREIER. Thank you very much. Again, congratulations to you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you so much. Look forward to working with the two of you.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Step right on up. Thank you so much for your patience as we round up this full day of funding hearings that started at 9:30 this morning.

We appreciate the two of you coming in today, Chairman Rahall and Ranking Member Young on Natural Resources. If you don't mind just submitting your full testimony for the record and just summarizing what you would like for the Committee to have, we would appreciate that.

And, Mr. Chairman, thank you and good afternoon.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. NICK RAHALL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. RAHALL. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate it, and I am glad to see my ranking member take his rightful seat to my right. And, Ranking Member Mr. Ehlers and Mr. Lungren, I do appreciate this opportunity both for myself and my long time colleague on both of the committees. I have had the privilege of serving in this body for 30 years, both on Transportation and Infrastructure and Resources. Ranking member now on Resources, Don Young and I now have an opportunity to present to this committee our budget for the 110th Congress. We know it has been a long day for you. And I am going to be very brief in my comments.

In total, the amount we are requesting represents only a 4 percent increase in 2007 over the committee's budget for the second session of the 109th Congress with an additional 4 percent increase—only 4 percent I might add—for 2008.

We believe that this small increase is justifiable in light of the aggressive schedule of oversight hearings the committee intends to conduct, including in the field.

In this regard, our committee does have jurisdiction over issues affecting Native Americans and the U.S. territorial possessions. Many Indian tribes remain impoverished, and territorial issues have been largely ignored over the past few years. It is our intention to bring the committee out to Indian country, to our territories, so we can see and hear firsthand the problems they face.

A brief review of the committee's oversight plan that was submitted with our budget proposal will also give you an idea of the other pressing issues the committee intends to address both through oversight and legislation. The increase we are proposing is also aimed at allowing the committee to retain talented professional staff. On the Democratic side, I am proud to say that we have staff that started on the committee during the chairmanships of Moe Udall and subsequently George Miller. They have chosen to stay with the committee through thick and thin, I might add, and have resisted the temptations of K Street for these many years due to their dedication to public service. I do respect their loyalty, and I feel obligated to provide them with appropriate compensation.

The committee is allowed 69 staffers in total. Of that number, 40 serve on the majority staff; 20 serve on the minority staff; and 9 are shared employees, staffers such as the systems administrator, the chief clerk and the chief financial officer. In this regard, one-third of the salary budget is controlled by the minority.

The remainder of the budget, Madam Chair, items such as travel and supplies, is treated openly. By this, I mean, there is no distinction or prejudice between the majority and minority. Computers, copiers and other equipment are repaired or replaced as needed without regard to whether it is a Democrat or Republican staffer using them. The same applies to travel. That concludes my testimony, and again, I thank you for this opportunity.

[The statement of Mr. Rahall follows:]

REMARKS OF U.S. REP. NICK J. RAHALL, II
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
before the House Administration Committee
February 28,2007

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers, thank you for allowing my long-time colleague and Ranking Member Don Young and myself to appear before you to present our committee's budget for the 110th Congress.

In total, the amount we are requesting represents a four percent increase in 2007 over the committee's budget for the second session of the 109th Congress, with an additional four percent increase for 2008.

We believe this small increase is justifiable in light of the aggressive schedule of oversight hearings the committee intends to conduct, including in the field. In this regard, our committee has jurisdiction over issues affecting Native Americans and the U.S. territorial possessions. Many Indian tribes remain impoverished and territorial issues have been largely ignored over the past few years. It is our intention to bring the committee out to Indian Country, and to our territories, so that we can see and hear first-hand the problems they face.

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Thank you again for giving me this opportunity to present the Committee's proposed budget.

The CHAIRWOMAN. I thank you so much.

Mr. Young.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DON YOUNG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ALASKA

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I agree with the Chairman 100 percent. I am fortunate to have a Chairman on the Committee who served with me for 30 years.

This is a fair budget request. It is very small. I have to say, in defense of the Chairman, you know, that the Democrats are supposed to be the big spenders. He is not a big spender. I would have been a bigger spender. But he has done what is correct, and I do support this budget. I think it is the right thing to do. And as he said, we have a great responsibility for the land and the water, the wildlife and the territories of the American Natives of this Nation. And I support the efforts as put forth by this proposal by the Chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Young follows:]

STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE DON YOUNG
RANKING REPUBLICAN MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 28, 2007

Chairwoman Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member Ehlers, and Members of the Committee, it is a pleasure to be here this afternoon with Committee Chairman Nick Rahall to testify on the Budget for the Committee on Natural Resources.

I strongly support Chairman Rahall's proposed budget which seeks only modest increases above the funding we received in the 109th Congress. These increases are necessary to attract and retain seasoned professional staff; to ensure that the Committee has the technology we need to analyze information and present it accurately to Members; and to permit us to conduct in-depth oversight, including field hearings in affected communities.

This Committee budget will treat the Minority fairly. We will receive funding to employ 1/3 of the staff. Although we will not have our own budget for committee travel and equipment, Chairman Rahall has agreed to give us a fair share of the overall budget for these expenses.

If we are to carry out our responsibilities in the 110th Congress, we will need all of the resources Chairman Rahall has requested. The next two years are extremely important for the Committee and for the critical programs that we oversee and authorize.

For example, this year $15.6 billion from onshore and offshore energy & minerals development is estimated to flow into the U.S. Treasury – second only to the IRS in monies collected. We oversee the fishery and marine resources of the 11.351 million square kilometer U.S. exclusive economic zone, the largest in the world. One of every five acres in the United States is managed under one of the programs we authorize at the Department of the Interior, including 390 national parks and 547 national wildlife refuges. Department of the Interior irrigation systems supply 31 million people with drinking water, as well as water to farmers to support one third of the Nation's produce.

We are also responsible for programs to manage and chart 88,633 miles of U.S. coastline, of which over 33,000 belongs to the State of Alaska.

The Natural Resources Committee probably holds the key to our Nation's energy security, as well. The U.S. is the "Saudi Arabia of coal" and our oil shale resources contain more oil than the entire rest of the world has oil.....twice as much as the entire world has used since the first oil well was drilled in 1857. The vast majority of these energy resources are on government owned lands. Our nation's national security and energy security may lie in the resources beneath the government lands overseen by the Natural Resources Committee.

The scope and complexity of overseeing the vast natural resources on our public lands places tremendous burdens on our staff. We must retain and adequately compensate the motivated and experienced professionals who will work to balance the economic and environmental values of these resources for the well being of all our people.

The benefits of good oversite that encourages proper management of our natural resources reaches beyond any one particular sector of society and serves society as a whole. These issues spread throughout the Country and are important to citizens in every congressional district and to our colleagues who represent them.

I strongly support the Committee's budget proposal for increased funding and I share Chairman Rahall's commitment, and that of the other Members of our Committee, to get the staff and dollars we need to do the job right. I know we can count on you to recognize the importance of our work. Thank you for your consideration.

The CHAIRWOMAN. You know what, it was not until I looked at the testimonies that you both submitted that I thought, wow, what a vast, broad array of things that you do under this committee. And I think I counted about 14 hearings in California alone or close to that.

And so we are very pleased that you are seeing California as one of those States that you need to continuously come to, but then, of course, with its natural resources and other types of habitat, you would want to go there.

I am very pleased with what you are doing. Regretfully to say, the committees that have come before us, all of the chairs have been met with the notion that we only have a 2.2 percent increase for inflation from the baseline of last year's budget because we did not have a budget passed last year. So we had to operate from last year's budget and then do this 2.2 percent increase.

There could be something else that comes down the pike. I have duly noted what both of you have said in terms of the vast array of initiatives and the agenda that you have before us. And I will certainly go back to the Speaker about this.

But I must tell you in all candor, at this point, that is what we have for the budget. And we just appreciate your working within those constraints.

Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is a pleasure to hear your testimony and to have harmonious arrangement between the two of you.

We have not had that in all our committees, but I know both of you well, and particularly, I have worked for years with—under the direction of the gentleman from Alaska. He has always done a good job.

I am sure both of you will at this point. It is a subject that is very dear to me. I could never serve on the committee. I have too many committees the way it is now, but the environment and resources, conservation are extremely important to me. I appreciate the work that your committee does.

Just one comment with respect to your jurisdiction which is basically the entire planet. It is exceeded only by the Science Committee in which I serve, we have jurisdiction over the entire universe. However, it is a little more difficult to plan committee trips to examine—I am hoping that I might be able to take a trip to the moon as part of the committee's responsibility, but I don't expect that is going to happen in my short remaining life.

On the two-thirds/one-third, which is mentioned, I just want to thank you for affirming that—and we are checking that with all the committees—because this is very important to this committee.

We struggled for 12 years to establish that ratio, including a few recalcitrant committees, because of the history where the Republicans were denied resources and some chairmen didn't want to yield back.

But we did establish it. We are determined to keep it. I am very much appreciative that you both pledged to continue that practice. I appreciate it.

With that, I have no further questions. And you seem to have submitted a very fair budget given the terrible constraints we are

working under this year. We hope that, if we have a good appropriations bill this year, that things might look a little better next year. We have no idea if they will. So thank you for your efforts. Thank you for your good work and make sure that committee keeps running smoothly.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank both of you for coming. I have always enjoyed working with both of you. And Madam Chair, it is appropriate that, in today's hearings, we started with a Foreign Affairs Committee with Mr. Lantos, who is not a native Californian but became a Californian, and we end with Mr. Young, who is a native Californian but who sought fame and fortune in the largest State in the Union, Alaska, but he does return to California from time to time and somehow, his alma mater, Chico State, decided that they would recognize him as the outstanding graduate.

And as long as we keep quiet about some of the things he has done here, I think they will not remove that title from him. So we appreciate him being here.

Thank you very much.

Mr. YOUNG. Thanks for the compliment.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, I thank you both so much, and again, thanks for your patience and thanks for your sensitivity to the constraints that we find ourselves in, in terms of this budget. Certainly, if anything else should come, you will be the first to know that. Thank you so much.

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, committee chairs, ranking members, and members, you have been incredibly outstanding today. We have heard from them all today. We knew that it was going to be ambitious, and indeed, it was, but you stuck right with us on that.

I would like to thank you both for being right here until the end, and I would like to thank those who did come and had to leave because of other committee commitments.

Mr. Ehlers, would you like to make a statement before we close?

Mr. EHLERS. Yes. Thank you for your patience and your service on this important day. I believe this is the first time we have, in my experience, that we have done it in one day and the first time that the chairman and the ranking member remained in the meeting the entire day, with a few excursions now and then. So I am very pleased that we were able to finish this up and hope we get to mark it up and get it through the Congress.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Well, we knew, Mr. Ranking Member, that we were going to be historic in our team work, and indeed, we are. We thank you so much for being around with us.

We will convene tomorrow for a markup, at around 4 o'clock p.m. We ask your indulgence for one more day so that we can get this through and get it done. There is one committee whose budget has not been cleared by the Committee. I would simply say that I will call those two, the Chair and the Ranking Member, and ask if they want the choice of perhaps going to the Floor to speak on their budget or wait until March 31st when the CR is up again for reauthorization, and they will again come before this committee.

With unanimous consent, I will go forward with that proposal.

Mr. EHLERS. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss that. I don't have any problem in principle, but I am sure there will be a report before tomorrow.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Sure, absolutely, and we will indeed do that.

If nothing else is to come before this committee, thank you all, Committee adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]