

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2025

HEARINGS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

DAVID G. VALADAO, California, *Chairman*

ANDREW S. CLYDE, Georgia

JAKE LATURNER, Kansas

STEPHANIE I. BICE, Oklahoma

SCOTT FRANKLIN, Florida

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, New York

JENNIFER WEXTON, Virginia

MIKE QUIGLEY, Illinois

NOTE: Under committee rules, Mr. Cole, as chairman of the full committee, and Ms. DeLauro, as ranking minority member of the full committee, are authorized to sit as members of all subcommittees.

MICHELLE REINSHUTTLE and APRIL LYMAN
Subcommittee Staff

PART 1

FISCAL YEAR 2025 LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS



Printed for the use of the Committee on Appropriations

PART 1—LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2025

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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2025

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

WITNESSES

HON. GENE L. DODARO, COMPTROLLER GENERAL, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

HON. HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL, DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

Mr. AMODEI. I want to call this meeting to order of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee. Subject of today's hearing is the fiscal year 2025 budget.

Thanks for that.

The request from the GAO, the Government Publishing Office—hey, did I miss something on that? I am so old; it was the Printing Office. But I guess we are getting more modern now. You are Publishing?

Mr. HALPERN. In 2014, they changed the name.

Mr. AMODEI. OK. So I am right up to date on that. Thank you for pointing that out. That will conclude your presentation.

And, last but not least, the Congressional Budget Office.

For those of you who are attending via digital media or streaming or whatever, our colleague from Virginia will be using an assistive device. So, if it doesn't sound like Ms. Wexton, it is Ms. Wexton. But, anyhow, we are not trying to do the bait-and-switch thing on you for that sort of stuff.

And I want to thank the witnesses for being here, even though you may not feel like you have been thanked so far.

And we will recognize the ranking member when he arrives.

So, now, Mr. Comptroller General, Mr. Dodaro, the floor is yours. Please present.

STATEMENT OF GENE L. DODARO, COMPTROLLER GENERAL, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. DODARO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning to you, members of the committee. I am very pleased to be here today to talk about GAO's fiscal year 2025 request.

I first want to thank the subcommittee for their past support. I believe we provided a good return on investment as a result of implementation of our recommendations last year: over \$70 billion in financial benefits accrued to the Government. Over the last 6 years, our return on investment has been \$133 for every dollar that you provide us. And so we are very proud of that record, and I appreciate your support.

The demand for our services remains high. We get about 650 to 700 requests from Congress each year from 93 percent of the standing committees of the Congress. So it is a very wide footprint across the Congress.

We also this year so far provided, you know, 430 technical assistants to 215 committees, Members, and offices. So the outreach that we have had on technical assistance has helped a lot in that area as well.

Our request for this year is basically to maintain the GAO workforce at its existing level of 3,600 full-time equivalent positions. We have added the support that you have allowed us to in the past. This is just to maintain that work.

And we are going to continue to focus on five major areas that we built up our capacity, thanks to your support over the past few years.

One is national security issues. There are 115 mandates in the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act for GAO. We do everything from military readiness to weapon system procurement on some of the major weapon systems, the modernization of the nuclear weapons complex. We are tracking aid to Ukraine, both military and foreign assistance as well. So a lot of work.

And how our troops are treated. We had a big report this year about the poor conditions in the barracks and the need to, you know, really reform that and support that is given not only to the military members but to their families as well.

The second is fraud. Fraud is a big problem, and, for government, it is pervasive. We estimated that, in the Unemployment Insurance Program alone, during the pandemic, it was \$100 billion to \$135 billion in fraud in that area. Next week, we are going to come out with a government-wide estimate on fraud. We are trying to work to get agencies to prevent fraud in the first place, which is the only effective way. So we have a work program that we would like to institute with your support going forward.

The next area is the science and technology area. We have tripled the size of our work in the science and technology arena. We have brought in some top-notch scientists in a wide variety of disciplines. We have done over 30 technology assessments. We are doing much more work on artificial intelligence, quantum computing, regenerative medicine, and across the board in a number of areas in those areas and providing support to the committee.

The fourth area is healthcare. Healthcare costs are the fastest growing component of the Federal budget, save maybe interest on the debt. But, also, Medicare, Medicaid, the assistance provided to VA, DOD, the Indian Health Service, is a big focus of our efforts because it is now—29 percent of the Federal budget is healthcare costs.

And, lastly, cybersecurity. You know, I designated that a high-risk area in 1997 across the Federal Government. Critical infrastructure protection 2003. In the last 4 years, we have made over 1,400 recommendations. 670 are still open. The Federal Government is still not operating at a pace commensurate with the grave evolving threat in cybersecurity.

So we are looking at the national cybersecurity strategy, how we are interacting with the private sector on the 16 critical infrastructures across the country, electricity grid, telecommunications, and the financial services, and it goes across the board. This is a big vulnerability, and the Federal Government really doesn't have a good clue of exactly how vulnerable things are in these critical infrastructure areas that can impact the Government as well as our economy.

So I thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning to talk to you about our request and the work we are doing at GAO, and I would be happy to respond to questions at the appropriate time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dodaro follows:]

United States Government Accountability Office



Testimony
Before Subcommittee on Legislative
Branch Appropriations, Committee on
Appropriations, U.S. House of
Representatives

For Release on 9 a.m. EDT
Wednesday, April 10, 2024

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

U.S. Government
Accountability Office

Statement of The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro,
Comptroller General of the United States

GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-24-107438, a testimony before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

Background

GAO's mission is to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. We provide nonpartisan, objective, professional and reliable information to Congress, federal agencies, and to the public. GAO recommends hundreds of improvements across the full breadth and scope of the federal government's responsibilities.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, GAO issued 671 products, and 1,345 new recommendations. Congress used our work extensively to inform its decisions on key fiscal year 2023 and 2024 legislation.

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

- \$1.38 trillion dollars in financial benefits; and
- Over 28,000 program and operational benefits that helped to change laws, improve public safety, and promote sound management throughout government.

As a non-partisan, fact-based service organization, GAO is committed to providing program and technical expertise to support Congress. This includes crafting legislation; overseeing the executive branch; evaluating government programs, operations and spending priorities; and assessing information from outside parties.

View GAO-24-107438. For more information, contact A. Nicole Clowers at (202) 512-4400 or clowersa@gao.gov.

April, 10 2024

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

U.S. Government Accountability Office

In fiscal year 2023, GAO's work yielded \$70.4 billion in financial benefits, a return of about \$84 for every dollar invested in GAO. Our average return on investment for the past 6 years is \$133 to \$1. In 2023 we also identified 1,220 other benefits that led to improved services to the American people, strengthened public safety, and spurred improvements across the government. GAO's High Risk Series this past year resulted in \$32.9 billion in financial benefits and 468 program and operational improvements. GAO is also helping advance agencies' efforts and related Congressional oversight to prevent, detect, and respond to fraud, waste, and abuse. For instance, in FY 2023 we estimated that the amount of unemployment insurance fraud during the COVID-19 pandemic was likely between \$100 billion and \$135 billion.

For our fiscal year 2025 budget, GAO is requesting \$916.0 million in appropriated funds and \$59.8 million in offsets and supplemental appropriations. This will maintain 3,600 full-time equivalents (FTE). These resources will enable GAO to continue to meet the priority needs of the Congress including five key areas of importance to the nation and Congress:

- **National Security Enterprise.** GAO evaluates an array of national security efforts in areas such as military readiness, space programs, and the U.S. nuclear complex.
- **Fraud Prevention.** We examine government efforts to safeguard programs from fraud by focusing agencies more on prevention.
- **Science and Technology.** GAO's growing portfolio of ongoing and future work includes many aspects of artificial intelligence, medical research and applications, critical minerals recovery, and quantum computing.
- **Cybersecurity.** GAO assesses the development and execution of a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, the cybersecurity of 16 critical infrastructure sectors across the U.S., and the security of federal information systems.
- **Health Care Costs.** GAO examines the sustainability and integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, Veterans Affairs, DOD, and Indian Health Service health care services.

Our fiscal year 2025 budget request also supports GAO's IT modernization and space optimization efforts. We will transition processes to Cloud Services and enhance cybersecurity. This will allow GAO to grow in agility and better engage IT Modernization strategies. In addition, we will advance space optimization projects to increase leasable space in headquarters and decrease leased space in the field. We will also continue addressing a maintenance backlog at the headquarters building.

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee,

I want to express my appreciation for this Subcommittee's support. With your help GAO has made great progress in saving federal funds, meeting congressional priorities, and improving government performance and accountability. Over the past 20 years our work has generated more than \$1.3 trillion in financial benefits, a return of \$113 on every dollar invested in GAO. In addition, in FY 2023 we recorded 1,220 other benefits resulting from our work across government as well as enhancements to national security and public safety. For example, the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) contained over 50 provisions that reflected GAO's recommendations across important areas, including cybersecurity, military housing, commercial satellite imagery capabilities, and special operations forces skills and competencies.

I am fully confident that the FY 2025 budget request will enable us to continue providing timely and high-quality support to the Congress and help improve government. Demand for GAO work remains high. The 2024 NDAA alone included 115 mandates for GAO. In FY 2023, we received 647 requests from 93 percent of the standing committees representing a broad range of congressional interests. We issued 670 products, made 1,345 new recommendations, and we achieved a 94 percent on-time delivery rate.

In 2023 we issued our 13th annual report on ways to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication and achieve other efficiencies. We identified 100 new recommendations in addition to the 1,782 suggestions from prior reports. As of April 2023, the Congress and federal agencies had fully addressed 1,239 and partially addressed 144 of these suggestions yielding about \$600 billion in financial benefits.

In addition, Congress has sought GAO oversight of the federal funds provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act and previously provided Ukraine assistance. As of March 2024, we have issued 20 IIJA reports which contained 46 recommendations. In addition, we have over 20 ongoing reviews examining issues related to the Inflation Reduction Act and oversight of Ukraine assistance.

Along with countless briefings to congressional staff and Members, we provided expert testimony 57 times before 32 separate committees or subcommittees in FY2023. Moreover, in the first two quarters of FY 2024, we have already provided more than 435 instances of technical assistance to over 215 committees and congressional offices. In FY 2023, GAO also sent 34 staff to work on 16 Congressional committees and 7 subcommittees for a limited time. We have received much appreciation and compliments from Congress for all these services.

We consistently deliver high quality products and services for Congress and the American people because of our talented, professional, and dedicated staff. Given the broad scope of issues the Congress relies on us to investigate and audit, our

employees' collective expertise ranges from the hard sciences to public policy and administration to information technology, economics, law, financial auditing and much more. We also have people that possess deep subject area knowledge of virtually all major facets of government from defense to health care to natural resource management, for example.

We successfully recruit and retain highly qualified staff from a wide range of disciplines because we are a premier employer in the federal government. In March 2023, the Partnership for Public Service ranked GAO as first among mid-size federal agencies as a "best place to work" for the third year in a row based on our employees' views.

In September 2023 a Future of Work agreement was reached with GAO Employees Organization, IFPTE Local 1921. The agreement, which builds off GAO's longstanding flexible work, voluntary transfer, and telework policies, prioritizes and ensures that GAO: 1) continues to meet its mission in serving the Congress; 2) maintains expertise, independence and quality in our work; 3) provides flexibility for a productive work environment; and 4) establishes equitable pay scales for employees in different locations. The agreement covers standard and core business hours, flexible work arrangements, voluntary transfers, and workspace assignment. Also, an updated pay system covers employees approved to change their Official Duty Station through remote work or a voluntary transfer to a different GAO office.

Fiscal Year 2025 Request

For FY 2025 GAO is requesting \$916.0 million in appropriated funds, a 12.8 percent increase over FY 2024 levels, and the use of \$59.8 million in offsets and supplemental appropriations. The FY 2025 budget request maintains GAO staffing at the 3,600 FTE level enacted for FY 2024 and reflects the impact of the reduced use of offsets as well as the winding down of supplemental funds.

The request will allow us to continue to meet the priority needs of the Congress. These priorities include five key areas of importance to the nation and Congress where we have focused on expanding our capabilities in recent years. Specifically,

- **National Security Enterprise.** The United States is faced with a wide range of global strategic and domestic terrorism challenges. For example, China and Russia employ economic, technological, informational, and military tools to undermine U.S. interests. The latest U.S. *National Security Strategy* emphasizes the importance of stronger American power and influence including a more modern U.S. military. To assist the Congress in monitoring how the government is addressing these significant challenges, GAO evaluates federal efforts across the spectrum of global national security activities, including military readiness, space programs, and the U.S. nuclear complex.

On the domestic front, terrorism threats have expanded from externally directed plots to attacks carried out by both homegrown violent extremists inspired by foreign terror organizations, and by what the FBI identifies as self-radicalized domestic terrorists. GAO assists congressional oversight of government counterterrorism efforts by evaluating FBI and DHS activities and progress in implementing open GAO recommendations.

- **Fraud Prevention.** The unprecedented amount of fraud in pandemic programs highlighted the urgent need for better implementation of leading practices for fraud risk management, identified in GAO's 2015 *A Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in Federal Programs*. This framework is now embedded in legislation and OMB circulars. Since then, we have examined the extent to which over 40 agencies or program offices are adhering to leading practices to safeguard their programs from fraud—in normal operations and emergencies. As GAO reported in November 2023, we have made 173 recommendations to better manage fraud risks. We also plan to issue a government-wide estimate of fraud in 2024.
- **Science and Technology.** Innovations in science and technology produce transformative change, sometimes with tremendous benefits to the U.S. economy, individuals, and society. For example, Artificial Intelligence (AI) may have the potential to transform virtually all sectors of American life by accelerating decision-making and automating monotonous tasks. However, such change can also lead to negative effects on privacy, equity, cybersecurity, and job security.

Our Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics team serves as a crucial resource for the Congress in understanding both the promise and the risks of emerging innovations. Its growing portfolio of ongoing and future work includes many aspects of AI in defense and civilian applications, quantum computing, regenerative medicine, critical minerals recovery, medical research, and technology transfer to foreign countries. GAO's Innovation Lab continues to apply a hands-on approach to explore data science and emerging technology through experiments, with the goal of enhancing GAO's oversight capabilities.

Since 2019, we issued 45 Science and Tech Spotlights, which distill complex issues into a two-page summary. Last fiscal year, we issued products in areas including generative AI, synthetic biology, and drone swarms. We also issued in-depth Technology Assessments on various topics, including chemical weapons, utility-scale energy storage, fusion energy, and precision agriculture.

Cybersecurity. Escalating threats, including new and more destructive attacks from around the globe, highlight the critical and persistent need for effective cybersecurity. Our work will continue to assess multiple priorities, such as the development and execution of a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, the

cybersecurity status of 16 critical infrastructure sectors across the U.S., and the security of federal information systems throughout government.

- **Health Care Costs.** GAO continues to examine the sustainability and integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and overseeing VA, DOD, and Indian Health Service health care services. Health care spending now accounts for around 29 percent of the federal budget and is one of the fastest growing federal expenditures.

GAO's FY 2025 budget request also allows small program and inflationary increases to our Information Technology and Building and Security programs respectively. This includes enhanced cloud data management and storage solutions, as well as IT security upgrades to combat the ever-growing cybersecurity threats toward U.S. assets. The request will also support GAO's Innovation Lab planned work.

GAO is leveraging the Cloud to adopt emerging technology more quickly. Shifting from an on-premises data center to a cloud environment will allow GAO to grow in agility and better engage IT Modernization and cybersecurity strategies. GAO is implementing Zero Trust Architecture principles to enhance cloud services with access and authentication controls using the cloud-based Secure Access Security Edge. Zero Trust allows GAO to transition from traditional perimeter-focused security models to cloud focused models with security controls throughout the infrastructure.

Our FY 2025 budget also supports space optimization projects to increase leasable space in headquarters and decrease GAO's leased space footprint in the field. For example, we are expanding restricted space for performing classified work in our headquarters building to support our growing volume of classified work. Also, we plan on reducing leased field office space by over 50 percent during the next several years.

The GAO workforce is our most critical asset. It is imperative that GAO provide a safe and secure environment. We need to address a maintenance backlog at our headquarters building. For instance, electrical equipment needs to be replaced. Failure has the potential for both safety issues and a possible loss of power. Also, during FYs 2024 and 2025 we will add Personal Identity Verification cards for all staff and contractors; continue with additional Integrated Electronic Security System upgrades at our field offices; and process Background Investigations to meet the demands for classified audits.

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In closing, I appreciate, as always, your careful consideration of our budget and your continued support. I look forward to discussing FY 2025 budget request with you.

Government Accountability Office

GAO's Mission:

GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. GAO remains steadfastly committed to providing nonpartisan, professional and objective program and technical expertise to support Congress in overseeing the executive branch.

Scope and Demand for GAO Work:

GAO performs a range of oversight-, insight-, and foresight-related engagements, a vast majority of which are conducted in response to congressional mandates or requests. GAO's engagements include evaluations of federal programs and performance, financial and management audits, policy analyses, legal opinions, bid protest adjudications, and investigations.

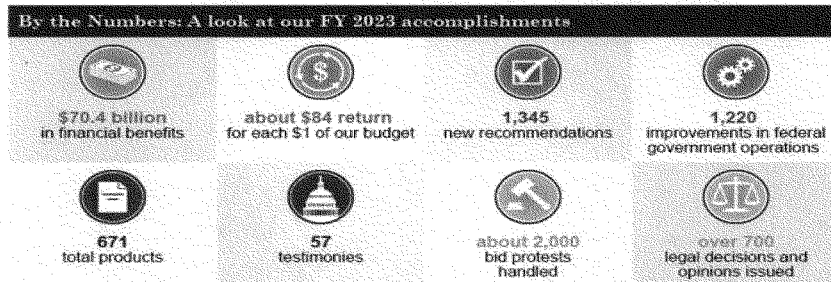
Demand for GAO work remains high. In FY 2023, we received 647 requests for work from 93 percent of the full committees of the Congress—supporting a broad range of congressional interests. We issued 671 total products and made 1,345 new recommendations. We testified 57 times before 32 separate committees or subcommittees on topics including the 2023 bank failures, pandemic-related fraud, improving servicemembers' transition to civilian life, and using AI responsibly.

Impact of GAO Work:

Since 2002, GAO's work has resulted in over \$1.3 trillion in financial benefits and over 28,000 program and operational benefits that helped change laws, improve public safety and other services, and promote better management throughout the government.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, GAO's work:

- yielded about \$70.4 billion in financial benefits—a return of about \$84 for every dollar invested in GAO; our average return on investment over the past five years is \$133 to \$1; and
- identified 1,220 other benefits—those that cannot be measured in dollars but that led to program and operational improvements across the government.



Source: GAO. | GAO-24-900483

We maintain our High-Risk Program to focus attention on government operations that are vulnerable to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement or need transformation—offering solutions to 37 high-risk problems. In FY 2023, our high-risk work yielded \$32.9 billion in financial benefits and 468 other benefits. Also, we annually report on the fragmentation, overlap, and duplication of federal government resources. From 2011-2023, we identified 1,885 such actions. Based on the most recent data available, the Congress and federal agencies had fully or partially addressed about 73 percent of all matters and recommendations (1,383 of 1,885) yielding about \$600 billion in financial benefits.

FY 2025 Budget Request:

GAO's FY 2025 resource request will allow us to continue to provide Congress with high-quality products that address both longstanding and emerging national interests. Key focus areas include:

- evaluating the national security enterprise;
- advancing the fight against fraud;
- building our science and technology capabilities;
- bolstering efforts to identify public and private cyber threats; and
- evaluating challenges associated with growing health care costs.

Internally, the funding requested will make possible critical information technology investments, accelerating IT modernization and cloud data management and storage solutions while enhancing cyber security controls. GAO is also undertaking physical infrastructure enhancements to address the deferred maintenance backlog at GAO's HQ Building. In addition, GAO is beginning space optimization projects for both the headquarters building and field offices. As part of this effort, we are repurposing space to build out a Conference Center that will be an additional revenue source once completed.

With the support of this Subcommittee, we have made great progress in saving federal funds and achieving our mission of improving government performance and accountability. The FY 2025 budget request will allow us to continue to build on this progress. The results that we deliver Congress and the American taxpayer year in and year out is due to our talented, multidisciplinary, professional staff. As the table shows, our people consistently represent over 80 percent of our budget. The FY 2025 budget request would allow us to maintain our current staffing levels.

Much of the growth in our staffing levels over the past five years has been focused on recruiting science and technology and cybersecurity expertise. These efforts are in line with direction from Congress and has enabled us to provide Congress with timely and insightful analysis of emerging technological advancements and challenges.

Also, during this period we bolstered our Appropriations Law team through critical attorney hires to further enhance our support to the Congress in this area. In addition, since the Pandemic our audit-related travel has increased, and we expect this trend to continue. The original firsthand research that domestic and international audit travel supports is a way that GAO delivers value to the Congress.

Government Accountability Office – Resource Summary by Program										
<i>(dollars in thousands)</i>										
Program	FY 2021 Actual	Change	FY 2022 Actual	Change	FY 2023 Actual	Change	FY 2024 Enacted	Change	FY 2025 Request	Change
FTE	3,208	0.9%	3,354	4.6%	3,483	3.8%	3,600	3.4%	3,600	0.0%
Human capital	\$580,017	5.1%	\$617,408	6.4%	\$668,665	8.3%	\$741,156	10.8%	\$797,087	7.5%
Engagement support	3,860	(40.5%)	5,528	43.2%	9,853	78.2%	12,302	24.9%	12,527	1.8%
Infrastructure operations	128,288	31.5%	126,793	(1.2%)	152,092	20.0%	156,969	3.2%	162,568	3.6%
Center for Audit Excellence	1,252	24.7%	1,744	39.3%	3,377	93.6%	3,525	4.4%	3,525	0.0%
Total budget authority	\$713,417	8.0%	\$751,473	5.3%	\$833,987	11.0%	\$913,952	9.6%	\$975,707	6.8%
Total Offsets¹	(\$52,278)	95.3%	(\$32,243)	(38.3%)	(\$44,368)	37.6%	(\$102,058)	130.0%	(\$59,750)	(41.5%)
Direct Appropriation²	\$661,139	4.9%	\$719,230	8.8%	\$789,619	9.8%	\$811,894	2.8%	\$915,957	12.8%

¹ Includes offsetting receipts and reimbursements from program and financial audits; rental income; training fees; collection of bid protest system user fees; supplemental funds for specific program oversight and pandemic related audits.

² Appropriation includes \$5.0 million in no-year funding to evaluate program spending pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58). FY 2024 offsets include \$660 thousand of these funds carryovered from FY 2023.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you, General. I appreciate that.

The chair now recognizes the ranking member from the home of the Ulysses S. Grant tomb.

Mr. Espaillat, the floor is yours for your opening statement.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Good afternoon.

Mr. AMODEI. And, since we are going to go ahead and fully utilize you, then when you are done, you have got first crack at General Dodaro for questions. Go ahead.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Excuse the lateness.

Mr. Dodaro, Mr. Swagel, and Mr. Halpern, thank you all for being here today. Each of your agencies has a tremendous responsibility and provides crucial functions to our democracy.

The Government Accountability Office provides independent oversight, obviously, of Government programs and activities and nonpartisan support to Congress. The GAO has been voted the best place to work in government. I have got to see that smile on your face.

Mr. DODARO. Three straight years.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Three straight years. For the past 3 years. That is correct.

The GAO budget request for fiscal year 2025 is \$960 million or 12.8 percent above the fiscal year 2024 enacted total.

The Congressional Budget Office provides regular support to the Appropriations Committee through technical assistance and cost estimates throughout the annual legislative process. The CBO budget request for fiscal year 2025 is \$73.5 million or 5 percent above the fiscal year 2024 enacted total. The CBO has been particularly important recently.

We have witnessed budget cuts perpetrated even after a handshake agreement. There are two ways to achieve budget cuts: either through decreased vital programs for the low to middle class families or to ensure that everyone is paying their fair share of taxes. I choose the latter. I prefer that everyone pays their fair share of taxes so that nurses and teachers aren't paying more taxes than a billionaire CEO. There is a larger conversation to be had about that, obviously.

However, moving on, the Government Publishing Office's fundamental functions are to make information about the operations of government—particularly, the Congress—readily available to the public. The GPO budget request for fiscal year 2025 is \$136 million or 3.1 percent above the fiscal year 2024 enacted total.

This subcommittee greatly appreciates each agency's work, and I would like to commend each of you and your staff for your work in reinforcing Congress' constitutional power of the purse and for dedicating the resources necessary to support this committee.

As ranking member, I am committed to ensure that your agencies have the resources they need to build on your excellent records, to provide timely expert assistance to Congress, and to meet the challenges of your missions. I look forward to each of you having a very interesting testimony.

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

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member. Also, we will continue to leave the floor with you for any questions you have of General Dodaro.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. OK.

Mr. Dodaro, at the request of Congress, GAO conducted a large body of work on the events of January 6. What were your most concerning findings, and have the law enforcement and intelligence agencies been responsive in addressing your recommendations?

Mr. DODARO. Our findings were that a number of agencies—FBI, DHS, and the Capitol Police—had information but didn't process it so that it got into their threat assessments, and it wasn't communicated effectively among the community.

So we made a number of recommendations in this regard to better process the information that they get from tips and other intelligence gathering sources, get it into their threat products that are shared, and have better sharing in place.

Now, we made a number of recommendations to the Capitol Police and the Capitol Police Board, and I was concerned last year that they were slow in implementing it. So I reached out. I met with the—I talked to the chief. I talked to the Sergeant at Arms in the House and Senate. And I am pleased to report all but one recommendation is implemented so far.

What we had them do was to provide more updated policies and procedures for when do you go outside the Capitol complex for support to bring it in, to help bolster the Capitol Police, how they share information among one another, and to give training, particularly to the Capitol Police officers. That one is the one outstanding.

They are going to start with their civil, you know, group—the Civil Disturbance Unit—to start with that. But we recommend they give training to everybody because they have to bring in additional people. So, you know, progress has been made in those areas, Congressman Espailat.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. We will have some follow-up questions for the Capitol Police during the hearing.

OK. Thank you for your answer.

Mr. DODARO. Sure.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Swagel, the CBO—

Mr. AMODEI. Excuse me, Congressman Espailat. We just completed the testimony of the comptroller general. We haven't had Mr. Swagel or the other folks testify yet, but we will give you a crack at those folks then.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Chairman, do you want to have them all testify so that we can just ask any of them? Just a suggestion.

Mr. AMODEI. I will take it under advisement. Thank you for that.

Mr. CLYDE, the floor is yours.

Mr. CLYDE. You mentioned that one recommendation had not been taken—had not been completed?

Mr. DODARO. Yes.

Mr. CLYDE. What recommendation was that?

Mr. DODARO. That was to provide better training to the Capitol Police workforce in how to handle civil disturbances.

Mr. CLYDE. OK.

Mr. DODARO. And, in that one, what they are doing is they are prioritizing giving the training to their Civil Disturbance Unit.

Mr. CLYDE. But not all of them?

Mr. DODARO. Not all of them yet. I am hopeful—I have talked to the chief. I am hopeful they will provide it to everybody as soon as they are able to do so.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. All right.

Mr. DODARO. And then we will consider that fully closed. But I am very pleased.

Other than that, I had very good conversations with the House Sergeant at Arms, the Senate Sergeant at Arms that comprise the police board along with the chief, and they have been very responsive.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you.

That is all I have.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

The gentleman from Illinois, the floor is yours for comptroller general questions.

Mr. QUIGLEY. During the budget cuts and sequestration, you lost about 10 percent of the workforce. Is that right?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. It was about 12 percent. I am very happy. We were one of the few Federal agencies to accommodate that through attrition and other means, and we didn't really have to furlough or RIF anybody during that period of time, and I am pleased about that. But it set us back, and since then, we have been trying to rebuild.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And you have closed the gap in different ways? Technology? Is the technology gap as well—is that still an issue?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. No, we are doing much better on technology, thanks to recent support from the committee. But I did postpone a lot of things. I prioritized our people.

Mr. QUIGLEY. What is your priority on technology that would help you?

Mr. DODARO. Right now, we are moving to the cloud technology, and we have moved a lot of applications. We are going to move some of our major other applications with the support of the committee to provide, you know, more flexibility and having more modern options once you are in the cloud to be able to do things and also to protect computer security. You know, we collect information throughout the government of all types, and we need to protect it properly. So moving to the cloud and computer security.

And then we are moving all our publications to HTML format so that they are more easily searchable than the PDF formats. So those are two areas of technology that we are trying to catch up and modernize.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you.

I yield back, Chairman.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

The gentlelady from Oklahoma, Mrs. Bice.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Dodaro, for being here this morning. I just wanted to maybe touch on two quick things.

First of all, can you talk a little bit about the New Blue project?

Mr. DODARO. Yes.

Mrs. BICE. I know that there has been some conversations that it has been a little slow and a little over budget. So can you give some color to that?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. We have been careful with the project. You know, we look at a lot of IT modernizations across the government, and I want to make sure we piloted it and tested it before we rolled it out because I didn't want it to be premature.

We are pretty much done with the pilots now. We expect, by the end of this fiscal year, all GAO products will be in the HTML concept, and then we will have realized the first potential of the New Blue project. So I am very pleased with that. We are on the threshold of having it implemented across all our products.

Mrs. BICE. What do you think the delays—why were there delays with trying to get this implemented?

Mr. DODARO. Well, you know, some of the problems were, you know, first understanding—make sure we were clear on what our requirements were going to be for the testimony. I have seen a lot of agencies move forward too fast without setting requirements. So we made sure that we spent time to set the requirements properly. And then, of course, in any software development initiative, you are going to have, you know, challenges to get it implemented properly.

But that is why I didn't want to rush it. I have seen a lot of people be more schedule-driven across government than, you know, be prepared properly. You know, you continue to see problems in the government with this. The latest problem was with the FAFSA situation in education. They rushed it out, and they weren't done. Healthcare.gov, same thing.

So I tried to be—you know, so we piloted it and made sure it worked properly before we went full bore. So we are on the threshold of doing that, and I feel good about it.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you for that update. I second your comments about, you know, making sure that we are doing things, I think, properly. There is also a balance, though, from a tech perspective in making sure that you can execute because what ends up happening is we bid something out; we take 3 or 4 or 5 years for implementation, and by the time we actually implement it, that product is almost obsolete.

Mr. DODARO. Yes. We are OK in that regard.

Mrs. BICE. OK.

Mr. DODARO. But it is a good point that you make.

Mrs. BICE. Yes. And then the follow-up. I think this is to Mr. Clyde's comment.

Is there a reason why Capitol Police have said they haven't been able to implement that final recommendation, the training piece of that?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. I am not entirely sure about that. It could have to do with the resources necessary and the time to provide the training to the people. I will follow up with the chief. I haven't talked to him recently to see.

But what the report I got back from our team that has been following up on these things is that they just want to prioritize that unit first, and I can't argue with that. I mean, that is the front-line unit that they need to deal with. It might have taken them a while to get the training in place and to—

Mrs. BICE. I yield.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you for that.

The gentlelady from Virginia has the floor.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you for being here with us today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As some of you may know, last year, I was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy, or PSP. I describe it as Parkinson's on steroids, and I don't recommend it. PSP makes it very difficult for me to speak. So I use an assistive app so that I can participate and you can understand me.

I want to thank the chair and ranking member for allowing me to do both today.

I appreciate the work the GAO is doing to bolster your work both on national security and technology. As the founder of the Congressional Task Force on Digital Citizenship, I am particularly interested in the intersection of these two areas.

Digital citizenship, or the responsible use of technology, applies to anyone who uses computers, the internet, mobile phones, or other digital devices to engage with society, and has become an increasingly important topic to me and many of my colleagues in Congress. Of particular interest to me is technology's impact on our children and on the spread of extremism online.

As Congress increasingly examines this space, can you elaborate on how the GAO is preparing to ensure your workforce is prepared to address these areas and help educate Members about how tech companies and platforms operate?

Mr. DODARO. Yes, please. First, I am sorry to learn about your health diagnosis, but I admire your courage and your flexibility.

With regard—we have expanded our science and technology assessments analytics group from 49 people a few years ago. We have 175 people we will have in place by the end of this year, a lot of people with skills in these areas. We have developed a framework for auditing artificial intelligence algorithms to make sure they are free of bias and they operate as intended.

Since 2013, I have been urging the Congress to pass a privacy framework for, you know, social media and the sharing of information and also to provide more flexibilities to the government agencies to make sure that the privacy—and people understand how their information that they enter into many applications is being used and they have a little bit more of a say in it. Unfortunately, that hasn't been the case.

I am hopeful with the current efforts of the Congress to focus on artificial intelligence to try to get ahead of that a little bit. So we are doing a lot. We are doing work now on the cost and benefits and risk of generative AI. And so we are going to continue to focus on these issues.

It is a very important subject. We are going to provide a lot of technical assistance to the Congress and look at how—like, we have looked at how artificial intelligence can be used for expediting drug development, helping in diagnosis and treatment in the medical area. We did that in partnership with the National Institute of Medicine. We are looking at applications in many other areas.

I think more education has to be provided to our children. And, in technology, unlike a lot of other areas where they get some advice from their parents, I think not all the parents are prepared to give that same level of support in the technology area. In some

cases, they are learning from their children as opposed to the traditional way that it goes. I am a grandfather of nine grandchildren, and I see how it has become ubiquitous to them.

And so I think that is a very important issue, and we are willing to work with you on any ideas you have to further expand our work in this very important area. It is important to the economy and our competitiveness, but all technology has a dark side to it, and what we are trying to do is to highlight what some of those risks are.

And, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I have long been concerned about security issues of computer security, and we are still not doing a good job in that area as a government.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you, ma'am.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Franklin.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Dodaro.

Actually, my questioning follows along with Ms. Wexton's. I am on the Speaker's AI Task Force, and we now are grappling with this big challenge of how do we take this transformational opportunity that we have that AI is going to present, and what is Congress' role in providing the right guidelines? You know, the guardrails to protect society but also not provide so much, you know, overburdensome regulation that we stifle innovation.

Mr. DODARO. Right.

Mr. FRANKLIN. But, particularly, you know, in listening to your five key focus areas—national security, fraud, science and technology, healthcare, cybersecurity—every single one of those come up in meetings that we are having about AI and where this is going. And, as you had mentioned, there is a dark side, but there is also a tremendous opportunity.

So, one, you are going to have—your agency is going to have the need to be monitoring others outside and how they are using it, but also I am interested in how you, as the GAO, are going to be harnessing AI to bring that to bear to assist you.

How can we help—how can Congress help you and provide you with the tools and the guidelines you need? Are there any authorities you need? Or where do you see—how are you using it to this point? I know you are talking about doing risk assessments and things like that, but tangibly are you using AI tools now, and where do you see that going?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. I have set up an innovation lab within GAO so we can test things out before we apply them, you know, more broadly. We have used a large language model, and what we are going to start with is inputting—you know, we have issued thousands of reports on all different topics, and to do a search now involves a lot of manual intervention.

So we are going to try to see if we can use a large language model and artificial intelligence to distill down these hundreds and thousands of GAO reports on particular topics to expedite our searches and then, once we are comfortable with the information, to share—allow Congress to use it to be able to search GAO products.

And, you know, we have started with our own work because I know it is accurate. Part of the problem here in the other cases is, if you don't get good information——

Mr. FRANKLIN. Right. You have got to have clean data to start with.

Mr. DODARO. Yes. And this is a problem because a lot of our reports talk about the poor quality of government data, and it doesn't have good integrity and reliability and good quality into it. So we are doing that.

We are also using it to see if we can use it to do some editing on our reports and things of that nature and using it, you know, in a number of other areas. So we are dedicating some time to come up with some concrete products on how we can use it with GAO. That is the prime example right now.

Mr. FRANKLIN. I just want to touch on the data there. Are you finding any common themes? Are there areas that—are there ways—as we start establishing standards for how we operate, are there things we can do on the front end to start establishing standards for how that data is created so that these AI models can be used more effectively?

Mr. DODARO. Yes, absolutely. You know, I have made recommendations—let's take USAspending.gov, for example, which provides—is supposed to provide all the information on how the government spends its money, all right?

We continue to find gaps. We found 49 agencies weren't reporting at all. It was several billion dollars. One even included that the data is not complete, reliable. You know, I have worked with the Congress before—there are data standards that are set, but there is no data governance structure in place to enforce it within the executive branch. We have made many recommendations to the Treasury Department and OMB to have a more structured, stringent data standards—data governance structure in place.

Also, the requirement for the inspectors general in the agencies to audit the information to ensure its accuracy expired, and they are not going to go in and audit it unless Congress directs them to do it. So I have recommended to the Congress that they reinstate the requirement to have periodic reviews of the inspectors general in order to make sure the quality of that data is much more accurate.

We have spent, in a number of cases, a lot of time looking at the reliability of information when we do individual audits to make sure it is reliable before we, you know, use it to draw conclusions and findings and recommendations. That shouldn't be the case. I mean, there should be much more integrity into the Federal Government's information in that area. So that is one glaring example.

But it is a problem because I think it is going to limit the Federal Government to be able to use the potential of AI without causing distorted effects that are going to happen. That is why, also, we created this framework for how to audit artificial intelligence, and part of it is, how do you ensure the data is right? How do you have an oversight function in place? You know, because if it is not done properly, all we are going to do is get bad data faster, and that is not going to——

Mr. FRANKLIN. Right. And draw wrong conclusions.

Mr. DODARO. Right. Absolutely. And it is going to cause a lot of problems.

So there are many things that could be done now. I would be happy to provide the committee with a list of all our recommendations in this regard. But, if you don't have that foundation, it is going to limit the government's ability to do it.

And the government needs to ensure that—when you are looking at regulatory aspects, that we set that same standard for the private sector and that they ensure the integrity of their information, that it is transparent, and that it is, you know, tested properly before the applications are made public.

Mr. FRANKLIN. I appreciate that. And I would love to get those recommendations that you have and then work with you.

Mr. DODARO. Sure. Absolutely. And we have a lot. We have got a great chief scientist in GAO and a chief data scientist, and so maybe they can meet with your task force, and I would be happy to as well.

Mr. FRANKLIN. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Mr. DODARO. Sure. Absolutely.

Mr. FRANKLIN. And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

And, as a follow-up to that, Mr. Comptroller General—so we are going to appoint a sub-subcommittee of two. One is Mr. Franklin, who will be the chair, and then one with whoever Mr. Espaillet wants to put on the committee with him to provide recommendations back to us both on coordinating with House Admin to get that front and center for their consideration and also ours for the purposes of writing our report.

And so the deadline for your sub-subcommittee in getting back with the subcommittee is—let's say 45 days.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you, sir. Can I have another?

Mr. AMODEI. Not yet, but thank you for asking in such a formal manner. That is OK because it—we will pick on Mr. LaTurner in his absence, and it will be much worse than anything you got.

Mr. DODARO. We would be happy to help assist you in that regard.

And I also want to thank Congresswoman Bice for the Subcommittee on Modernization in the House Administration Committee for setting up space in the Longworth Building. We showed up the first day we could get in. It is working well, and I am hopeful that that will continue to do that as well—you know, to reach more Members—individual Member offices in addition to the committees that we work with.

Mr. AMODEI. OK. Great.

We are going to go now to Mr. Halpern from the Government Publishing Office.

But I would ask you, General Dodaro, to hang around in case Members want to talk to you afterwards.

When we get done with all three of you, if there are any questions—taking part of the gentleman from Illinois' recommendation—we try to accommodate as much as possible—we will have questions—any follow-up questions for all three of you at the end.

Mr. AMODEI. So, Mr. Halpern, the floor is yours.

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

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Espallat, Members of the subcommittee. It is great to be here. It is great to see you again. And let me first say, thank you so much for your support for the work that our 1,600 craftspeople and professionals at GPO do for Congress.

I am pleased to appear here today to testify in favor of our fiscal year 2025 appropriations request. In the interest of time, I will do my best to keep this short.

As many of you know, GPO is fundamentally a manufacturing operation. We publish, produce, and maintain materials for all three branches of government, and we operate much as a business would.

Only about 10 percent of the agency's operating budget is directly appropriated, and most of that is to cover the direct cost of Congress' own printing and publishing and the operation of the Federal Depository Library Program. We recover the rest of our \$1.3 billion operating budget directly from our other customers.

This year, we are requesting approximately \$136 million, and that includes \$83 million for congressional publishing, nearly \$42 million for our public information programs—including the Federal Depository Library Program—and about \$11.5 million for special projects funded by our revolving fund. This represents a 3.1 percent increase over last year's enacted levels and basically reflects our increases in labor and materials costs.

Fully funding our request will allow us to continue recruiting the next generation of GPO teammates and, importantly, fund our ongoing modernization efforts such as developing XPub, our next-generation composition engine, and adopting digital printing technologies. Likewise, it will enable us to expand the depth and breadth of our digital offerings, like congressionally mandated reports and the Congressional Serial Set.

Thank you, again, for your support of GPO. Supporting this committee and really all of Congress is one of our top priorities, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Halpern follows:]



THE HONORABLE HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN
Director
United States Government Publishing Office

**Prepared Statement before the
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

**United States Government Publishing Office
FY 2025 Budget Hearing**

April 10, 2024
9:00 AM
HT-2, The Capitol

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

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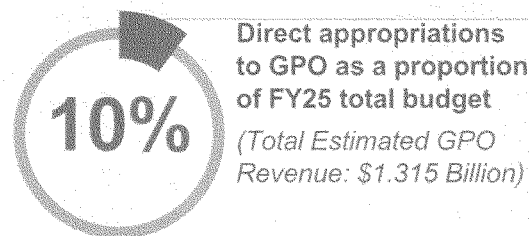


Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to appear before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations to present the Government Publishing Office's (GPO's) fiscal year 2025 appropriations request. I thank you and your staff for your past support of GPO, and I look forward to again working closely with you in the coming year. For fiscal year 2025, I am requesting appropriations in the amount of \$136,089,000, an increase of \$4,090,000 over our FY 2024 appropriation.

This marks just the fourth time in a decade that GPO has requested an increase in appropriated funds and incorporates increased costs in labor and materials, while accommodating certain initiatives of importance to Congress and the rest of the legislative branch. Our FY 2025 requests represents a 3.1 percent increase over FY 2024. It is also 7.7 percent lower than the Agency's all-time high appropriation of \$147.5 million in FY 2010.

GPO runs as a business enterprise and appropriated funds represent a comparatively small portion of GPO's overall budget. For FY 2024, about 90 percent of GPO's revenue came from billings of its other Federal customers, including the State Department, the courts, the Department of Defense, and many others. For FY 2025, we estimate that direct appropriations will represent a similar portion of our overall budget (*See figure 1*). And just as we occasionally need to adjust the rates we charge our other customers, we also need to request adjustments to our appropriation levels to ensure that we are meeting our statutory obligation to recover our costs and provide for investments that will yield additional efficiency and capability.

Figure 1



Charting a Course for the Future

During fiscal year 2023, GPO made considerable progress in our efforts to chart a new course for the Agency's future. First and foremost, we closed our books for fiscal year 2023 with a net positive income for the third consecutive year. All told, we had a net positive income of \$61.1 million in FY 2023 and did so while making the critical investments in human capital and technology needed to thrive in the years ahead.

One of our proudest achievements in FY 2023 was our work to fulfill the statutory requirements of the "Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act" [P.L. 117-263] to build a centralized repository for the congressionally mandated reports that Federal agencies are required to submit to Congress or committees. Fulfilling this mandate required us to work closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and our



congressional stakeholders to make these reports publicly available online within one year's time. We are proud to have met our December 2023 deadline and to report that, as of March 25th, there are 288 congressionally mandated reports from 61 issuing agencies posted on GovInfo.

In FY 2023, we also celebrated important milestones for our Security and Intelligent Documents (SID) business unit. First, we marked our first full year of production of the state-of-the-art Next Generation Passports (NextGen), producing an impressive 22 million NextGen passports for the State Department. Additionally, we had the opportunity to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of our Stennis MS Secure Production Facility, which has produced a total of 95 million passports since 2008 and 9.5 million secure credentials since 2013.

We also initiated the Project Common Press with our congressional partners, the first attempt to modernize the look and style of key congressional publications since GPO opened its doors in 1861. Today, because of advances in technology, we have a level of flexibility with congressional documents that we haven't had before, whether they are displayed digitally or in print.

For example, GPO uses digital inkjet presses capable of cost-effective printing on any size paper with a wide variety of features, including color. Advances like these, coupled with a congressional willingness to reexamine long-standing practices to improve outcomes for lawmakers, staff, and the public, have led to the bicameral, bipartisan Project Common Press effort to develop a new design template for committee reports and hearings.

With the full support of the Joint Committee on Printing, GPO has started the Project Common Press focus group work of gathering our customer requirements for what a new format might look like. To date, we have completed our first round of focus group meetings with the JCP staff, House and Senate institutional officers, and House and Senate committees. In light of their feedback, we are further refining our designs and look forward to continuing that dialog with congressional stakeholders in the coming year.

Last summer, GPO celebrated the 10 billionth retrieval of government information from our websites, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the signing of the GPO Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act [P.L. 103-40]. It's amazing to think of where our digital presence is today when we consider that it all began with a rudimentary, pre-Netscape Navigator site to post the Congressional Record online in the mid-1990s.

Throughout fiscal year 2023 our ongoing efforts to modernize and build a dynamic and welcoming workplace continued to attract attention. In fact, we were notified that Forbes Magazine again rated us—now for the third straight year—as one of America's Best Midsize Employers while also recognizing us as one of the nation's Best Employers for Veterans for the second consecutive year.

Those positive sentiments were also reflected in the results of our first-ever employee climate survey designed to assess agency morale and identify challenges, which found that 90 percent of respondents are proud of the work they do at GPO and 76 percent agree that respect is high among teammates. While there is always room for improvement, the survey provided encouraging results we hope to build on in the years ahead.



GPO's vision is of an *America Informed* and our mission is to publish trusted information for the Federal Government to the American people guided by four key values—honesty, kindness, effectiveness, and inclusiveness. Our vision and mission are supported by our FY 2023–2027 Strategic Plan which is built on four strategic goals: to (1) Achieve Operational Excellence; (2) Modernize and Innovate; (3) Ensure Financial Stability; and (4) Develop the Workforce. (A copy of the plan can be found here: https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/mission-vision-and-goals-pdfs/gpo_strategicplan_fy23-27.pdf.)

It is with those goals in mind that we accepted the recommendations of the Task Force on a Digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) last year to guide the evolution of the FDLP and build a strong digital future for all our library partners and transition the program to one that is primarily digital. We are currently moving forward on those Task Force recommendations we can implement on our own. We have also shared a set of legislative proposals with Congress to address other Task Force recommendations and guide ensure our statutes support the transition to a digital FDLP.

As we look to our future, GPO's single biggest current challenge is attracting and maintaining a workforce prepared to fulfill our mission. Dramatic shifts in the newspaper and publishing industries have significantly diminished traditional sources of potential skilled labor for us. It's a serious challenge. Fifty percent of our workforce is eligible to retire in the next four years. That's one out of every two proofreaders, presspeople, bookbinders, carpenters, electricians, IT specialists, contracting officers, and a host of other trades and professions working at GPO.

To ensure that GPO continues to attract and retain an exceptional workforce in the years ahead, we have established the Recent Graduates Program and restarted our Apprenticeship Program.

Designed to appeal to talented young graduates who are seeking a career, the Recent Graduates Program attracted 22 new hires in its first year, and another 29 in FY 2023, its second full year of operation. The Apprenticeship Program, which was created to help promising GPO teammates acquire the skills needed to assume larger roles throughout the Agency welcomed its first eight participants and aims for 22 more in FY 2024.

We also created a new position, Production Technician, through which the Agency provides promising individuals with three years of on-the-job training to earn certification as fully credentialed bookbinders. We were able to hire 56 Production Technicians in Washington and Stennis, MS to-date and are currently working to bring on an additional 24 on board in fiscal year 2024.

A Snapshot of GPO's Business

GPO has three primary lines of business: (1) producing items requested by our customers, either ourselves or through contracts with other firms across the country; (2) making government information available through libraries, the internet, and direct distribution; and (3) building the tools that our customers use to produce their own content in formats that facilitate digital and physical distribution.



Production

GPO's business portfolio consists of—

- our in-house production work for Congress and the Executive Branch.
- the passports and secure credentials we produce for the State Department and other Federal agencies; and
- the print procurement and ancillary business services we provide to a broad range of Federal agencies.

For Congress, work we complete in-house includes the Congressional Record, the House and Senate calendars, bills, resolutions, committee reports and hearings, and the United States Code. For the executive branch, we produce the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations, the President's Budget, the Economic Report of the President, and many other high-profile publications. Notably, daily production of the Congressional Record and the Federal Register is like producing two major city newspapers every day.

Additionally, our craftspeople frequently produce a wide array of programs, invitations, and ceremonial and commemorative documents for both the executive and legislative branches.

Making Government Information Available to the Public

Still another core enterprise of GPO is administering the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), through which GPO provides important public documents to the over 1,100 FDLP-affiliated libraries nationwide, many of which are then also made available to the public at no charge through our ISO-certified secure digital repository, GovInfo.gov. Through the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP), the public can identify and access over 1 million current and historic government titles and resources housed in FDLP libraries throughout the country or linked to in digital collections at libraries and Federal agencies.

GPO's Superintendent of Documents and Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) units support the FDLP libraries in the identification and access to new government content, maintenance of their tangible collections, digitization of aging and rare tangible documents, and education, outreach, and training to ensure that the staff of FDLP libraries can assist their patrons in finding government information in both tangible and digital collections. Additionally, LSCM distributes new tangible publications to the FDLP libraries.

The Superintendent of Documents also supervises a sales and distribution program offering current, high-interest Federal publications to the public. They also provide logistics and warehousing services for Federal customers distributing printed materials.



Building the Tools to Deliver on the Vision of an America Informed

As technology has evolved, GPO has updated its operations to keep pace. With the development of GPO's proprietary MicroComp composition engine in the 1980s, GPO got into the business of building tools that would later be incorporated into our customers' workflows. Soon after adoption by GPO, Congress incorporated MicroComp into its own workflows in the House and Senate offices of Legislative Counsel as well as the legislative operations teams of the Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate. While MicroComp is still in use today, GPO is hard at work on its replacement, XPub, which will leverage several commercial and open-source technologies to produce a composition system worthy of the 21st century.

The current version of XPub is in the user acceptance testing phase with the House and Senate for congressional bills, resolutions, amendments, and public laws. When our customers adopt XPub, hopefully later this year, features will include integration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills, as well as a new responsive HTML format for congressional bills and public laws.

GPO also works closely with the Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, the Library of Congress, and the Congressional Data Task Force to develop and enhance United States Legislative Markup (USLM), an XML standard in the Legislative Branch and a critical data format for XPub.

GPO's ISO-certified secure digital repository, GovInfo, is also a key technology for supporting our customers. The data in GovInfo supports many public and private sector databases, such as Congress.gov, through open application programming interfaces (APIs). In FY 2023, there were 96 million average monthly information retrievals from GovInfo's collection of more than 2.3 million content packages—as we hit 1 billion annual retrievals for the first time ever.

Breaking Down GPO's Revenue

In fiscal year 2023, GPO's overall revenues totaled \$1,229.8 million. Of that amount, \$1,109 million—or about 90 percent—came from direct billings to our non-congressional customers. This category includes the Next Generation passports produced for the State Department and secure credentials produced for numerous Federal agencies, including the Capitol Police, sales and distribution of government publications, and Federal print procurement contracts managed by GPO.

Another six percent—or \$69 million—came from billings to Congress for the provision of specific requested services, including the Congressional Record, congressional hearings, bills, resolutions, calendars, and other publications. Still another three percent—or \$36 million—came from appropriations we used to administer the Federal Depository Library Program and provide critical public information program services. And finally, the remaining one percent—or \$16 million—came from appropriations this Subcommittee provided to enable GPO to make critical information technology and cybersecurity investments for the future.



Some Key Accomplishments

In fiscal year 2023, our first full year of operations under our ambitious FY 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, GPO continued charting a new course for success in this digital age and achieved some notable successes:

Our GovInfo digital repository earned recertification to retain its status as the world's only ISO 16363 Trustworthy Digital Repository and hit a record of over 1.1 billion information retrievals in a single year—the first time we have ever topped 1 billion retrievals in a year.

Our Customer Services business unit awarded \$496 million in competitive contracts to private-sector printers nationwide supporting thousands of jobs in all 50 states.

Our Security & Intelligent Documents business unit produced a total of 21,889,000 Next Generation Passports for the U.S. Department of State, and another 6,547,000 secure card credentials for our Federal agency customers.

We closed 11 regional print procurement offices transitioning 58 customer service employees to remote work, saving \$1 million per year in rent and other costs.

We removed the antiquated Group 98 web presses that our new inkjet presses have rendered obsolete and initiated a state-of-the-art RTB-480 machine that fully automates the paper roll-to-book form conversions.

We produced the Final Report from the January 6th Committee and the latest report from the House Committee on Modernization with our new XPub composition engine.

Our Creative Services and Digital Media Team won four awards from Graphic Design USA for the high quality of their productions for Federal agency customers.

For the 2nd consecutive year, we designed the logo for the United States Capitol Christmas tree, which came from Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia this year.

Our Plant Operations unit was honored by the In-Plant Printing and Mailing Association at their Annual Education Conference with the IPMA's 2023 Innovation and Best of Show Awards for the quality of their inkjet press work.

We had the privilege of producing the White House Holiday Greeting Card for the fourth consecutive year as well as producing "Holidays at the White House," a White House tour book.

We completed Supplement IV of the Annual Supplements to the United States Code via XPub.

And—for the 27th consecutive year—GPO's independent outside auditor provided us with an unmodified, or clean, opinion on our annual financial statements.

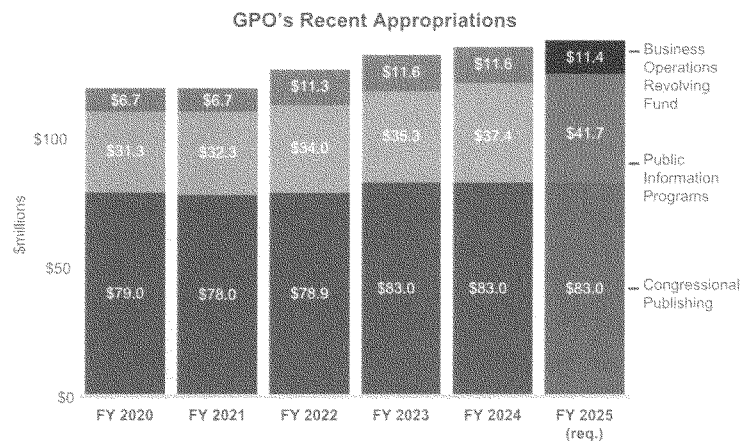


GPO's FY 2025 Appropriations Request

GPO is requesting an increase in its FY 2025 appropriations to \$136,089,000, a \$4,090,000 increase over our FY 2024 appropriation. This increase will account for changes in our labor and raw materials costs and fund certain ongoing projects of importance to our congressional customers.

This would be GPO's only fourth proposed increase in appropriations since FY 2014 and is 7.7 percent less than our FY 2010 appropriation. Increased productivity through the adoption of new technologies has been key to keeping GPO's needs for appropriations down, providing new and improved services at lower costs, and reducing overall headcounts. Figure 2 shows GPO's recent appropriations amounts and requests. Currently, we have 1,622 GPO teammates, compared to 2,284 in FY 2010.

Figure 2



One tool we used to keep our appropriations requests low was to repurpose prior-year unexpended balances. We appreciate the willingness of this Subcommittee and the Full Committee to allow GPO to use those balances in support of programs and capital investments that benefit the original purpose of the appropriated funds.

However, as I have informed your predecessors in recent years, those balances are declining, forcing GPO to request additional funds if we are to continue our current pace of development and innovation.



Our FY 2025 request includes \$83,000,000 for congressional publishing, the same amount as our FY 2024 appropriation. It is based on our estimates of Congress' likely needs, informed by historical trends, and available unexpended balances. It is also informed by increased raw materials and labor costs. In constant-dollar terms it represents a 75 percent reduction for congressional publishing appropriations since FY 1980, and a 36 percent reduction since FY 2010.

Our request for our public information programs (PIP) account, through which we administer the nationwide Federal Depository Library Program, is \$41,664,000. This represents an increase of \$4,296,000—or 11.4 percent—over FY 2024, and will cover the costs of providing Federal Government publications in digital and tangible formats to 1,100 Federal depository libraries nationwide, cataloging and indexing, and distributing documents to recipients designated by law and international exchanges. Rising labor and compensation costs as well as increased materials costs are the driving factors behind this increase in our FY 2025 PIP appropriation request. With this proposed increase, the PIP appropriation will be just 1.8 percent higher than the amount appropriated in FY 2010, but 29 percent lower in constant-dollar terms.

The final component of our overall appropriations request is for a total of \$11,425,000 for GPO's revolving fund to support capital investments and information technology upgrades, which is \$186,000 less than amounts appropriated in FY 2024.

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

First, we are seeking direct appropriations support for our continued development of the XPub composition system, which is intended to fully replace our more than 40-year-old proprietary MicroComp composition system.

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

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



In FY 2022, GPO obtained the internal authority to operate for the upcoming production release of congressional bills and public laws. This release is currently in testing with our House and Senate customers and is slated to be in production with the House, Senate, and GPO Bill End during FY 2024. Features in this release include integration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills, as well as a new responsive HTML format for congressional bills and public laws.

Prior to FY 2022, much of the initial development of XPub had been funded through the annual reprogramming of unexpended appropriations with the Subcommittee's support, but given GPO's mostly static appropriations requests in recent years, those prior-year funds have been largely expended. In recognition of the importance of the XPub project, the Subcommittee generously provided direct appropriations of \$3,370,000 in FY 2022, \$5,630,000 in FY 2023, and \$6,086,000 in FY 2024.

If approved, our \$5,975,000 appropriation request will keep XPub development and deployment on track in FY 2025. Once development is complete, we hope to provide XPub to our customers as a software-as-a-service (SAAS) application, ensuring that there is a dedicated stream of income to support continued development of the platform without the need for separate recurring appropriations.

The second component of GPO's request for increased capital investment appropriations in FY 2025 relates to the continued development of our peerless GovInfo online portal, the world's only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. In recent years, the Subcommittee directly appropriated funds to refresh GovInfo's infrastructure and further develop its content collections. This year's request of \$5,450,000 for GovInfo is \$75,000 more than the Subcommittee provided in FY 2024, and it would be divided between infrastructure investments (\$1,800,000) and development investments (\$3,650,000), including development required to support the digitization of historical content.

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

With the Subcommittee's sustained support, GPO has been able to add hundreds of thousands of additional documents and publications to the GovInfo online repository each year—over 195,000 content packages were added in FY 2023—and the public's usage of GovInfo continues to grow, with more than 96 million retrievals a month from GovInfo throughout FY 2023.

GPO successfully completed its recertification to retain ISO certification as the world's only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. With this designation, end users can be comfortable knowing that information accessed via GovInfo is both safely secured and authentic, two invaluable attributes for government information.



Lastly, before I conclude, I want to add that, as required by section 1604(c) of the Legislative Branch Inspectors General Independence Act, we have forwarded our Inspector General's request for \$7,540,000 in budget authority for FY 2025 as part of our FY 2025 Budget Submission. Currently that request is funded as part of GPO's agency overhead—a component of the prices and rates GPO charges its agency customers and Congress—and not as a separate appropriation.

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present GPO's FY 2025 appropriations request, and for all the support you and your staff have extended to us during these challenging past two years. This completes my prepared statement, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



GPO Snapshot

The Government Publishing Office is a business-like enterprise providing publishing and printing services to all three branches of government. The Agency was named by Forbes Magazine as one of America's Best Places to Work three years in a row and one of the Nation's Best Employers for Veterans for the second straight year.

Mission

Publish trusted information for the Federal Government to the American people.

Business Snapshot

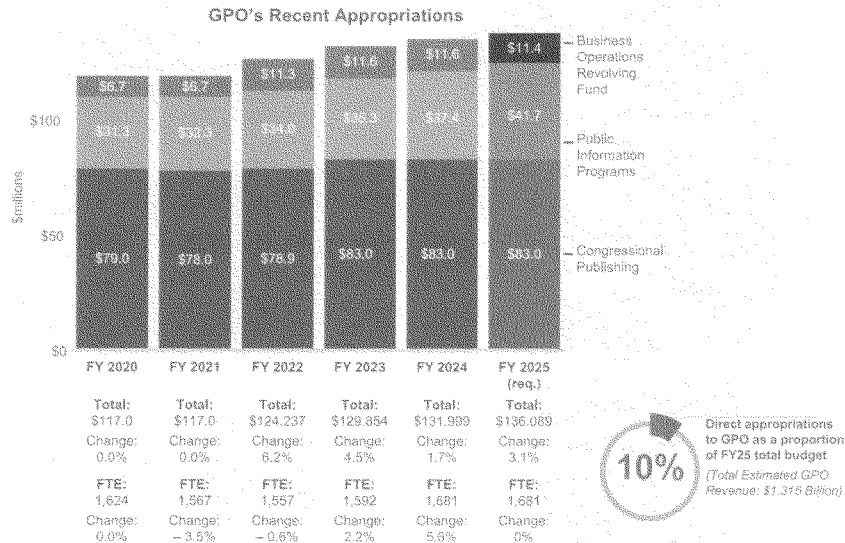
GPO manufactures and publishes a variety of products for all three branches of government. In FY 2023, **GPO had total operating revenue of \$1.23 billion**. Only about 10 percent of that total is appropriated, the rest coming from billings to other Federal customers. The following table describes GPO's major lines of business and their contribution to the overall financial position of the Agency.

		FY23 (000s)
Appropriations Received	Congressional Printing (Congressional Record, Bills, other products).....	\$82,992
	Public Information Programs (FDLP, GovInfo)	\$35,257
	Appropriated Revolving Fund Programs	\$11,605
Revenue for Major Products and Services	Contract Printing for Federal Agencies	\$497,115
	Passport Production	\$465,964
	Other Federal Printing (Federal Register, Budget, WH publications)	\$67,297
	Other Secure Credentials (Global Entry cards, NEXUS, TWIC, etc.)	\$59,651
	Publication Sales and Distributions	\$18,323

Some FY 23 Production Highlights

- Produced 21.9 million Next Generation Passports for the State Department and more than 6.5 million secure card credentials for Federal agency customers.
- Supported over 1 billion online information retrievals of public documents through GovInfo digital repository, and celebrated 10 billionth retrieval from GPO sites overall.
- Supplied the 1,100 FDLP libraries nationwide with tangible and digital publications.
- Initiated Project Common press and produced millions of pages of Congressional Record and Federal Register, as well as committee reports, bills, resolutions, and amendments.
- Created programs for official White House visits, diplomatic events, Medal of Honor ceremonies, and other national events.

GPO APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST
Fiscal Year 2025



GPO's FY 2025 Budget Request – \$136,089,000

Congressional Publishing – \$83,000,000

This account pays for the costs of publishing congressional documents — bills, reports, hearings, the Congressional Record, and other publications — in digital and tangible formats. Total obligations for FY 2025 are estimated at \$85,686,000 and the application of transfers of \$2,686,000 will reduce the appropriations requested to \$83,000,000. Appropriations in this account had been reduced or flat from FY 2009 through FY 2021.

Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents – \$41,664,000

This account pays for the costs of providing Federal government publications in digital and tangible formats to about 1,100 Federal depository libraries nationwide, cataloging and indexing, the distribution of documents to recipients designated by law, and international exchange distribution. The increase of \$4,276,000 is comprised of increases in teammate compensation and related costs of about \$2,142,000, price level increases of \$417,000, and \$1,717,000 for increased contractual costs for projects supporting the transition from printed material to digitized information and contractual expenses related to adding Congressionally Mandated Reports.

Business Operations Revolving Fund – \$11,425,000

GPO requests \$5,450,000 for GovInfo, an ISO-certified Trustworthy Digital Repository, for collection development and system infrastructure; and \$5,975,000 for XPub System development, an XML-based composition ecosystem, to replace our proprietary MicroComp system.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Ranking Member, the floor is yours.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

Mr. Halpern, can you briefly discuss how your recent modernization efforts have increased your reach to the American public?

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. One of the things that we try to do is make sure that the information that our customers produce—and it is ultimately their information, whether it is Congress', the courts', or whoever our customer may be—we want to make sure that that information is available in as many different formats as possible so that it is readable and accessible by folks.

We do that through a variety of different ways. One of those is trying to update the data standards for Congress itself so that we can provide your bills and other documents in a variety of different formats, not just PDF, but structured data as well.

Similarly, we are going back through our archives and trying to make old documents available on GovInfo.gov, the world's only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. So we just completed digitization of the Congressional Serial Set, finished our work on the statutes at large, going all the way back to 1789.

We are trying to make all of that available and, trying to do it in as many different formats as we can so it is as accessible as it can be for folks, whether they are looking at a PDF, or whether they are looking for more of a structured data or something that is more compatible with mobile devices and easier to read. So we are trying to achieve that on all the different levels that we can.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. For a taxpaying citizen that doesn't have English proficiency and wants to access some basic information, is there anything available in other languages?

Mr. HALPERN. So it depends. We don't do direct translation ourselves, but we have in the past engaged translators when requested by customers. But piggybacking off the discussion of AI and some of the other tools that are out there, the more that we can get into more fundamental readable data formats, there are going to be other tools out there that can do the translation pretty easily, whether it is Google Translate or some other product.

So my goal is always to try and make that basic data available where I can. Sometimes with old documents, it is hard to do without having a human being sit there and rekey it.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. With the new technologies, that may be——

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. So let me give you an example.

I talked about XPub, our new composition engine. Right now, that is in user acceptance testing with the House and Senate for bills, resolutions, and amendments. So, ultimately, it is up to our customer when that rolls out, but my hope is we would see that late summer, early fall.

And one of the immediate changes that you will find is instead of the, quite frankly, really terrible text-only display that you would get now on Congress.gov or GovInfo, that would go to a full HTML5, fully compliant, fully structured data format. So it is much easier for these tools to translate that into other languages as opposed to the way it currently displays. So that is our goal.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Clyde.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you.

In your testimony, you mentioned that only 10 percent of your budget is appropriated and that there is about a 3-percent increase—so about \$4 million of appropriated money.

By the way, I think a tremendous amount of which you guys do—I think you are a top-tier agency.

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you.

Mr. CLYDE. And I am happy that you run it as well as you do, all right?

So could you tell me—this additional \$4 million. I mean, you mention it incorporates increased cost in labor and materials. Can you be a little more specific about what that \$4 million increase entails?

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. So let me start with labor costs because that is the—frankly, the largest component of that.

So, right now, we have got—depending on how you count—someplace between 12 and 13 union bargaining units. We have contracts in place with those bargaining units.

Our agreement with them is that they will receive the same increase that a standard GS employee would receive. So, if Federal employees received a 3 percent increase, they have got that 3 percent increase. Last year, I want to say it was a little more than 5 percent. So we have got to factor that into our cost.

And the other thing to preface this all with is, by law, I am required to recover my costs. So the way we interpret that is, if it costs us x to produce Congress' documents, that is where we have got to recover that. We can't go to another agency and recover the cost to produce Congress' thing from what they are paying us.

There are shared overhead costs. But, for instance, we are not going to surcharge the State Department for our production of passports to fund Congress' needs.

So you take that. You add in the cost of paper. And, frankly, we need people. We need to add on folks to meet the requirements that you all place on us.

So, to give you an idea, our workforce trends older than the Federal average, and one key area is in the prepress work. When you drop a bill into the hopper, there is a human being who looks at that paper to make sure that it matches the electronic file that we have. And those folks are getting older, and they are getting ready to retire, and we need to hire the next generation of folks to come learn from them and follow behind.

So those are all the resources that we need to bring to bear. We think keeping those costs to around 3 percent, given where we are, we are able to offset, frankly, much higher costs by investing in technology and trying to become more efficient. Our ability to keep doing that at a zero increase disappeared a few years ago. But our goal is to keep that number as low as we possibly can.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. Well, on that note of hiring people, a question that I would like to ask both of you and that I did not ask the good general down there: What percentage of your workforce is working completely—has returned to the office and is working completely in person, and what percentage is remote?

And, if you can answer that, and then you can follow on with that.

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. So about two-thirds of our teammates have come to the office throughout. They are craftspeople and manufacturing employees. You can't take a printing press home.

Mr. CLYDE. Right.

Mr. HALPERN. The third of our team that is knowledge workers, telework has worked really, really well for us. And those folks are either largely telework or some sort of hybrid arrangement.

I will give you one example. We used to have 12 sales offices all across the country, and that was to serve those agencies wherever they were. Nobody came to visit them. So, when we shifted to telework, we found that those folks could keep doing their job just as they were before, and we didn't need that overhead. So we closed all 12 of those offices and saved about a million dollars a year in rent and other overhead costs.

So, yes, we have embraced telework, but we have also found some savings from being able to do that.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. So two-thirds, one-third?

Mr. HALPERN. Two-thirds, one-third.

Mr. CLYDE. All right.

Mr. DODARO. Yes. We have had a robust telework program for over 20 years in GAO. It really started during 2001 when there were anthrax attacks at the Capitol. And all the House of Representatives—all 435 Members, their staff, and the committee staff—came to the GAO building to continue their work because they had to deal with the emergencies associated with it.

Mr. CLYDE. I bet that was fun.

Mr. DODARO. It was interesting. I was sitting in my office on a Friday. I got a call, and I said, "Well, when do you want to come?" They said Monday. I said, "Well, give me until Tuesday at least." And so we did it.

But they were there for 2.5 weeks dealing with the aviation industry and all the problems that came from 9/11. And we said, well—so we let people work from home. We increased our technical capacity.

And we are a knowledge-based organization. Most of the government's records are not digitized. We have 11 field offices across the country. Most of the Federal money is spent outside of Washington, and most Federal employees are used there. So it is very important for our people to go—I am more interested in where they go to do the audit work, whether it is a VA Medical Center, a military installation, the State agency that is running the Medicaid program, for example. So our people need to be out.

We have had in the last year, like, 3,200 trips where we have sent people to every State, all four territories, and 36 different countries around the world, you know, where U.S. interests are there.

So this program—even before the pandemic, our people could work 66 hours out of 80 hours every 2 weeks telework. And so we are adding a remote component. We have done evaluations all along—very strict evaluations—to make sure it doesn't affect the quality of our work and, you know, the integrity of our operations to the Congress.

So our people have flexibility. It helps us attract really high-caliber talent, you know, so that we have the best people to serve the Congress and produce these reports that we do.

And it has helped us retain people. Our attrition rate is less than 6 percent, and we are able to get people from the private sector that we couldn't get without flexible work arrangements because we can't compete on salaries. I mean, that is just flat out. These scientists I have been hiring, these are people who want flexibility. We have been able to attract, you know, high-caliber people.

So, you know, I believe, over the years, it has not had any effect on our quality and our productivity of our work. You know, I have been in GAO 50 years. So I have seen all different kind of work arrangements. And I am very proud of the quality of the work that we have now, and it is because we have high-caliber people, and having flexible work arrangements is pivotal to bringing those people in and keeping them.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you. That is good to hear.

I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. The gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you, Chair.

In the darkness, a little bit of light here of congressionally mandated reports. As you know, we create hundreds and hundreds—a Carl—Sagan-like number of requests for congressionally mandated reports. For the most part, before, they ended up on the bookshelf, dusty. A lot of them had critical information, but a lot of them involved access into what the government was doing and why it mattered.

So I was involved with that, but it had great bipartisan support, the Transparency Caucus. So now we are a year into this. There are 250 reports on the website—the year website.

Mr. HALPERN. Actually, I can give you an updated number.

Mr. QUIGLEY. OK. As of this morning?

Mr. HALPERN. As of Monday, we had 299 reports online from 61 different agencies.

Mr. QUIGLEY. So I guess the short question is, just tell us a little bit about that process. Are there any agencies that we need to talk to who aren't as helpful?

Mr. HALPERN. I can get you a list of folks who may be—I think the polite way to put it—might be a little laggard in—

Mr. QUIGLEY. I am from Chicago. We can visit them.

Mr. AMODEI. Our phrase, not yours: Do you need a tune-up?

Mr. HALPERN. However you would like to deal with the issue.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Does the public know about this?

Mr. HALPERN. We do a lot of outreach to executive branch agencies trying to educate them about their requirements under the law, and we have done our level best to make this process as easy as we possibly can.

Right now, the vast majority of those documents are coming to us as PDFs. We would like to, in the future, help build systems for these agencies so that they can deliver these documents to us in other more accessible formats as well.

But we have been very pleased with the success so far. We were able to essentially stand the program up in a year, and we used

a combination of custom and commercial off-the-shelf technology to make that happen. We are very proud with the results.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And, again, I want to make sure we do what we can to make sure the public is aware of this so they can go fishing here to see what information might help them.

Mr. HALPERN. We highlight this on GovInfo.gov, and we are happy to shout from the mountaintops about the availability of this new resource.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you. I appreciate all your work on that.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Mrs. Bice.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Director Halpern, thank you for being with us this morning.

Tomorrow, the House Administration Subcommittee on Modernization will be marking up H.R. 7592 to remove the print requirement for the Annotated Constitution and pocket-part supplements.

If you all have not seen a published Annotated Constitution, it is about 5 inches in height and is done on a decade basis, but that tends to actually be out of date fairly quickly. And we recognized in the Modernization Subcommittee that, by allowing that to be done online, it is much more up to date. It is much more convenient.

Director, can you talk a little bit about how much savings that we will achieve by moving that to strictly online?

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. I believe the cost to produce the last edition was about half a million dollars. That was a substantial savings over the time before when it was up over a million dollars.

I think one thing to keep in mind is there are some customers out there for the actual book, and those are our Federal Depository Libraries. So there may be some disappointment there that it is not available, but—

Mr. AMODEI. Excuse me. Some of us—and thank you for being gentle with how you describe age of employees. Some of us really like books. Please continue.

Mr. HALPERN. I like books. I like stationery. So this seems to be the right fit for me.

So there is probably going to be a little bit of disappointment in that community. That said, the FDLP program is moving to a largely digital program, anyway. Libraries don't have space to store these volumes. And we have been working really, really closely with that cohort to try and soften the blow, not just on CONAN—on the Constitution Annotated—but on other documents as well and creating places for physical copies on a regional basis rather than necessarily every library.

And there are ways. If folks really decide in the future that they want a printed copy, digital ink-jet technology gives us a lot more flexibility than we had back in the offset days to produce small print runs. So it will become cheaper still. So, if we wanted to, say, run soft cover copies—a limited run—that is easy enough for us to do.

Mrs. BICE. I appreciate that. I think the focus for us is trying to find ways to utilize technology in a beneficial way. And certainly that CONAN book, albeit is quite lovely and large, it is also almost

immediately outdated once it is published. So, by using technology to keep that information up to date, I think it is incredibly important for anyone that is using it for actual legal purposes.

So thank you for entertaining that. I look forward to marking that up tomorrow.

And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Ms. Wexton, the floor is yours for questions for the GPO Director.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Halpern, thank you for being here. It is good to see you again. When you came before us last year, you invited us to come to the GPO facility, a short walk from here on North Capitol Street. It was fascinating to see the quantity and quality of publications that are printed here and distributed nationwide. The little notepads that you make with leftover scrap paper and decorated with ancient techniques were very well received.

Last year, we spoke about a number of initiatives to modernize Congress.gov and the ways we print and review congressional documents. Coming from the Virginia State Legislature where we use LIS, the opaque nature of bill text is a pet peeve of mine, and I appreciated your insights.

One of the things you mentioned in that conversation and in your opening testimony today is the work GPO is doing to further develop the XPub system and GovInfo. I see that your budget request includes nearly \$6 million for XPub development and over \$5.4 million for GovInfo.

Can you please elaborate on how these investments will further the work you have done in the last year and what, if any, additional functionality will be achieved?

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. And thank you so much for the opportunity to answer those questions. And thank you for coming to visit. It was great having you.

Let me take XPub first. As I mentioned, that right now is in user acceptance testing with both the House and the Senate. So our hope is either over the summer or in the fall, leg counsel—both House and Senate—will give that product their OK and sort of flip the switch and start using that.

The immediate change that folks will see is that the text—the plain text display of a bill resolution or amendment will be far more readable online than they are currently, and that is a huge step forward.

What XPub holds for the future is the ability to reimagine what congressional documents look like. One project I am working on, with the blessing of the Joint Committee on Printing and both House Administration and Senate Rules, is updating the format for committee reports.

To date, we have done some focus groups with institutional officers and committees so far. We have taken that information back. And I am working with our graphic designers now to incorporate a lot of that feedback to come up with a new format for committee reports.

On GovInfo, we are always trying to expand those collections, and we are trying to figure out new ways to incorporate new tech-

nology to increase the value that GovInfo delivers for the American public.

And I know that we talked with Mrs. Bice and other folks about the opportunities for AI and how that can change things. One of the things we are struggling with on GovInfo is, while we could create a sort of large language model search engine to search all of government publications from 1789 forward, we are a little concerned because GPO's brand is we are delivering you the authentic document. And, if we have something that interposes between the user and that authentic document, is that really delivering the authentic item that we have been advertising?

Those are some of the kinds of issues where we are struggling with, but we are very open to figuring out new ways to deliver this information in ways that benefit your individual constituents and the public at large here in the U.S. and really worldwide.

Ms. WEXTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

Mr. Franklin.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Halpern.

I was thinking back to last year. We were talking about workforce, and we had these questions about remote working, and one of the challenges you had expressed is in some of the skills—particular skills necessary within your office, some of these are just things that people don't learn until they get there, and there is a lot of hands-on.

You talked about reinstating your apprenticeship program. I am just interested to hear how that has progressed and where it needs to go from here.

Mr. HALPERN. So that first year—well, let me back up.

We have got some critical needs in, frankly, all of our trades but particularly in the proofreading/copy editing area, and that is actually the entry point for congressional documents.

So our first apprentice class was, I believe, eight folks, and they are in the second year of their program right now, and we are hoping to get them out on the floor and actually doing work a little bit sooner than we had in the past.

We also, this past year, did a new apprenticeship class of almost 24 folks. I believe it is another eight proofreaders and then a mix of press people, platemakers, and other trades that we need for GPO. So we have really invigorated that program, and we are very happy with the results.

We also took on another program really directed at our efforts to produce the U.S. passport. So there, instead of doing a full-on apprentice program, we did an on-the-job training program. We looked for folks who have some aptitude in the manufacturing environment. We used objective assessments to try and ferret that out.

And then we have a 3-year on-the-job training program where these folks that we bring in as production technicians. They learn all the machines that they need to learn to produce U.S. passports and secure identification cards. And, at the end of those 3 years, they are a full journey person bookbinder at the end. That has been a tremendously successful program. We run that both here in DC

and at our facility down in Mississippi where we do our secure ID work.

We have hired about 80 folks in the production tech program.

So these kind of programs where we are teaching a trade—where we are teaching folks how to make the products that our customers are asking for—have actually been really, really successful.

We have also had great experience recruiting into our recent grad program. Those are folks from—everybody from accountants to IT specialists to automation experts. And they are in a cohort that is learning—as they are going, learning what we do at GPO and really bringing a lot to the table.

Last year, we hired almost 200 new people, and that is hugely important as our workforce ages and a lot of them are taking their well-deserved retirements. So we are doing a lot of work to make sure that we are ready so that, as folks retire, we have got that next generation coming up.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Yes. I seem to recall you had mentioned about maybe half of your workforce leaving in the next 3 or 4 years. So do you feel like you are on step to—

Mr. HALPERN. We do. The statistic is half of them will be eligible to retire in the next 4 years. It doesn't mean they all will. But we are working really hard to make sure we are backfilling.

We have got some other areas. For instance, that proof room—now, in that, we have a mean age in the proof room of 59, and over half of them are eligible to retire right now. So we have got a shortage of folks doing that work. That is why sometimes it takes us a little longer to process your introduced bill than we would like.

We have got a plan to supplement that using reemployed retirees, new apprentices, and trying to hire folks as well. We think, that in a couple years, we will be back up to full staff in that area, but it is going to take us some time.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Dr. Swagel for CBO, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF PHILLIP L. SWAGEL, DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL
BUDGET OFFICE

Mr. SWAGEL. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Congressional Budget Office's budget request. Thank you for providing nearly the full amount we requested for this fiscal year and, more broadly, for your continued support of our agency.

CBO is requesting an appropriation of \$73.5 million for 2025, which is an increase of \$3.5 million or 5 percent from the amount provided in 2024. The request would address increased costs, sustain our investments in IT infrastructure, and enable CBO to add staff in key areas.

Our mission is to provide nonpartisan analysis to the Congress that is timely, rigorous, and transparent. When legislation is heading to a vote, we provide cost estimates and real-time analysis of amendments, often hundreds or even thousands of them for bills such as the NDAA.

We provide analysis and technical assistance for large complex legislation, such as reauthorization of the farm bill. We are still working on that. We produce budget and economic projections and analysis of a broad range of policy issues confronting the Congress.

The additional resources would enable us to do better—even better in terms of our responsiveness and our transparency. Our fiscal year 2024 funding will allow CBO to grow from 267 in late March to 276 people by the end of the year, and then our request for 2025 would help us grow by an additional nine more. So that is to 285.

CBO would add analysts in areas of particular congressional focus: defense and homeland security. In particular, I want to add people for some of our work on the budget impacts of weapon systems. We would add people to do implications of fiscal policy—so effects of taxes and spending on the economy—and our long-term projections, and that is analysis of Medicare, of Social Security, and preventive health policy.

Our requested increase is entirely for personnel expenses. It is to cover the salaries and benefits for current employees and, to a much lesser extent, to fund these new staff. Our total non-personnel expenses would decline by about 3 percent because some of our spending for IT in 2024—such as purchases of equipment, cybersecurity, cloud services—are for things that we deferred last year and that will not recur in the future—will not recur in 2025. It will recur at some point in the future.

Our requested budget would support our goal and our mission to provide information when it is most useful to the Congress. And, for the Appropriations Committee, we provide real-time provision-by-provision estimates of the 12 annual appropriation bills and any supplemental appropriation bills or continuing resolutions, and we respond to thousands of requests for technical assistance and more as you craft your legislation.

In addition to providing cost estimates before a floor vote for nearly all bills, we will publish dozens of statutory reports and requested reports on topics—on a wide range of topics: the budgetary impacts of coverage for obesity or anti-obesity medications, hepatitis C treatment, housing, Navy shipbuilding, much more. We will offer help by phone, by video, by email, and in person to your offices as you consider and draft legislation and in response to questions.

So, in summary, to achieve our goal of being as responsive as possible, CBO requests an increase of \$3.5 million. With your support, we look forward to continuing to provide timely and high-quality analysis to the Congress. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Swagel follows:]

Congressional Budget Office
Nonpartisan Analysis for the U.S. Congress



TESTIMONY

The Congressional Budget Office's Request for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025

Phillip L. Swagel
Director

Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

APRIL 10 | 2024

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Congressional Budget Office's budget request.¹ CBO requests appropriations of \$73.5 million for fiscal year 2025: About 89 percent would be for pay and benefits; 7 percent would be for information technology (IT); and 4 percent would be for training, expert consultant services, office supplies, and other items. The request amounts to an increase of \$3.5 million, or 5 percent, from the \$70 million that CBO received for 2024 (see Figure 1). That increase would address increased costs brought about by inflation, sustain investments in IT infrastructure, and enable CBO to expand its staff in key areas.

The requested budget is based on strong interest in CBO's work from the Congressional leadership, committees, and Members. On the legislative front this past year, CBO published about 675 cost estimates and devoted significant resources to analyzing the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (Public Law 118-5), the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (P.L. 118-31), and H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act. The agency also fulfilled thousands of requests for technical assistance related to appropriation bills and the reauthorization of the farm bill. Providing estimates and assistance to the 119th Congress as it considers significant legislative initiatives is likely to require additional resources.

Operating under a continuing resolution—that is, at its fiscal year 2023 funding level—for half of fiscal year 2024 has been challenging. CBO postponed filling vacant positions and allowed the agency to shrink from 279 in late 2022 to 267 now. In addition, the agency cut back in myriad ways to save money.

CBO's fiscal year 2024 funding will enable the agency to grow back to 276 positions by the end of the year, and the fiscal year 2025 request would support 285 employees—enough to satisfy its responsibilities under the Congressional Budget Act and enable it to be even more responsive in preparing cost estimates and providing technical assistance to Congressional committees.

Of the nine new staff members in 2025:

- Five would improve CBO's capabilities to produce dynamic analysis (that is, determining how changes in fiscal policies would affect the economy), long-term estimates, analysis of defense weapons systems, and estimates of credit programs (like student loan programs);
- Two would enhance CBO's responsiveness in producing cost estimates and providing technical assistance in the legislative process;
- One would enhance CBO's IT security; and
- One would boost outreach to Congressional staff and the press.

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

CBO's requested increase is entirely for personnel expenses. In the request, total nonpersonnel expenses decline by about 3 percent because some of the agency's spending for IT in 2024—including purchases of equipment, cybersecurity, and cloud services—is for deferred projects that will not recur in 2025.

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

In fiscal year 2025, CBO will continue its mission of providing objective, insightful, clearly presented, and timely budgetary and economic information to the Congress. The \$73.5 million requested would be used mostly for personnel salaries and benefits.

Funding Request for Personnel Costs and Consequences for Staffing

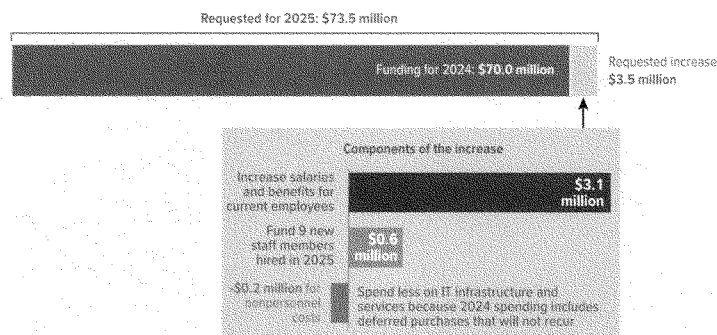
CBO requests \$65.5 million for salaries and benefits to support 285 employees by the end of fiscal year 2025, which equates to 278 full-time-equivalent positions for the year. That amount represents an increase in personnel costs of \$3.7 million, or 6.1 percent, from the \$61.8 million that was provided to CBO in fiscal year 2024.

Of the total requested amount:

- \$47.1 million would cover salaries—an increase of \$2.3 million, or 5 percent, from the amount provided in 2024. The requested increase would

1. See Congressional Budget Office, *The Congressional Budget Office's Request for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025* (March 2024), www.cbo.gov/publication/59698.

Figure 1.

Components of Requested \$3.5 Million Increase

Data source: Congressional Budget Office.

fund the hiring of nine new staff members in 2025. It would also provide for inflation adjustments and performance-based salary increases for current staff in 2025. Employees earning less than \$100,000 would receive an across-the-board increase of 4.5 percent, whereas employees earning \$100,000 or more (for whom more of their compensation is based on performance) would receive a 2.5 percent increase.

- \$18.4 million would fund benefits—an increase of \$1.5 million, or 8.8 percent, from the amount provided in 2024. The requested increase would cover growth in the cost of federal benefits and would fund benefits for the nine new staff members.

Funding Request for Nonpersonnel Costs

CBO requests \$8.0 million for costs other than personnel costs. Those funds would cover current IT operations—such as cybersecurity, software and hardware maintenance, software development, communications, and purchases of commercial data and equipment—and would pay for training, expert consultant services, office supplies, travel, interagency agreements, facilities support, editorial support, financial management operations (including auditing of the agency's financial statements), subscriptions to library services, and other items.

The requested amount for nonpersonnel costs is \$0.2 million, or 2.9 percent, less than the amount in fiscal year 2024. The requested funding would, among other things, cover IT and other operational costs; continue to provide computing capabilities and maintenance for staff workstations that have been migrated to cloud-based systems; and improve CBO's ability to detect, assess, and recover from cyberattacks. Much of the agency's spending on cybersecurity is the cost of maintaining access to data that are essential to CBO's analyses.

Consequences for Output

The requested funding would allow CBO to produce a great deal of valuable analysis for the Congress, including analysis in areas in which the agency anticipates additional legislative activity and oversight (see Table 1). It would also allow CBO to provide more technical assistance to committees and Members when they are crafting legislation and faster turnarounds when demand surges. In addition to providing major analytic products, CBO would be able to continue to produce other important material, such as presentations about CBO's work, letters in response to Members' questions, and blog posts.

CBO regularly consults with committees and the Congressional leadership to ensure that the agency's resources are focused on the work that is of highest

Table 1.

Products by the Congressional Budget Office, Calendar Years 2023 to 2025

Type of Product	2023, actual	2024, estimate	2025, estimate
Fulfilled Requests for Technical Assistance. Such requests typically come from committees and Members of Congress seeking a clear picture of the budgetary effects of proposals before they introduce or formally consider legislation.	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
Cost Estimates for Authorizing Bills. CBO is required by law to produce a cost estimate for nearly every bill that is approved by a full committee of either the House or the Senate. The agency also publishes cost estimates at other stages of the legislative process if requested to do so by a relevant committee or by the Congressional leadership. In addition, CBO reviews bills scheduled to be considered under suspension of the rules in the House.	675	900	900
Cost Estimates for Appropriation Bills. Those tabulations include account-level estimates for individual appropriation acts at all stages of the legislative process, as well as summary tables showing the status of discretionary appropriations (by appropriations subcommittee) and running totals on a year-to-date basis.	100	100	100
Reports, Working Papers, Testimonies, Slide Decks, Interactive Tools, and Infographics. CBO's publications are generally required by law, prepared in response to requests from the Chairs and Ranking Members of key committees, or aimed at enhancing the transparency of the agency's work. They examine the outlook for the budget and the economy, major issues affecting that outlook under current law, the budgetary effects of policy proposals that could change that outlook, the details of the federal budget process, and a broad range of related budgetary and economic topics in such areas as health care, defense policy, Social Security, and climate change.	102	100	100

Data source: Congressional Budget Office.

priority to the Congress. Nevertheless, the demands on the agency remain intense and strain its resources in many areas. Even with high productivity by a dedicated staff, CBO expects that it will not be able to produce as many estimates and other analyses as committees, leadership, and individual Members request.

Requested Information and Authorities

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

CBO's Access to Data

The House Committee on Appropriations directed CBO to report to the committees of jurisdiction on any challenges in accessing federal data and to identify whether the Congress can take any actions to ensure continuous and real-time access. CBO obtains from federal agencies a wide array of information, which it uses to produce baseline budget projections, economic projections, cost estimates, and reports.

CBO works collaboratively with agencies to obtain data through formal and informal means. The Budget Act

provides CBO general authority to access data from a variety of sources. CBO also accesses data by using specific authority or by collaborating with other agencies. CBO currently has more than 20 active data-use agreements with other federal agencies. However, shifting legal and regulatory frameworks of federal agencies can delay, weaken, or cut off CBO's access to information. The time spent negotiating and renewing agreements varies widely and is unpredictable, taking from a couple of weeks to over a year.

During 2024, CBO identified three challenges and actions the Congress can take to improve the agency's access to federal data:

- **Preserving access to student aid data.** Without a change to section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, CBO will lose access to an important component of the agency's models of the Federal Pell Grant Program and student loan programs. CBO currently receives from the Department of Education data on the income of student loan and Pell grant recipients. In the summer of 2024, the Education Department will begin receiving certain income information about student loan borrowers directly

from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), newly making the data federal tax information (FTI). CBO is seeking an amendment to section 6103 to allow the agency to continue to receive those data. CBO receives FTI for other purposes and is compliant with the IRS's security requirements. CBO has been working with the House Committee on Ways and Means; the House Committee on Education and the Workforce; the Senate Committee on Finance; the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; and the House and Senate Budget Committees regarding an amendment.

- **Strengthening general authority under the Budget Act.** CBO seeks to clarify and strengthen its general authority for accessing executive branch data under the Budget Act. The agency seeks an amendment to section 201(d) of the act to strike the parenthetical "(other than material the disclosure of which would be a violation of law)." That caveat risks undermining the broad data access that the Budget Act is intended to provide and is unnecessary when another statute more specifically governs CBO's access to specific data. The caveat can also delay CBO's access to data by requiring additional discussions with agencies, impairing the timeliness of CBO's work. In February 2024, the House Budget Committee approved H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act. Enacting the bill would remove the caveat and, instead, provide CBO access to executive branch data unless that access is specifically disallowed by a future law. The bill also includes a reference to section 203(e) to highlight CBO's obligation to protect the restricted information it receives.
- **Obtaining authority under the Privacy Act.** CBO also seeks to clarify and strengthen its authority for accessing executive branch data through an amendment to the Privacy Act of 1974. In June 2023, the Senate passed S. 1549, and in February 2024, the House Committee on Oversight approved an identical bill, H.R. 7184, which would authorize the disclosure to CBO of information protected by the Privacy Act, providing the agency the same access that the Government Accountability Office has. In general, the Privacy Act prohibits executive branch agencies from disclosing certain records without the prior written consent of the people to whom the records pertain. There are currently 12 exceptions to that prohibition, and enacting S. 1549 or H.R. 7184 would add a 13th specifically for disclosures to CBO.

The agency often requires the type of individually identifiable data the Privacy Act protects to prepare requested analyses and avoid relying on aggregations and statistics created by executive branch agencies. If granted access to such data, CBO would protect the information and not disclose it.

In addition to the items above, CBO is seeking authority for fiscal year 2025 (and would need to renew its request for any subsequent years) to accept gifts of property, including money and intangible property, or services to support the operation of the agency. Under current law, CBO often can obtain new data sets and tools from private entities by procuring them using appropriated funds or negotiating no-cost contracts. Gift authority would enable CBO to sometimes obtain such data and tools more quickly or without expense, as many legislative and executive agencies do. This authority would also enable CBO to accept donations for events such as those commemorating the agency's 50th anniversary.

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

Requested Authority for a Childcare Benefit

The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, noted that each legislative branch agency may request authority to provide a childcare benefit in its fiscal year 2025 budget request. CBO requests the authority as follows:

Sec. ____ The Director of the Congressional Budget Office may expend funds appropriated in fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter to reimburse employees of the Office for costs to improve the affordability of childcare if the Director determines that reimbursing such expenses is of sufficient benefit or value to the Office.

Included in CBO's fiscal year 2025 budget request is \$250,000 for the cost of those payments (embedded in various object classes for benefits). This benefit would enhance CBO's ability to recruit and retain a talented and competitive workforce. Because of the agency's size, individual reimbursement for childcare costs is the most cost-effective, feasible mechanism for providing a

childcare benefit to its employees, making the cost more affordable.

Strengthening Responsiveness

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

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

CBO's goal is to increase the number of staff with overlapping skills within and across teams. In some cases, those skills will consist of expertise related to particular topics, such as defense or transportation. In other cases, they will be more technical, such as the ability to design and improve simulation models. In a similar vein, CBO plans to invest additional resources in bolstering analysts' ability to coordinate work that requires expertise from across the agency. Another objective is to give additional senior analysts responsibility for projects that span multiple subject areas.

The budgetary increase that CBO is requesting would allow it to increase its efforts to be responsive. In 2025, CBO plans to hire additional staff to produce more timely cost estimates and fulfill more Congressional requests for technical assistance, particularly in the areas (like health care) that involve complicated modeling,

and staff to conduct more work in the areas of dynamic analysis, long-term estimates, analysis of defense weapons systems, and estimates of credit programs (like student loan programs)—areas in which CBO expects the Congress to have increased interest.

Enhancing Transparency

CBO works hard to make its analysis transparent and plans to strengthen those efforts, building on the increased emphasis that it has placed on the endeavor over the past several years. In 2024 and 2025, many of CBO's employees will spend part of their time on making the agency's analyses more transparent.

Testifying and Publishing Answers to Questions

In 2024 and 2025, CBO expects to testify about its baseline projections and other topics in response to requests by the Congress. That work will involve presenting oral remarks, answering questions at hearings, and presenting written statements, as well as publishing answers to Members' questions for the record. CBO will continue to address issues raised as part of the oversight provided by the House and Senate Budget Committees and the Congress generally.

Explaining Analytical Methods

CBO plans to publish material providing general information to help Members of Congress, their staff, and others better understand its work. For example, a report will explain the agency's approach to modeling the effects of various policies in the electric power sector. Working papers, too, will provide such explanations for various topics, and in some cases, CBO will be able to publish the computer code used in models.

Releasing Data

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will maintain its practice of publishing extensive sets of data to accompany its major recurring reports, including detailed information about 10-year budget projections, historical budget outcomes, 10-year projections for federal trust funds, revenue projections by category, spending projections by budget account, tax parameters, effective marginal tax rates on labor and capital, and 10-year projections of economic variables, including the economy's potential (or sustainable) output.

The agency will also provide details about its baseline projections, for example, for the Federal Pell Grant Program, student loan programs, Medicare, military

retirement, the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, Social Security Disability Insurance, Social Security Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, the Social Security trust funds, child nutrition programs, the Child Support Enforcement and Child Support Collections programs, foster care and adoption assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, unemployment compensation, the Department of Agriculture's mandatory farm programs, federal programs that guarantee mortgages, programs funded by the Highway Trust Fund, benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and veterans' disability compensation and pensions.

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

Analyzing the Accuracy of CBO's Estimates

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will continue to release reports analyzing the accuracy of its past projections of outlays, revenues, deficits, and debt. And the agency will compare its projections of federal subsidies for health insurance with actual amounts.

Comparing Current Estimates With Previous Ones

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

Comparing CBO's Estimates With Those of Other Organizations

CBO will compare its budget projections with the Administration's and its economic projections with those of private forecasters and other government agencies when possible. In addition, in various reports, the agency

will include comparisons of its estimates with estimates made by other organizations. When time does not allow for publication but interest is great, analysts will discuss such comparisons with Congressional staff.

Estimating the Effects of Policy Alternatives

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will update some of its interactive tools and release new ones to help the Congress and the public better understand the effects of potential changes to federal policies. Reports will also illustrate the potential effects of various policy proposals.

Characterizing the Uncertainty of Estimates

CBO will update an interactive workbook showing its estimates of how changes in economic conditions affect the federal budget. The agency's reports about the 10-year outlook for the budget and the economy, the long-term outlook for the budget, and federal subsidies for health insurance will contain substantial discussions of the uncertainty of CBO's projections. In addition, in most cost estimates in which uncertainty is significant, CBO will include a discussion of the topic.

Creating Data Visualizations

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will provide information about its budget and economic projections in slide decks and create infographics about actual outlays and revenues. The agency will also produce more reports that rely principally on visual presentations. And it will look for opportunities to include graphics to enhance the explanations in some cost estimates.

Conducting Outreach

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

CBO will obtain input from its Panel of Economic Advisers, its Panel of Health Advisers, and other experts. Many reports will benefit from outside experts' written comments on preliminary versions. For some recurring reports produced on compressed timetables, such as the one about CBO's long-term budget projections, the agency will solicit comments on previous publications

and selected technical issues to incorporate improvements in future editions.

CBO's staff will give presentations on Capitol Hill—some in collaboration with Congressional committees and the Congressional Research Service—on CBO's budget and economic projections and on other topics. Those presentations will allow CBO to explain its work and answer questions. The agency will also give presentations about its findings and about work in progress in a variety of venues to offer explanations and gather feedback. In addition, CBO will use blog posts to summarize and highlight various issues.

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

This testimony summarizes information in the Congressional Budget Office's budget request for fiscal year 2025. That budget request was prepared by Leigh Angres, Tracy L. Henry, and Kamna Virmani with assistance from Angela D. Clark, Dana Ealey, Ann E. Futrell, and Kevin Laden and with guidance from Mark Smith. It is available at www.cbo.gov/publication/59698.

Mark Hadley reviewed the testimony. John Skeen edited it, and Jorge Salazar created the graphics and prepared the text for publication. The testimony is available at www.cbo.gov/publication/60002.

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



Phillip L. Swagel
Director



**The Congressional Budget Office's Mission and
How the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request Supports It**

The Congressional Budget Office provides objective, nonpartisan information to support the budget process and to help the Congress make effective budget and economic policy. CBO aims for its analysis to be timely, rigorous, insightful, and clearly explained. The agency makes no policy recommendations.

CBO's chief responsibility under the Budget Act is to help the House and Senate Budget Committees with the matters under their jurisdiction. CBO also supports other Congressional committees—particularly, Appropriations, Finance, and Ways and Means—and the Congressional leadership. Each year, the agency's budget analysts and economists fulfill thousands of requests for technical assistance, produce hundreds of cost estimates for proposed legislation, and prepare dozens of reports and other materials on a variety of topics.

CBO seeks to provide budgetary and economic information when it is most useful. CBO provides technical assistance and preliminary estimates—often on very fast turnarounds—as committees are crafting legislation, as amendments to bills are being debated, and at other stages in the legislative process. For example, CBO supports the Appropriations Committees by providing real-time provision-by-provision estimates for the 12 annual appropriation bills, supplemental appropriation bills, and continuing resolutions and by explaining complicated estimating issues. CBO also reviews, for hundreds of Members, thousands of proposed amendments to legislation. In addition, the agency offers help—in phone calls, emails, and meetings—to Members and their staff as they are considering and drafting bills or simply asking questions about a complicated estimate or report.

One of the agency's most important objectives is to review each piece of legislation ahead of floor consideration. In 2023, CBO published estimates for 97 percent of the bills ordered reported by an authorizing committee before they were considered on the floor of either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

CBO's budget request will enable the agency to provide more analysis when the Congress needs it. CBO's budget request of \$73.5 million would support 285 employees, an increase of 9—enough to satisfy its responsibilities under the Congressional Budget Act and enable it to be even more responsive to Congressional committees. Of the 9 new staff members in 2025, 5 would improve CBO's capabilities to produce dynamic analysis (that is, determining how changes in fiscal policies would affect the economy), long-term estimates, analysis of defense weapons systems, and estimates of credit programs (like student loan programs); 2 would enhance CBO's responsiveness in producing cost estimates and providing technical assistance in the legislative process; 1 would enhance CBO's IT security; and 1 would boost outreach to Congressional staff and the press.

By increasing the expertise and modeling capability in areas in which CBO expects the Congress to have increased interest (for example, defense and homeland security, economic implications of fiscal policy, and long-term projections), the agency will be ready to provide the cost estimates and reports the Congress needs.

April 2, 2024

**Summary of the Congressional Budget Office's
Request for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025**

CBO's Funding Over Five Years and Its Current Request						
Thousands of dollars	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024, enacted	2025, requested
Full-time permanent positions	33,917	34,810	37,324	38,960	42,044	44,177
Other than full-time permanent	1,386	1,481	1,495	1,889	1,826	1,950
Other personnel compensation	695	745	780	955	1,005	1,005
Subtotal	35,998	37,036	39,599	41,804	44,875	47,132
Personnel benefits	14,058	15,049	15,584	16,531	16,918	18,405
Total, personnel	50,056	52,085	55,183	58,335	61,793	65,537
Travel and transportation of persons	189	191	160	150	184	200
Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	298	375	395	435	510	399
Printing and reproduction	39	38	53	39	5	8
Other services	3,557	3,862	4,420	3,809	6,355	6,395
Supplies and materials	419	472	456	418	332	401
Equipment	383	269	286	51	821	569
Total, nonpersonnel	4,885	5,207	5,770	4,902	8,207	7,972
Total	54,941	57,292	60,953	63,237	70,000	73,509
Percentage change from prior fiscal year	8.3	4.3	6.4	3.7	10.7	5.1
Memorandum: Full-time-equivalent positions	264	264	275	278	271	278

The Congressional Budget Office requests appropriations of \$73.5 million for fiscal year (FY) 2025: 89 percent would be for pay and benefits; 7 percent would be for information technology (IT); and 4 percent would be for training, expert consultant services, office supplies, and other items. The request amounts to an overall increase of \$3.5 million, or 5 percent, from the \$70 million that CBO received for 2024.

Operating under a continuing resolution—that is, at its fiscal year 2023 funding level—for half of fiscal year 2024 required CBO to postpone filling vacant positions, causing the agency to shrink from 279 in late 2022 to 267 now. CBO's fiscal year 2024 funding will enable the agency to grow back to 276 positions by the end of the year, and the fiscal year 2025 request would support 285 employees—enough to satisfy the agency's responsibilities under the Congressional Budget Act and enable it to be even more responsive to the Congress's needs.

Personnel Costs. CBO requests an increase of \$3.7 million for personnel costs. About \$3.1 million is for inflation adjustments and performance-based salary increases for current staff in 2025. Employees earning less than \$100,000 would receive an across-the-board increase of 4.5 percent, whereas employees earning \$100,000 or more (for whom more of their compensation is based on performance) would receive a 2.5 percent increase. The remaining \$0.6 million would cover salaries and benefits for nine new staff members in 2025. Those additional employees would enhance the agency's responsiveness in preparing cost estimates and providing technical assistance; produce dynamic analysis, long-term estimates, analysis of defense weapons systems, and estimates of credit programs; enhance CBO's IT security; and boost outreach to Congressional staff and the press.

Nonpersonnel Costs. CBO requests \$8 million for nonpersonnel costs. The requested amount is nearly 3 percent less than that provided to CBO in 2024. Some of the agency's spending for IT in 2024—including purchases of equipment, cybersecurity, and cloud services—is for deferred projects that will not recur in 2025. For 2025, funding would support IT and other operational costs; purchases of data about health care, domestic and international banking and financial markets, and other topics in support of the agency's analyses; ongoing improvements to computing capabilities and maintenance of cloud-based systems; and improvements to CBO's ability to detect, assess, and recover from cyberattacks. Much of the agency's spending on cybersecurity is for maintaining access to data that are essential to CBO's analyses.

Numbers in the text and table may not add up to totals because of rounding.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Swagel. Your agency does provide great work and bipartisan work, and I commend you for your efforts.

In fiscal year 2024, the Appropriations Act that this subcommittee was able to provide, CBO did one of the largest percentage increases of any agency across government, and this increase was in recognition to the important role that you play, obviously, in strengthening our Congress power of the purse through analysis and services that you provide.

As we begin fiscal year 2025 and its appropriations process, I want to ask you about CBO's prudent budget planning for next year and regarding your budget summary that noted that CBO postponed filling about 12 vacancies during fiscal year 2024 CR.

And, if necessary, will CBO be prepared to continue operating at the fiscal year 2024 level in October if there is a continuing resolution for some part of next year? Could you tell us the impact on the volume of your work that having continuing resolutions imposes on you?

Mr. SWAGEL. Yes, sir. And we are looking ahead in exactly the way that you are talking about. We are expanding now. As soon as, you know, the second appropriations bill was enacted, we posted a number of job openings in key areas. Our work on Medicare in particular and other health issues is something that we had attrition, and now we are looking to restaff and rebuild.

We are going to be cautious and recognize that there could well be a CR from October on until, you know, sometime into the next year, and so we are not going to overhire in a way that would put us at risk if there is a CR. So we will expand with our additional funding.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. So how does the CR impact you? Does it make you hire more people or less people?

Mr. SWAGEL. We would be cautious and not fill all of our positions. You know, we will get the critical ones first—healthcare and national security first—but it would impact us.

And the CR this year—you know, I lost people working on Medicare, and the volume of our work on Medicare is just—it is intense and—immense and intense, I guess, and—yes. So it would impact us continuing at a CR.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. OK. And so you also do all types of reports and, obviously, you analyze our bills and the impacts that they have. So the work that you do is not confined to this budgetary process, correct?

So how can you increase your response time in other areas by hiring people even though we are doing CRs or other things that may not require as many people as possible?

Mr. SWAGEL. Yes. And we will do that. So the foundation of much of our work is our economic forecast. You know, what is happening in the macroeconomy? And having a projection for, say, the unemployment rate in the future, that feeds into our analysis of, you know, say, SNAP benefits or school lunches, things like that, inflation and all that.

So we also lost people on our macroeconomic team that we are looking to rebuild. So that is an area that is outside the cost estimates but that supports everything that we do.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. AMODEI. Mrs. Bice.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Director Swagel. I appreciate the conversation that we had prior walking through some of the numbers that you provided us as far as the increases in the budget request.

Can you talk a little bit about the type—what types of analyses that you provide for appropriations bills? Being an appropriator, that is something that I certainly take notice of.

Mr. SWAGEL. Yes. So, with the appropriators, we are in sometimes just real-time back and forth. You know, we are providing analysis provision by provision and then looking at the whole to make sure that each subcommittee is within its allocation. We start with the top line and then work with you from the bottom up.

With the two appropriations bills that were enacted this year, the Consolidated Appropriations Act and the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, we were—I had to write that down.

Mrs. BICE. I was going to say we are creative with names, aren't we?

Mr. SWAGEL. Right. We were just in sometimes real-time communication with the committee in both—again, at the top and working up. And so that is how we were able to post the cost estimates for both of those bills before—more than a day before the floor vote.

You know, when the final bill came out, of course, we checked the language and made sure it matched our previous estimates, but we were ready because of that close cooperative working relationship.

Mrs. BICE. Fantastic. Are there any restrictions on CBO that prevent it from including supplementary information regarding projected debt servicing cost in the cost estimates for legislation that impacts the deficit?

Mr. SWAGEL. So we are set up to do that. In fact, on our website, we provide a tool—a spreadsheet that uses our latest economic projection and let's someone say, what are the interest costs of anything? So we make that available.

We don't put that into our cost estimates, but that is something we would work with the budget committees, you know, in both Chambers, and it is something that is useful to them and to Members. We certainly would, you know, work with them and follow their direction.

Mrs. BICE. And, finally, when we spoke previously, you indicated that there was an increase in IT costs and that you were trying to make some upgrades across the agency. Can you also talk a little bit about software? Because that is such a big piece of what you all utilize to be able to provide estimates, maybe walk through a little bit of what that software increase looks like and why that is important for you all to continue to invest in that.

Mr. SWAGEL. OK. Thank you. We have been shifting to the cloud just like the other two agencies, and sometimes we are moving from hardware—some things that were hardware to software. You

know, so I have a PC on my desk. Most of the work gets done in the cloud.

Mrs. BICE. Let me clarify. I meant from a forecasting perspective. The software that you are using for forecasting that you are having to continually sort of modify and update and the cost associated with that.

Mr. SWAGEL. OK. I apologize.

Mrs. BICE. That is OK.

Mr. SWAGEL. So we have been doing a variety of things. I will give you one example that you and I have talked about before. We have one key model that does our analysis on Social Security, which was built in FORTRAN 77, which I actually learned when I was in high school, but I don't think anyone is learning that today. So we are shifting that to Python, which is essentially the language some people would learn now.

We are actually using—this is the one use we have so far of an AI tool, is that you can put blocks of code into AI tools. You know, here is the FORTRAN. It will translate into Python. You know, we then have to check it, but that is one. We have other macro-economic tools. That is a key area that we are upgrading.

And then the last one I will mention is, on the healthcare side, we work with massive datasets and various healthcare datasets. We have a secure network. It is, like, a subset of our network that is secure, and we have been trying to upgrade basically the ability to make that model work faster, and it is both on the hardware side and the software side.

Mrs. BICE. Great.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I referenced it earlier. Here is an actual physical copy of the CONAN from the Publishing Office. I thought people may want to see it.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. AMODEI. Well, first of all, Mrs. Bice, I want to say, you have got a pretty good eye. You said it was about 5 inches thick. I am guessing maybe 4.5, but that is close enough for government work.

So, since we are going to digress for just a second before we go to Ms. Wexton, are those for sale?

Mr. HALPERN. They are through our online bookstore. I couldn't tell you the price off the top of my head.

Do you know?

\$239, and that can be yours.

Mr. AMODEI. Will you put my name on it, too, if I pay extra?

Mr. HALPERN. If you ask nicely, I can arrange that.

Mr. AMODEI. OK. Well, for anybody who—it is cheaper than a doorstop made out of silver these days, so what the heck? That is probably a pretty good price.

With that, Ms. Wexton, the floor is yours.

Ms. WEXTON. I don't have any questions.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. Franklin.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ranking Member Espaillat asked the questions I had about, you know, staffing and personnel as far as, you know, how our wacky budgeting processes has evolved, and Mrs. Bice talked about my technology questions.

So, really, I guess I will try and just ask it. Is there anything here else that you would like to share with us? Things that we should be drilling into that we haven't been asking about or any parting shots? That is a loaded question. So you can go any direction you want.

Mr. FRANKLIN. There are a lot of different ways.

Mr. SWAGEL. There are lots of ways I can go.

We are here to support you. And that is my goal, is to look ahead. Wherever you are going, I want to get there first.

And so some of the work we are doing on preventive healthcare is that. That, you know, we know Members are interested. I mentioned the anti-obesity medication. I have had many Members ask about that. We are really hard at work on that. The hep C has a little bit of that same flavor. Spend money up front and, you know, if it works well, prevent illness and cost down the road.

The math is tough on that. I mean, it is a little bit like saving money at Costco by spending a lot and sort of buying a lot. So the math doesn't always work. But that is what I am trying to do. I am sorry. That is my mother and my late stepfather. That is how they bought.

So that is what I am trying to do, is get ahead and figure that out, and that is some of the hiring that we are doing in basically the areas. I mean, healthcare and national security are the two areas where the interest in our work just continues to grow, and I want to be ready for it.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Well, thank you for that. And it has got to be, for you, a pretty fascinating job for one who likes numbers. But the diversity of the issues you are working on—you know, flight hours for F-18 pilots and healthcare, you know, challenges on drugs coming down the line. I appreciate all that you do.

And all of you gentlemen, thank you very much for very well-run organizations. It is a privilege to work with you.

I yield back. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

Mr. Ranking Member, do you have anything else for these three gentlemen?

Mr. ESPAILLAT. No, Mr. Chairman. I think I am done.

Mr. AMODEI. OK. So a little bit of housekeeping for the three of you.

Oh, Ms. Wexton, you are recognized.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you. Dr. Swagel, it is wonderful to have you here with us today. I always enjoy seeing you and your passion for your work. As you mentioned in your testimony, operating under a continuing resolution has presented a number of challenges for CBO, causing the agency to shrink from 279 to 267 employees. Your budget request for the coming year will help account for these losses and restore the agency to 285 employees, which will help you meet your Congressional Budget Act responsibilities and be more responsive to Congress.

Was CBO able to get down to the required number of eligible through attrition, or did they have to let people go?

Mr. SWAGEL. So we were able to lose people through attrition and stay within our budget, and the challenge was that some of the

people we left created, you know, holes in important areas. I mentioned Medicare before. That was really a tough one just because of the queue of work. And so, you know, we are still catching up.

But, if you look at our website now, we have several job openings posted that would support that work.

Ms. WEXTON. In previous years, we have discussed the importance of childcare to attracting and retaining the best and the brightest to your workforce. I was glad to see that CBO is requesting the authority and funding to provide a childcare benefit in this year's request.

Can you please elaborate on why you need this benefit as a way to get qualified professionals to work for the CBO and the impact this will have on your ability to recruit and retain the employees you need to be responsive to Congress?

Mr. SWAGEL. Thank you very much for asking that. It is a key issue for CBO and for our staff, our current staff and our future staff.

Just the age of our staff is slightly different than, you know, kind of the overall House staff. You know, we tend to hire people either right out of college. We have maybe 30 of those. We are hiring them now. But, really, it is out of graduate school, you know, after a master's. And people of that vintage and that age, they are getting married, and then they are having children a couple years later.

We are pretty far down on the priority list for the House childcare center, and it means, for infants in particular, we just have no hope. So the subsidy that we are looking to provide our employees would allow us to help our employees with—especially with infant care but then more broadly. And it is really a critical one.

But what we are hoping to do is provide a subsidy of \$5,000 per employee for 50 employees. And, you know, we think that would allow us to essentially help, you know, the people with kids in that age range.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. AMODEI. Go ahead.

Mrs. BICE. She yields back.

Mr. AMODEI. OK. Thank you.

Any other follow-up questions from members of the committee?

OK. Some housekeeping stuff. First of all, I think in order to check the box on the committee record—Mr. Clyde mentioned something. If you could each generate—and this is not a what-I-did-with-my-summer-vacation request—just a memo for Ms. Reinshuttle. And I am going to impose a 2-page limit. And if you want to be shorter than that, that is fine—to just discuss the quality and value with respect to each of your telecommuting folks. I think you have strong stories to tell.

But so that if somebody says, "Hey, what are you doing about that," it is like, "Well, we discussed that with the agencies that are within our jurisdiction, and they generated short memos, and here they are."

So, because of that, obviously, none of you gentlemen have any problems with substance. Let's make them hard on substance and

light on buzzwords and talking points. You can go to the news talk shows for that stuff. So we would appreciate that.

Also, we would like in fairly real-time manner—I don't think it is something that we will require a lot from the Publishing Office—who is tardy in their reports to you? And let me tell you the context that I am asking for that information. That is so that the members of this committee on their other committees that they serve on—other subcommittees in Appropriations—if that needs to be a discussion with those agencies, like, “Hey, what is the problem with reporting, blah, blah, blah?”

We will endeavor to do it without fingerprints, but I am sure you can take care of yourself when you are walking to and from work or if you are going to Costco with Mr. Swagel's relatives or whenever you have a townhall meeting on that sort of thing.

With respect to, members, please feel free—I know I don't need to tell anybody, but if you have other questions that come up, please feel free to engage with the committees directly. But, if you would let Ms. Reinshuttle know so that, when we are getting ready to do the work session—that we know if there are outstanding issues, and we can, you know, try to do what we can to resolve that or whatever so that we know what is going on.

The final thing that I will say is, we are endeavoring to be crisp with the work of this committee, not hasty, not whatever. But we do want—although no good deed goes unpunished, we were ready a long time ago last round.

And, of course, we went through in the last round—what was that euphemism you used, Dr. Swagel, about something appropriations bill?

Mr. SWAGEL. The further consolidated.

Mr. AMODEI. Further. That is quite a euphemism.

We want to endeavor to complete the work of the committee for a couple of reasons in a crisp manner, and that is so that members in their other committee assignments—it frees up time when that comes to do the necessary stuff to that.

And then, also, in that ever-continuing quest to try to do 12 separate bills and in a timely manner—just to be real direct—trying to put the committee in a position to go, “Hey, folks that schedule the floor, we are ready.” We may not agree on everything or whatever and people—but, anyhow, it is like the committee work is done.

So there will be plenty of notice. Nobody is going to spring a work session on anybody. I appreciate the fact that there were several competing things today for members and respect your value judgments on whether you can make it or can't make it—although please let Mr. LaTurner know that flying by and dropping off a you-are-not-in-Kansas-anymore note was very effective. We appreciate that.

But, anyhow, that is kind of the thought as we get started on 2025 while the taste or memory or whatever your perspective of the 2024 process is still fresh in our mind.

So thank you all. Thank you, folks, for coming. We look forward to working with you to get the product finished up. We are adjourned.

[Answers to submitted questions follow:]

**GAO Responses to Questions for the Record
Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing
April 10, 2024**

Fraud Prevention

Mr. Dodaro, as you know, a huge part of the work that GAO has done – especially in recent years following the passage of pandemic and other emergency assistance programs – is fraud prevention. You mentioned in your budget justification that GAO plans to issue a government-wide estimation of fraud this year.

Question: When do you anticipate that the government-wide estimation of fraud will be available?

Answer: We issued our report on April 16, 2024. Based on fiscal year 2018-2022 data, we estimated that the federal government loses \$233 billion to \$521 billion annually to fraud. The underlying data from this time period reflect different fraud risk environments (i.e., prepandemic; pandemic; post-pandemic). Lower risk environments are associated with the lower end of the range, higher risk environments with the higher end.

While our work is not predictive, it does highlight that fraud is inevitable where there is something to be gained. Eliminating fraud entirely is not possible. The goal is to manage risk through better prevention and detection. Estimates provide information about the scope of the problem, can help prioritize oversight, and can be useful benchmarks for assessing return on investment for these actions. Since 2016, agencies have been required to strategically manage fraud risk in alignment with GAO's Fraud Risk Management Framework. GAO and the OIGs continue to identify lags and failures in agencies' management of fraud risk and implementation of leading practices outlined in the Framework. Closing gaps in strategic fraud risk management is the key to reducing fraud.

We recommended that OMB work with agencies and OIGs to improve the quality and availability of data to support fraud loss estimation. More granular estimates will help target resources and oversight. We also recommended that Treasury work with OMB to improve fraud estimation, including more granular estimates to help target resources and oversight. OMB and Treasury agreed with the recommendations.

We would be happy to brief you and your team about this work at your convenience.

Federal Cost Savings

GAO has an impressive self-reported "return on investment" in terms of government wide cost savings resulting directly from the work that you do.

Question: Do you think the level of federal cost savings from GAO recommendations that we saw in 2023 is sustainable for future years?

Answer: Yes. With the Subcommittee's support for our budget request and continued action by executive branch agencies and the Congress on our open recommendations, I believe the level of cost savings is sustainable for future years. As the table below shows, we have consistently recorded over \$50 billion in financial savings the past 10 years.

Figure: GAO's Financial Benefits, 2014-2023

FY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Financial Benefit (\$B)	\$54.40	\$74.70	\$63.40	\$73.90	\$75.10	\$214.70	\$77.60	\$66.20	\$55.60	\$70.40

Note: The \$214.7 billion in financial benefits we achieved in FY 2019 was due primarily to one large financial benefit of \$136.1 billion for contributing to reductions in DOD's procurement costs for weapon systems acquisitions. It was the largest financial benefit recorded.

Our work continues to yield opportunities for additional financial benefits. Over 60 percent of our reports contain recommendations to improve government performance, some of which could result lead to cost savings. For example, we recommended that Congress equalize the rates Medicare pays for certain health care services, which often vary depending on where the service is performed. CBO has estimated that equalizing Medicare payment rates for certain services could save \$141 billion over a 10-year period. As requested by Congress, we issued a report on the financial benefits of our open recommendations in June 2023. We estimated that implementing them could produce \$92 billion to \$182 billion in financial benefits. We plan to update this report this summer, as directed by Congress.

Getting our recommendations implemented takes work and effort. To encourage implementation of our recommendations, we follow-up with the agencies on at least an annual basis. Since 2015, we have also sent letters to the heads of most federal departments and several agencies identifying unimplemented recommendations that should be a priority for implementation, some of which could result in cost savings. In addition, in our annual duplication report, we catalog unimplemented recommendations that could result in significant cost savings. For example, we highlight open recommendations that could result in financial benefits of \$1 billion or more. We have reported that an additional tens of billions of dollars could be achieved if Congress or the agencies implemented our open recommendations.

Prioritization of Federal Audits and Program Reviews

Mr. Dodaro, you detailed in your budget justification how GAO prioritizes projects – mentioning that Congressionally-mandated reports generally take precedence. My question is regarding whether the scale of federal spending impacts project prioritization. For example, EPA announced a few days ago that the agency had awarded \$20 billion out of the “Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund” after a House decision to repeal \$27 billion out of that fund, which was created in the IRA. As far as grant programs go, that's a large sum of money in play.

Question: Given that GAO tends to prioritize Congressionally-mandated reviews, how does your organization assign priority level to auditing agency spending of that magnitude?

Answer: Our strategic planning and congressional outreach efforts helps us prioritize and focus on the most pressing issues facing the nation, including significant investment of federal funds. We

issue our strategic plan every four years. The plan identifies emerging issues and trends that will shape and impact government and society. We use information from this plan when talking to our congressional clients about their priorities. We are in continuous conversations with our clients about what new work may be needed, which can then inform the work they mandate or request.

For example, in the lead up to the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) we had multiple conversations with congressional staff about what oversight would be needed. The Act appropriated funds for us to support the oversight of (1) the distribution and use of the Act's funds; and (2) whether the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the funds are equitable. Through March 2024, our oversight has resulted in 7 reports, with 48 recommendations. In FY 2024, we plan to continue work on 18 IRA audits, and to begin 9 new audits. This includes an ongoing review of the \$42 billion to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) for grants and other investments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance climate resilience.

For our individual audits, examining the risks associated with the federal activity and spending is a priority when developing the audit's objectives, scope, and methodology. Risks could include the magnitude of spending, the speed in which the funds are being distributed, and the mechanisms that are being used to distribute the funds. Depending on the risks that we identify, we will use a methodology to examine whether the appropriate controls are in place to safeguard federal funds.

Chairman Amodei:

Modernizing Printing and IT Systems

Question: GPO has made progress on modernizing the agency's printing and information technology systems. These investments increase productivity and reduce costs, while also giving federal employees opportunities to develop high value skills. How is GPO enabling other federal agencies to use color ink, cameras, modern interfaces and software, and other existing technology and solutions to improve their communications with taxpayers, beneficiaries, veterans, and other citizens?

Response: GPO is helping Federal agencies improve their communications with the American people in several key ways. Perhaps the most prominent example is the capabilities we can now share with our customers through GovInfo and XPub.

As you know, GovInfo is our online digital repository—the only ISO 16363 Trusted Digital Repository in the world—which supported over 1 billion downloads of public information in the past fiscal year. It is a marvel made possible by the continued support of this committee, and has transformed the way we make publications available to the public. Where GPO once had to print more than 20,000 copies of the daily Congressional Record and mail them across the country, we can now reach millions of Americans by simply posting the daily Congressional Record online, which we aim to do by the beginning of each new business day.

Each year, we also upload more than 100,000 digital packages each year to GovInfo—the packages are the equivalent of a published volume—so the collection of government information available at one's fingertips at www.govinfo.gov is large and growing. We just added the complete set of United States Statutes at Large dating back to 1789 to GovInfo, including the text of the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, amendments to the Constitution, treaties with Indians and foreign nations, presidential proclamations, and treaties and international agreements approved by the Senate.

One of GovInfo's most significant recent contributions to enhancing our Federal customers' ability to communicate with the American people has come through the development of the new Congressionally Mandated Reports (CMR) web portal, which Congress directed GPO to create.

Federal agencies are now required by law to send reports mandated by Congress to GPO so that we can make them electronically available through GovInfo's CMR portal, which went live in December 2023. As of April 22nd, the portal had 315 CMRs posted by 62 agencies.

We are also encouraged that the development of our new composition engine called XPub is nearing completion after more than a decade of hard work. XPub will fundamentally transform the way GPO and Congress work together to produce bills, resolutions, amendments, the Congressional Record, committee reports, and other congressional publications. It will improve our workflows' speed, accuracy, and efficiency and decrease the likelihood of breakdowns in production.

The old system XPub is replacing is called MicroComp. It was put into service in the early 1980s and is barely holding together. A work horse tool that has proved its worth over the past five decades, MicroComp just really can't be modified any further to deliver the functionality that Congress needs today. It is essentially obsolete, extremely challenging to maintain, and prone to breakdowns.

The current version of XPub is currently in the user acceptance testing phase with the House and Senate for congressional bills, resolutions, amendments, and public laws. When our customers adopt XPub, hopefully later this year, features will include integration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills and a new responsive HTML format for congressional bills and public laws. It is going to take some time to transition to XPub fully, but once the shift is complete, congressional users are going to be working with a much more user-friendly and productive tool.

The development of XPub and other advances in printing technology are providing us with an entirely new level of flexibility with congressional documents, whether they are displayed digitally or in print. For example, the new digital inkjet presses GPO employs are capable of cost-effective printing on any size paper with a wide variety of features, including color.

We hope to leverage our investment in XPub for other agencies, whether that's OMB's production of the Budget of the United States, or many other agencies that must submit reports to Congress. While it will take time to build out other applications, we believe that XPub holds promise for almost all of our customers.

Advances like these, coupled with a congressional willingness to reexamine long-standing practices to improve outcomes for lawmakers, staff, and the public, have led to a bicameral, bipartisan effort to develop a new design template for committee reports and hearings called Project Common Press.

With the full support of the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP), GPO has started the Project Common Press focus group work of gathering our customer requirements for what a new format might look like. To date, we have completed our first round of focus group meetings with the JCP staff, House and Senate institutional officers, and House and Senate committees. In light of their feedback, we are further refining our designs and look forward to continuing that dialog with congressional stakeholders in the coming year.

Beyond our work for Congress, GPO's Creative Services and Digital Media team helps a great number of Federal agency customers apply the latest in computer-assisted design technology and contemporary styles to their publications and media products. Their work is exceptional, and they have earned well-deserved recognition for the high-quality products they created throughout this past year. In fact, after reviewing more than 10,000 entries in 2023, Graphic Design USA magazine conferred four Graphic Design awards on Creative Services for their impressive work including the 2023 Capitol Christmas Tree logo for the U.S. Forest Service; an Early Stages Development Guide for the District of Columbia Public Schools; a Conflict De-escalation Toolkit for the National Park Service; and the National Science Foundation's Office of the Inspector General logo.

In addition, our Customer Services business unit, which manages our print procurement and associated operations, also provides Federal agency customers with a broad range of contemporary services employing the latest in print and digital document production technologies.

For example, Customer Services contracts 508 compliance services for customer agencies to make legacy PDF documents and forms more accessible for citizens. Such services fulfill the Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 7949(d)) requirement that agencies give disabled employees and members of the public access to information comparable to the access available to others. The 508 services that GPO provides Federal agencies with include 508 compliance consulting as well as the creation, remediation, and distribution of Section 508 compliant PDF files from legacy documents or electronic files.

Customer Services also provides customer agencies with contracted scanning and digitization solutions of tangible documents, including optical character recognition (OCR) for searchability, indexing, and metadata creation to enhance access and efficiency of accessing records for beneficiaries and veterans. Often these services include scanning of microfiche and 35 mm slides or comparable outdated media and the digitization of records consistent with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) archival standards.

Customer Services also provides expert-level guidance, support, and contract management services through our 951-M Program. This program provides equipment solutions for customer agencies seeking to deploy sophisticated printing and reproduction technologies to enable them to produce the high quality products they need in house to communicate with veterans, beneficiaries, and taxpayers nationwide.

Rep. LaTurner:

Appropriations Request Increase

Mr. Halpern, GPO is requesting a roughly \$4.1 million increase over last year's appropriations.

Question: What are the reasons for the increase, and are all those expenses deriving from the legislative branch?

Response: GPO's requested increase of \$4.1 million is 3.1 percent over GPO's FY 2024 appropriations and is for increases of \$4.3 million in the Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents, which are partially offset by a reduction of \$0.2 million in GPO's appropriation to the Business Operations Revolving Fund for information technology development. The amount we are requesting for Congressional Publishing remains the same as the enacted level, \$83 million.

The increase in the Public Information Programs is comprised of about \$2.6 million for projected pay raises under our current labor contracts, price increases and \$1.7 million for program increases. These program increases are for projects supporting the transition from printed material to digitized information and contractual expenses related to adding Congressionally Mandated Reports. The increases requested will help to expand and enhance public access to congressional and other Government information products while decreasing the cost of distributing traditional printed products over the long term and still supporting GPO's mission of publishing trusted information for the Federal Government to the American people.

The transition from providing primarily printed products to digital products has had a transformative impact on GPO's annual budget requests—for example, our FY 1980 Congressional Publishing budget was \$91.6 million in 1980 dollars, which would be equal to \$345.2 million today. This starkly contrasts our FY 2025 request for \$83 million.

By supporting this transition to digital by helping us make critical investments in new technologies, the legislative branch has, over the years, allowed us to save millions and millions of dollars that would have been otherwise wasted.

Retiring Workforce

Both last year and this year, your testimony indicated that half of GPO's workforce is eligible for retirement in the next four years.

Question: Do you feel like your workforce recruitment through the Recent Graduates Program and GPO's apprenticeship program have put your office in a position to comfortably refill those slots, or is it too soon to tell?

Response: We are really encouraged by the initial results of our recruiting through the Recent Graduates Program and our Apprenticeship Program. Over the past two years, we have onboarded 51 Recent Grads and are putting together plans for a new class now. With regard to the Apprentice Program, last year we successfully enrolled eight participants and we aspire to add another 22 in the months ahead.

We are also proud of the success we have had in creating and establishing our new Production Technician position by working with our organized labor partners. This program has enabled us to onboard 56 new GPO teammates in the past year, with another 24 coming on board this current year.

We are encouraged by the initial response to these initiatives. We think we are learning as we go and discovering new ways of promoting these opportunities and engaging participants.

However, our challenge moving forward will be in sustaining our commitment to recruitment and workforce development in the years ahead because it is going to take us a good four to five years to emerge from the demographic challenges we currently face throughout our skilled workforce. We are going to need to keep our eye on the ball.

Input Costs

Question: Are there factors outside of inflation contributing to the increased cost of labor and materials that you anticipate for the next year?

Answer: The primary factors leading to our cost increases are truly inflationary ones—the costs of everything have gone up in recent years—and this has required us to ask for appropriations increases in FY 2025. Earlier, during the initial aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain bottlenecks were contributing a great deal to the inflationary pressures on the manufactured goods we rely on, such as paper produced domestically or overseas. There were a good 18-24 months during which it was challenging to find and maintain steady supplies of this core commodity.

Today, while the logistics challenges related to those shipments seem to have been ironed out, the costs of paper compared to several years ago remain higher. We suspect that may have more to do with the long-term trend of paper mills converting their operations from manufacturing paper for printing to manufacturing corrugated cardboard boxes to meet increased global demands for packaging for shippers.

One thing we are monitoring very closely at the current time is the situation at the Port of Baltimore to see what impacts shipping delays within the port caused by the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse might have on GPO supplies of key manufacturing materials. We haven't yet seen any price spikes or endured serious delays regarding commodities and products we rely on, but we certainly could as the Port of Baltimore handles so much international cargo bound for the Mid-Atlantic region.

Congressional Budget Office
Nonpartisan Analysis for the U.S. Congress



**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
FOR THE RECORD**

Following a Hearing on

**The Congressional Budget Office's
Request for Appropriations for
Fiscal Year 2025**

Conducted by the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

May 31 2024

On April 10, 2024, the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch of the House Committee on Appropriations convened a hearing at which Phillip L. Swagel, the Congressional Budget Office's Director, testified about the agency's appropriation request for fiscal year 2025.¹ After the hearing, Congressman LaTurner submitted questions for the record. This document provides CBO's answers. It is available at www.cbo.gov/publication/60236.

Boosting Outreach

Question. Mr. Swagel, when we met a few weeks ago, you indicated that CBO's requested increase is entirely for personnel-related expenses, including hiring nine new staff members.

Can you outline your vision for boosting outreach to Congressional staff and the media—and the role that additional staff would provide in that effort?

Answer. Of the nine new staff members that CBO is requesting for fiscal year 2025, one would be devoted to boosting outreach to Congressional staff and the press. That person would assist in a broad strategy to do the following:

- Enhance the outreach by CBO, especially at the start of each new Congress. The CBO Director and agency staff members regularly conduct outreach to Congressional committees and personal offices of Members of Congress to explain the agency's work, respond to questions, learn Members' interests, and solicit feedback. (In 2023, for example, the Director met with hundreds of Members either individually or in groups.) At the start of a Congress, there is a particular focus on that outreach, as part of the agency's efforts to identify legislative priorities and issues on the horizon, in addition to making the Congress aware of CBO as a resource. An additional staff member would enable the agency to do more of that outreach, particularly with personal offices.
- Find innovative ways to keep the Congress and public informed of CBO's work. Earlier this year, the agency launched a quarterly email newsletter, *CBO's Quarter in Review*, which is a roundup of the agency's most

recent publications and cost estimates in an accessible HTML format. CBO will continue to enhance such communications with the Congress and public, aiming to send more frequent email newsletters. An additional staff member would bolster that effort as well as the ongoing priority of looking to inform the Congress and the public better.

- Provide forums to learn about CBO's work. CBO's staff give presentations on Capitol Hill—some in collaboration with Congressional committees and the Congressional Research Service—about CBO's budget and economic projections and other topics. Those presentations allow CBO to explain its work and answer questions. An additional staff member would help organize more such presentations.

Making Cost Estimates More Understandable

Question. At the Legislative Branch hearing last year, we talked briefly about CBO's ability to answer questions about its cost estimates and modeling, and CBO's goal of increased transparency through additional materials supporting CBO's baseline projections and cost estimates.

What specific steps are you taking or do you plan to take to make your cost estimates more comprehensible for Congressional offices?

Answer. Over the past few years, CBO has undertaken several projects to enhance the clarity of its cost estimates, and the agency plans to build on those endeavors. Those projects primarily focused on reorganizing the contents of published cost estimates to emphasize, on the first page, key summary information about the bill's budgetary effects. This summer, CBO will begin posting that key information in HTML format, making it easier for staff to view it on their computers and mobile devices. In addition, the agency will continue to enhance the information it provides about how it prepares its cost estimates, focusing on explaining key assumptions and areas of uncertainty.

Besides those efforts, CBO has published three budget primers since April 2023 to help Congressional staff understand the federal budget process and the agency's role in preparing cost estimates:

- *CBO Describes Its Cost-Estimating Process*—The Congressional Budget Act requires CBO to prepare

1. See the testimony of Phillip L. Swagel, Director, Congressional Budget Office, before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch of the House Committee on Appropriations, *The Congressional Budget Office's Request for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025* (April 10, 2024), www.cbo.gov/publication/60002.

estimates of the cost of legislation at certain points in the legislative process. This primer describes how the agency prepares cost estimates.

- *CBO Explains How It Estimates Savings From Rescissions*—Rescissions are provisions of law that cancel budget authority previously provided to federal agencies before it would otherwise expire. The Congress can use rescissions, along with other legislative tools, to reduce federal spending. CBO provides estimates of the budgetary effects of proposed rescissions to support the Congress in enforcing budget rules. To produce those estimates, CBO considers several factors, which this primer explains.

- *CBO Explains Its Principles for Identifying Mandates in Legislation*—As required by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995, CBO examines some of the effects of federal legislation on state, local, and tribal governments and on private-sector entities by identifying what that act defines as mandates. This primer describes the principles that the agency follows to identify mandates in legislation.

CBO will ensure that its budget primers remain up to date and address the emerging needs of Congressional staff who are less familiar with the agency's cost estimates.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

WITNESS

J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF, UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. AMODEI. We will call this meeting of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch to order.

The reason for today's meeting is to hear the budget presentation of Chief Thomas Manger on the Capitol Police budget.

Chief, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF, U.S. CAPITOL POLICE

Chief MANGER. Thank you.

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for your continued support of the women and men of the United States Capitol Police.

The support from Congress has allowed the department to invest in critical aspects of its operation and address mission requirements of an increasing threat environment. I can confidently tell you that the Capitol is safer today than it was prior to January 6.

To support this mission, the department has prioritized staffing and the expansion of the training, policy, and administrative functions, all of which ensure the USCP is positioned to meet the demands of today and into the future.

The department continues to move forward and improve its operations. Earlier this year, the department formally implemented the reorganization plan approved by the committees. The new organization structure is designed to enhance program oversight and operational efficiencies in response to the recommendations by the Office of the Inspector General.

Specifically, the fiscal year 2025 budget reflects the department's three key budget drivers: protecting the Capitol complex, countering the increasing threat environment to ensure Member safety, and bolstering recruitment and retention.

Protecting the Capitol complex from threats while at the same time protecting Members, staff, and the public is a complex operation that requires planning, coordination, and investment in physical and technical security.

The department's 2025 budget also includes a request for no-year funding for the Congressional Continuity of Operations, or C-COOP. The major driver behind this request is the department's need for an independent, in-house response and deployment capability to allow it to respond to changing environments. This funding will allow the department to replicate the functions of the USCP Command Center at any C-COOP site to the fullest extent possible.

Our country is in the midst of a historical rise in threats. Over the past year, we have seen a dangerous rise in acts of violence against Members of Congress, their families, and staff. This changing landscape requires the department to take a proactive approach to threat investigations and Member protection by enhancing its intelligence-gathering and -sharing capabilities.

The number and increasing complexity of threats against Members requires acquisition of cutting-edge technology that can help the department navigate the increasingly sophisticated climate that the cyber universe provides to criminal actors. The fiscal year 2025 budget request is reflective of the department's constant need to stay one step ahead of those who seek to do harm.

A significant focus for the department centers on Members' security in their home States and districts. With funding provided by the Congress for the purpose of enhanced Member protection, the department created the Protective Intelligence Operations Center, or PIOC.

The PIOC serves as the department's fusion center by centralizing Member protection functions, to include investigations intake, air operations monitoring, the tracking of congressional details, intelligence analysis, and the department's newly created residential security program. This new protection model allows the department to increase its ability to protect Members whether they are in or away from the Capitol complex.

Our fiscal year 2025 budget also focuses heavily on increases to both sworn and civilian staffing. We are requesting \$642 million to fund salaries and benefits for 2,247 sworn employees and 583 civilian employees. This represents 75 percent of the department's total annual budget request.

One of the most critical aspects in protecting the campus, Members, staff, and visitors is the ability to utilize mutual aid from our law enforcement partners in the national capital region and throughout the country. This aid acts as a force multiplier for large-scale events at the Capitol or to assist protection of Members and their families when outside the national capital region. I would like to thank the committee and Congress for providing this vital funding.

Increasing the department's ranks continues to be a key priority. Given the increasing number of threats, it is not surprising that the bulk of our staffing efforts are focused on the continued expansion of the department's Protective Services Bureau, or PSB, which includes the Dignitary Protection Division.

With the support of Congress, the department's staffing levels have increased, but we still have more to do, especially as we work to right-size the organization and curb overtime.

There is more work to do, and we must do it within the context of a strategic, holistic, and deliberate strategy. Long-term strategies take time to develop and implement in a coordinated fashion. Working in close collaboration with the Congress, I am confident that our upward trajectory will continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Chief Manger follows:]

**Formal Statement of J. Thomas Manger,
Chief, United States Capitol Police**

before the

**Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
of the
United States House of Representatives**

April 10, 2024

HEARING:

U.S. Capitol Police FY 2025 Budget Hearing

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the United States Capitol Police (USCP or Department) budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. The Department greatly appreciates the Subcommittee's continued support of the women and men of the U.S. Capitol Police, who courageously carry out their duties of protecting the Members of Congress, the Capitol Complex, and the legislative process each and every day. The support of Congress has allowed the Department to invest in critical aspects of its operation and address the mission requirements of an increasing threat environment. I can confidently tell you that the Capitol is safer today than it was prior to January 6. We must continue this upward trajectory. To that end, the Department FY2025 budget request includes \$906 million to fulfill our mission.

The USCP mission is unlike any other. Protecting the Congress requires a 24/7, no-fail operation. Our teams work around the clock to staff doors, corridors, plazas, garages, and street corners; to protect Members of Congress in and outside of the Capitol Complex; to gather, analyze, and disseminate intelligence; to oversee physical and technical security measures; and to plan and respond to demonstrations. To support this mission the Department has prioritized staffing and the expansion of the training, policy, and administrative functions, all of which ensure the USCP is positioned to meet the demands of today and into the future.

The Department continues to move forward and improve its operations. Earlier this year, the Department formally implemented the reorganization plan approved by the Committees. The new organizational structure is a reflection of the Department's growth and transformation, and is designed to enhance program oversight and operational efficiencies in response to recommendations provided by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). For example, the Department's policy, audit, and training functions are now centralized under the new Assistant Chief of Police for Standards and Training Operations, and includes training liaisons that work in coordination with all Department components for maximum efficiency and accountability. Likewise, the reorganization established the Intelligence Services Bureau, fully centralizing functional oversight of intelligence analysis and streamlining information gathering and dissemination. The reorganization also established the Office of the Chief of Staff to manage the Howard C. Leibengood Center for Wellness, the Office of Accountability and Improvement, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and the Public Information Office. In short, the reorganization demonstrates the Department's continuing efforts to enhance its operating posture in a post-January 6 environment.

The Department's FY 2025 budget request reflects the need to keep pushing forward with our progress. It provides the resources needed to continue the modernization of internal operations and shift toward a more protective model of law enforcement. Specifically, the FY 2025 budget request reflects the Department's three key budget drivers:

1. protecting the Capitol Complex,
2. countering the increasing threat environment to ensure Member safety, and
3. bolstering recruitment and retention.

I will focus on each of these key areas in turn.

Capitol Complex Protection:

Protecting the Capitol Complex from threats while, at the same time protecting Members, staff, and the public, is a complex operation that requires planning, coordination, and investment in physical and technical security.

The Department's operational planning and coordination efforts continue to improve substantially following January 6. The Department's multi-phased approach to the event planning processes and the establishment of the Incident Action Plans (IAPs) for all large and high-profile events, was a major paradigm shift. The IAPs serve as a comprehensive blueprint for intelligence, operational, command, and communication plans. The Department also engages in inter-agency coordination calls before all large and high-profile events, pre- and post-event officer briefings, after-action reports, and other measures designed to improve overall coordination and efficiency. The Department's FY 2025 budget request will allow us to continue improvements to these planning and command and control coordination functions.

Ensuring the Department's physical and technical security capabilities are sufficiently staffed and state-of-the art is another key objective of the Department's efforts to increase the physical security of Members and the Capitol Complex. The Department must keep abreast of advancements in technology to ensure it can properly identify, monitor, and deter threats, whether they exist on the ground or in cyber space. Thus, the FY 2025 budget request provides the funding needed to invest in security planning, equipment, and technology upgrades.

The Department's FY 2025 budget also includes a request for no-year funding to support the Congressional Continuity of Operations (C-COOP). The major driver behind this request is the Department's need for an independent, in-house response and deployment capability to allow it to respond to changing environments, and, ultimately, to support our mission to protect Members of Congress. This funding will allow the Department to replicate the functions of the USCP Command Center at any C-COOP site to the fullest extent possible, to include a mobile capability to support the immediate use of command and control and Leadership Coordination Center requirements for Congressional leadership. This request also provides for Information Technology equipment to establish connectivity and radio communication capabilities, as well as physical security requirements including deployable screening equipment, mobile vehicle barriers, mobile kiosks, and deployable barriers. Through close coordination with the Capitol Police Board and other stakeholders, the Department's budget request reflects a multi-year strategy to develop and implement one aspect of this multi-faceted program. This request will ensure the appropriate flexibility to procure the equipment necessary to build out C-COOP initiatives and implement as each phase is ready.

Increasing Threat Climate

Our country is in the midst of an historical rise in threats that is flamed by the current climate of heated political rhetoric; it is both unprecedented and alarming. Over the past year, we have seen a dangerous rise in acts of violence against Members of Congress, their families, and staff. This changing landscape requires that the Department take a proactive approach to threats investigation and Member protection by enhancing its intelligence gathering and sharing

capabilities. The number and increasing complexity of threats against Members requires the acquisition of cutting-edge technology that can help the Department navigate the increasingly sophisticated climate the cyber universe provides to criminal actors. We need to identify and deter threats before they materialize. The FY 2025 budget request is reflective of the Department's constant need to stay one step ahead of those who seek to do you harm.

A significant focus for the Department centers on Member security in their home states and districts. With funding provided by Congress for the purpose of enhanced member protection, the Department created the Protective Intelligence Operations Center (PIOC). The PIOC serves as the Department's fusion center by centralizing Member protection functions, to include investigations intake, air operations monitoring, the tracking of Congressional details, intelligence analysis, and the Department's newly created residential security program. This new protection model allows the Department to increase its ability to protect Members whether they are in or away from the Capitol Complex.

Recruitment and Retention:

When I joined the Department nearly three years ago, I recognized that staffing was a critical vulnerability. In fact, the Department had been understaffed for years. It took January 6 and the pandemic to make that clear. I immediately took action to maximize our capacity to hire and train new recruits to build the Department's bench strength, and I am proud of what we have accomplished to date. The Department simply cannot operate without the women and men who protect, serve, and support our mission, day in and day out. They are tough, resilient, and committed. I cannot emphasize that enough.

Thus, our FY 2025 budget request focuses heavily on increases to both sworn and civilian staffing levels. We are requesting \$642 million to fund salaries and benefits for 2,247 sworn employees and 583 civilian employees. This represents approximately 75 percent of the Department's total annual budget request and includes funding to cover items such as overtime costs and to support the Department's student loan repayment program.

As we approach the next election, the Department's staffing posture could not be more critical. The demands on our staff have already accelerated as we prepare for upcoming conventions and Member campaigns, while simultaneously handling an increasing workload as we investigate and deter threats, plan and coordinate large-scale events, and deploy specialty units to manage demonstrations – all while protecting Congress, staff, and the public on a daily basis. But our efforts are paying off and we are on the right track. Indeed, the Inspector General noted in a recent report that the Department has improved internal and external coordination of major events with an enhanced emphasis on inter-agency crisis management.

One of the most critical aspects in protecting the Campus, Members, staff and visitors is the ability to utilize mutual aid from our law enforcement partners in the National Capitol Region (NCR) and throughout the country. This aid acts as a force multiplier for large scale events at the Capitol, or to assist in the protection of Members and their families when outside of the NCR. I would like to thank this Committee and the Congress for providing the vital funding

for the USCP to reimburse agencies who assist the Department by supplying mutual aid and look forward to working with the Committee to extend this critical tool.

Increasing the Department's ranks continues to be a key priority, for both sworn and civilian personnel. The FY 2025 budget request emphasizes the centrality of this objective to the Department's overall strategic plan. Given the increasing number of threats, it is not surprising that the bulk of our staffing efforts are focused on the continued expansion of the Department's Protective Services Bureau, or PSB, which includes the Dignitary Protection Division. As threats to Members of Congress, their families, and staff continue to dominate our attention, the Department has been forced to shift resources to support threat-based protective details, Congressional events outside of the U.S. Capitol grounds, residential security assignments, and Member escort details. These efforts cannot succeed without increased funding.

We have made—and continue to make—good use of the funding Congress has provided to us thus far. Specific, new initiatives to increase our PSB ranks include a program to recruit lateral, entry-level, and reemployed annuitants. The program provides a direct path for external applicants to fill Special Agent or Investigator positions. While the Department continues to hire from within, this new recruitment campaign has provided another mechanism to increase staffing levels across all operational areas by expanding the scope of our applicant pool. The Department's FY 2025 budget request reflects this new hiring strategy and includes funding to support an increase of 126 Special Agents, half through these new, external hiring initiatives and half through internal selection.

While the Department's efforts to expand staffing are robust and remain our number one priority, we, like other law enforcement agencies, face challenges recruiting qualified personnel. Nation-wide, law enforcement agencies are experiencing record levels of attrition. Compounding the problem is the fact that officers hired during the post-9/11 surge are now eligible – or required – to retire. In addition to the new hiring initiatives described above, the Department's budget provides funding to continue our strategy of hiring and training 288 new recruits every year to increase sworn capabilities within Uniformed Operations. Equally important to the Department's efforts to maintain its operational posture are the administrative and support functions that are the backbone of the Department. Without an adequately staffed administrative infrastructure, particularly in the Offices of Human Resources and Information Services, the Department's operational mission cannot be maintained, much less enhanced.

With the support of Congress, the Department's staffing levels have increased, but we still have more to do, especially as we work to right-size the organization and curb overtime to support more sustainable work-life balances for our workforce. A key element of this effort came in FY 2023, when the USCP, at the request of Congress, hired an outside vendor to conduct an extensive, Department-wide analysis of the five pillars that make up the organization—mission, staffing, structure, training, and technology. The result was the Concept of Operations report, which was delivered at the end of February of this year. The Concept of Operations report provides 30 recommendations, as well as a valuable framework and implementation roadmap that will allow the Department to develop a model for integrated decision making and strategic planning to better inform future operations and resource requirements. The Department is currently in the process of evaluating the recommendations to

consider which to implement and how. While this work is ongoing, the Department has included funding in the FY 2025 budget request to build the initial infrastructure in three areas—staffing, training, and technology—that closely align with USCP initiatives already underway.

Conclusion:

The events of January 6 shifted the Department's priorities and accelerated the timeline for executing them. The Department and its workforce have risen to meet the evolving demands placed on the USCP in recent years. From addressing over 95% of the OIG January 6 recommendations, to implementing the reorganization, to developing innovative hiring strategies, the Department has made great strides. None of this would have been possible without the support of this subcommittee.

However, as I stated at the outset, we are not done. There is more work to do. And we must do it within the context of a strategic, holistic, and deliberate strategy. Long term strategies take time to develop and implement in a coordinated fashion. Working in close collaboration with the Congress, I am confident that our upward trajectory will continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.



UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

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United States Capitol Police FY 2025 Budget Request

Mission Statement

The United States Capitol Police (USCP or Department) is unique among federal law enforcement agencies. It protects the U.S. Capitol, Members of Congress (internationally and domestically), their staff, visitors, dignitaries, and the legislative process. USCP Police officers patrol a campus that is open to the public and is visited by an estimated 7 to 10 million visitors from around the globe every year. The women and men of the USCP handle this mission with resilience and commitment.

In the immediate aftermath of January 6, 2021, the Department concentrated on triaging the operational priorities identified in the various Inspector General, congressional, and third-party audits of the organization. As a result of these efforts, the Department is more prepared than ever to serve our mission to protect the Congress – its Members, employees, visitors, and facilities – so it can fulfill its constitutional and legislative responsibilities in a safe, secure and open environment. With the support of Congress, the Department has implemented enhanced planning efforts to support coordination and communication of large and high-profile events; expanded intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination to mitigate increasingly sophisticated threats; published new policies and standard operating procedures to bolster internal controls; and established a new organizational structure to enhance operational efficiency throughout the Department.

To continue with this forward progress, the Department's FY 2025 budget request includes funding to protect the Capitol Complex, counter the increasing threat environment to ensure Member safety, and bolster recruitment and retention. With increasing threats and directions of interest toward Members of Congress, and demonstration activity on the rise, the Department must continue to fund the critical investments needed to reinforce our security posture.

Among the most pressing priorities for the Department is to increase staffing – both sworn and civilian. The Department's multi-year strategy to curb attrition and begin to right-size staffing is reflected in the FY 2025 budget request. With increased resources, the Department is better positioned to support threat-based protective details, Congressional events outside of the U.S. Capitol grounds, residential security assignments, and Member escort details; event planning and coordination, demonstrations, and security services on the Capitol grounds; intelligence research and analysis; and critical administrative support functions.

The FY 2025 budget request furthers the Department's transition to a more protective model of policing. With the results of the Concept of Operations report directed by Congress, the Department intends to continue on this path with an updated strategic plan that will allow the Department to develop a model for integrated decision making and strategic planning to better inform future operations and resource requirements.

United States Capitol Police					
Five Year Budget Summary					
\$ in Millions	FY 2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025**
Salaries and Benefits	424,397	468,861	538,280	588,627	642,154
General Expenses	87,505	133,648	186,818	202,846	214,815
Total Annual*	511,902	602,509	725,098	791,473	856,969
% change	10%	18%	20%	9%	8%
Multi-Year Salary			3,450		
Multi-Year GE			6,028		
No-Year	3,639				49,396
Grand Total***	515,541	602,509	734,576	791,473	906,365
FTE (authorized)	2,584	2,624	2,693	2,693	2,830
% change	0%	2%	3%	0%	5%
*Annual Appropriation (excludes multi-year / no-year)					
**Budget Request					
***Grand Total (does not include \$106.860M Supplemental Funds received in FY21)					

Budget Drivers:

The Department's Salaries and Benefits makes up approximately 75 percent of the total annual budget. This category funds personnel salaries and benefits, along with overtime and workers compensation, and is the primary driver of the Department's increased budget request. Cost increases year-over-year are attributed to cost of living pay adjustments, OPM benefits adjustments, within-grade increases and promotions, and overtime.

In FY 2025, the Department's budget supports efforts to continue to increase sworn and civilian staffing levels. The Department uses a zero-base budget approach to establish the funding requirements included in the budget request. This ensures funding is not overstated. For the FY 2025 Salaries and Benefits request, the Department used FY 2023 end-of-year actual FTE levels as a baseline to establish its FY 2025 request, which includes increases for new hires with assumptions for attrition.

The FY 2025 annual General Expense budget request reflects an increase above FY 2024 enacted funding levels, primarily due to enhanced technology and physical security programs.

Note: In FY 2025, the Department is requesting no-year General Expense funding in the amount of \$49.4 million to support the Congressional Continuity of Operations (C-COOP). This funding is in addition to the annual funding reflected above and provides for an independent, in-house response and deployment capability to allow it to respond to changing environments, and, ultimately, to support our mission to protect Members of Congress.

Mr. AMODEI. Thanks, Chief.

I now recognize the ranking member, Mr. Espallat, for his opening statement.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Chief, for presenting before us today.

As you know, Members, our colleagues, have been subject right here in DC to carjackings and other criminal activity. And at our district-office level and back home, our colleagues and staff and our colleagues' family members are subject to danger and threats. There has been an escalating number of protests both at our district offices and our homes. The New York Times just recently had an article about the level of activity in the department.

And so we are concerned that the safety of our family members and ourselves, staff, and our constituencies are at stake, both here locally, in our district offices, and in our homes. This has escalated, right? And I am glad that you all feel that—confidently feel that the campus is safer now, but the level of threat has escalated. And I don't think no one can deny here that it is nasty out there, right?

So what measures have you taken to ensure that our family members are safe at home, that right here in DC our Members are safer, and that our district offices are secure?

Chief MANGER. So, I think, let me talk about here in the DC area first.

We just recently met with the chief of the Metropolitan Police Department to talk about the possibility of the Capitol Police expanding its extended jurisdiction zone.

Right now, we have full authority beyond the Capitol complex, and when we identify places where—buildings where you have, you know, a dozen or 20 or 30 Members living in that building, we feel like we should be patrolling that building often, that if we hear anything occurring in or around that building, that we should be able to respond.

So, here in the city, we understand that when somebody walks off the campus, we can't just say, "Well, they are on their own." We want to take full responsibility to try and continue to provide safety and security in terms of responding to calls for service. If we hear a 911 call come out, we are going to respond.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Do you have a process at the airport? Because I remember maybe 3 or 4 weeks ago Mr. Quigley ran right by me, and I guess he realized he was at the wrong gate or the wrong terminal, and he ran right past me again. And I think he missed his flight.

Right?

Mr. QUIGLEY. Yeah.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. But, you know, Mr. Quigley was by himself there. And, you know, I tried to get his attention, because maybe I could have assisted him, but, you know, he was just, you know, focused on not missing his flight. But he was by himself.

Chief MANGER. Yes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And the airport, as we know, on January 6—on January 7, the day after January 6, some of our colleagues were accosted and threatened at the airport.

Do you have a permanent at the airport? Or do you have a booth or a center of operation there?

I think it requires—the airport now has expanded a little bit, and I think that it is an area where we are all subject to threats.

Chief MANGER. Yes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And I believe we need greater presence of you there.

Chief MANGER. I agree.

And so, you know, we are doing more when folks are here in the national capital region. We also are doing more and want to do more when Members are on travel. And so we have people at Dulles, National, and BWI.

You can work through the House Sergeant at Arms to get one of our officers to meet you at the airport if you need an escort.

And then the third leg of that stool is to provide additional protection when people are at home, both in their home districts and their home residence. And so we have programs that are expanding—and we are asking for additional money to expand them further—for residential security as well as increased air operation security and just better patrols and better response to folks when they are here in the District.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Let me suggest that I believe that, whatever outfit you have at the airport, it should be visible, because deterrence is a big factor, right? And if people don't see you there, if they don't see a booth there, if they don't see a physical presence there, they just may think that you are not there at all, and the level of threat may go up.

Chief MANGER. Well, but if they don't see the Member there, because the Member is getting escorted by one of our officers, that helps too.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Yeah, but not every Member is going to be escorted. And I remember back when—do you remember, Mr. Amodei, when they had the 8-tracks on the car, you know, that you would take——

Mr. AMODEI. No, I am too young for that.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. You know——

Mr. AMODEI. Yes, I do.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I remember that one of the modus operandi of the criminal element was to go to funeral services, because people will be distracted, right? They lost a loved one, and on many occasions they would leave their car door open, and they would just come in and take the 8-track because we were distracted.

I think that we are distracted at the airport, because we want to get to that flight. And, as a result, not everybody is going to be escorted by the police. And we don't know who the general public may be, but they know who we are, whether we like it or not, right?

And so I think there needs to be a greater presence in the airport, that I say, "Wow, you know, Capitol Police is here. I am not going to try anything crazy."

Chief MANGER. I agree.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

Chief MANGER. And we try and accommodate—everybody that requests an escort, we try and accommodate them.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I am done, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

The gentlelady from Oklahoma, Mrs. Bice.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Chief, for being with us this morning. And thanks to you and all of your officers for what you do every day to keep Members of Congress safe.

I want to start by—you mentioned patrolling not only the Capitol complex but areas adjacent to it, particularly those that have a large number of Members living in them.

Do you think that your communication with agencies located within the DC metropolitan area, whether it is Metro PD, National Guard, or others, do you believe that that has improved since January 6?

Chief MANGER. Absolutely.

And just as an example, MPD stood up a real-time crime center just weeks ago, and we have a person assigned to that real-time crime center. So, if anything happens in or around the Capitol complex, we are right there. And they have access to cameras and a host of other resources so that we can ensure the best response to anything that we would get involved with.

Mrs. BICE. I worry, because we have seen an increase in crime in the metropolitan area, that—and we have seen carjackings. We have seen one of our colleagues attacked in an elevator in her building. We have seen staff assaulted, mugged. You know, I am glad to know that you are there. I think that we are concerned it is not enough sometimes because of all of the things that we are seeing. But I want you to know that I appreciate that, and I am glad to hear that there is a lot more collaboration.

In the documentation that you provided, it lists that there are going to be 542 civilian employees of United States Capitol Police. Can you describe what those roles would be?

Chief MANGER. So, many of them are operational support roles. Many of them are—basically create our infrastructure.

You know, we have been bringing on record numbers of new officers, and this doesn't just happen without the folks working in our human resources and doing background checks and all of those things.

But we are also looking at opportunities to supplement our operations folks by hiring folks that are in civilian positions that can assist our operations folks.

I mean, you know, there was a time when we had police officers at posts, where now we have civilian contract security, because they are only dealing with people that have already been screened, and do you really need a police officer there? Couldn't you better use a police officer somewhere else?

So it is a range of positions, but civilians are a very valuable part of our organization.

Mrs. BICE. Can you talk a little bit about retention? I know in previous hearings we have talked about the fact that it was becoming difficult to retain officers, particularly those that may be, you know, inching towards retirement. Can you talk a little bit about what you have been able to do to impact the retention rate of your officers?

Chief MANGER. Two big things that had an immediate impact. One was the fact that I got a waiver for the 57 year old age limit

and I bumped it up to 60. Frankly, if I could, I would bump it up to even higher than that, but I am limited by statute.

But we also have—and this was vitally important when right after January 6 we saw the number of people leaving the department, and so you all funded us for retention bonuses that we got officers to sign that said if they got this retention bonus they would stay for an additional year.

I know there was some discussion about, well, you know, we have had retention bonuses for the last couple years; I mean, you know, how long are we going to do this? And my response was, this is not the year to change the retention bonus. I mean, we need for people to stay for the conventions, for the election, for next January 6, for the inauguration, and beyond. So we will do another retention bonus with the fiscal year 2024 money since it just got approved.

But it is not just the retention bonus and the hiring that we are doing—we have 12 academy classes per year. That is 288 new recruit officers coming in. We are ahead of attrition now. Even if this year we lose—and it is probably close to 200 that we will lose through retirement or other reasons people leave. But if we are hiring 288, we are still ahead.

And we have been ahead—for the last 3 years, we have gotten ahead of attrition, and we are going to continue to do that.

Mrs. BICE. I think that is the best news I have heard.

So, Chief, thank you for what you are doing for the Capitol complex and certainly for Members and staff here.

And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

Before we go to the gentleman from Illinois, the record should be clear that the ranking member's discussion about his athletic ability at National Airport was not germane to the Capitol Police and that there are some of us that still think he has got his game.

And, with that, the chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you very much for that, Mr. Chairman.

Chief, I was in the Chamber on January 6. And before—we were the last ones to exit. I heard a colleague say after a gunshot, "So when does the 'blankety-blank' cavalry get here?" It never came.

So, regardless of where a threat like that would come in the future, foreign or domestic, what is the plan for a threat that would require additional resources to come in quickly?

Chief MANGER. So we have more resources within the Capitol Police, but we have already started—we started this months ago—planning for the election, next January 6, the inauguration. We already have committed hundreds of police officers from allied organizations, and by the time we get to those dates, we could have thousands of trained law enforcement officers—trained, equipped law enforcement officers.

So the cavalry will be here on site for all the big events that we have coming—

Mr. QUIGLEY. If it is not a big event, how do you get—

Chief MANGER. We still—now, we won't have thousands, but we typically will have two or three outside agencies that provide trained Civil Disturbance Unit officers.

If we know we are going to have a demonstration of 10,000, 20,000 people—you know, we have had 100,000 people for some of the marches. And we have our own folks, again, many more of our own folks that are trained and equipped, but we also have the allied agencies that have been very helpful.

And the only reason—well, it is not the only reason, but—the reason that they are here and they keep coming back is because of the funding that we get every year to reimburse them for their services. And that funding is critical, as I pointed out in my earlier testimony.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Do you see a time or a set of circumstances in which you would need the National Guard? And is there a different understanding and agreement with them now?

Chief MANGER. We have a new procedure, and you probably are aware that one of the legislative changes that were made immediately after the 6 was that I now have the authority to call and request the National Guard. I don't need to get anybody's approval; I can do that myself.

I have talks with the National Guard on an ongoing basis. I will tell you that the National Guard is terrific, but what I really need is trained, equipped law enforcement officers who are trained in crowd control, civil disturbance. And those—again, if we need it, we will have thousands of those on our campus.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And part of the reason I ask these, I want Members and the public to be able to hear your answers.

Before I went into the Chamber on that morning, I looked out on the east side, and there was a large group there of people who would be involved in this attack. And I saw three Capitol Police officers at that point, and they were in baseball caps.

So if you could detail just how better equipped—so we don't put our officers in danger like that again.

Chief MANGER. So every single one of our officers, all of our officers, all 2,000-plus of our officers, have new, state-of-the-art Civil Disturbance Unit equipment. And, by the way, it is actually available to them, whereas on the 6 it wasn't available to everybody the way it should have been. So all—

Mr. QUIGLEY. And what does that—and I am sorry—what does that mean? It was stored away someplace?

Chief MANGER. Yes. And a lot of the equipment was so old it was expired. So that problem was one of the first things that was remedied. And so everybody has new equipment; everybody has been trained with that equipment.

And, again, there is no—if every single one of our officers who is CDU-trained and has the training and equipment we would mobilize, we still might need more. And whether it is getting, you know, another thousand cops from MPD or whether it is getting another thousand cops from the neighboring agencies that we work with all the time, we will have adequate staffing here to handle whatever needs to be handled.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And those additional coming in will have access to the same equipment?

Chief MANGER. They bring their own equipment, yes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. But we know they have it?

Chief MANGER. And we train with them. I mean, they—

Mr. QUIGLEY. OK.

Chief MANGER. So we, throughout the year, we have—they are here often enough that we take advantage of that, that we actually train with them as well.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you so much.

I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Franklin.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chief, kind of, I was processing what you were just talking about there. And, first off, I just want to preface with, I appreciate, sincerely appreciate, everything you and the department do. The scope and scale of the threat that you all are facing, that we are facing as Members, continues to grow, and I certainly recognize that.

We are in budget season, so this is a budget drill, and I am just trying to understand the numbers that you presented to us. And I saw in the remarks that this is derived through a zero-budget basis. So, basically, you are starting from scratch and justifying every dollar that is in there. So I appreciate the science behind that.

I do want to talk a little about overtime. For the current year, I think, fiscal year 2024, we were looking at about, what, \$74.9 million in overtime, was what was in the budget, I think, for fiscal year 2024.

This coming year, for 2025, you are asking for \$87.37 million, about 10 percent of the total budget. That is a very specific number. I am just interested in how you get to that.

And as we were just talking about, if you augment the force with officers from other areas, is that factoring into overtime? Or is this overtime specifically your officers that are on—

Chief MANGER. No, this is—the overtime is for our officers.

And you can look at the assignments that you know are going to have the highest overtime rates. An example of that is our Dignitary Protection Division. We are woefully understaffed there, have been, in my view, for many, many years.

When we get the protection detail staffed to the level they should be, we will eliminate the officers who are working double shifts, working 16 hours a day, for weeks at a time. But you do that by saying, well, you don't have 5 people on the detail, you have 10 people, so that you can actually—people can work regular shifts, get days off, which now is not working as well as it should, which results in this massive overtime.

We are still understaffed in terms—this department has always been staffed for, well, how many posts do you need? OK. Well, we can fill all the posts. But then when we have demonstrations, multiple demonstrations, at different buildings, then you have to have people respond to them. And we had one yesterday where we ended up making, I don't know, I think it was over 50 arrests.

And, you know, we have to pull people off posts, oftentimes, to be able to handle those kinds of situations. When you pull people off post, then you have to draft somebody or hold somebody over on overtime, because you can't just leave a post empty.

So, as long as we keep doing that, that is our modus operandi, we are not going to be able to bring the overtime to a level where it is more manageable.

It is great for—look, there comes a time when overtime is a better way to deal with things than hiring more people. But we are at a point where we need to right-size our staffing so that overtime is more manageable. And that is our challenge.

Mr. FRANKLIN. So, now, do I read correctly that you are looking to increase the FTEs by about 5 percent?

Chief MANGER. Well, I don't—

Mr. FRANKLIN. And I guess my question is—you know, that is a tremendous amount of overtime and a massive jump from—I didn't know if maybe some of that projection for the coming year is because of the inauguration and concerns around the transition, potentially, during administrations or if that is just a more accurate representation of what you have been responding to currently.

Chief MANGER. So, thankfully, we don't have conventions every year, but I will tell you this: Because we send hundreds of officers—we will send hundreds of officers to Chicago; we will send hundreds of officers to Milwaukee. You know, if we take 200 or 300 officers off the campus, that is going to result in overtime that goes through the roof. That is going to be a challenge this year.

So we are not staffed to a point where—training is another thing. I mean, you know, I am sure I will get questions about, you know, well, you have to train these officers, you know, this person got trained, this person needs training, we haven't gone yet. Every time we send 30 officers to take a training class for a week, I have to find 30 people who are either off or, you know, we are going to hold them over—and, again, this is all on overtime—so that we can meet the minimum staffing levels that we need to operate.

So all this goes to the point that we need to right-size our staffing. And I don't know if your 5 percent—I know that we are looking to hire 288 new recruits, as we do every year. I know that we have—if you look at the overtime just in our Dignitary Protection, if you look at the—I think the number was somewhere around \$247,000 in overtime in our Dignitary Protection. That equates to over 100 special agents.

And so, if you want to get the overtime to a more manageable level, you are talking about adding, you know, more than a 5-percent increase in the staffing just to impact that overtime.

Mr. FRANKLIN. OK. Well, I appreciate that.

I know I am out of time. I would like to hear more at a point about the C-COOP request, and I just struggle to get my head around that.

I do appreciate Mr. Quigley's point, too, and your amplification that—you know, I hear frequently back home, you know, why wasn't the Guard there in more force? People do need to understand that Guard troops are not trained to do this mission, and your folks are, and there is a tremendous difference there. And I think that is under-appreciated.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

We are next going to go to the gentlewoman from Virginia, who, for those of you watching online, is doing a masterful job of using technology to help her participation in this hearing. And so, if it doesn't sound like Ms. Wexton, it really is, via her technology assistance.

And so the floor is yours, Ms. Wexton.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As most of you now know, last year I was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy, or PSP. I describe it as "Parkinson's on steroids," and I don't recommend it. PSP makes it very difficult for me to speak, so I use an assistive app so that I can participate and you can understand me.

I want to thank the chair and ranking member for allowing me to do both today.

Chief Manger, thank you for being here. It is always a pleasure to see you.

As you are aware, one of the things I am most proud of during my time in Congress is the progress we have made to get Capitol Police greater mental health resources, especially through the Liebengood Center for Wellness, which is named after my constituent Howie Liebengood. The resources at the center are extremely important for the hundreds of officers who are already utilizing them.

I have some questions for you regarding the Liebengood Center and its impact. Can you tell us about how you are currently tracking officer utilization and satisfaction with the center?

Chief MANGER. So we are tracking the use, and it is getting increasingly used as we staff up and provide more and more services. We are hiring counselors, and it is—I am really pleased with the way things are going.

As you know, Dr. Liebengood, Howie's wife, Howie's widow, remains involved and certainly very invested, professionally and personally, and it benefits of the wellness center, and we continue to expand the services.

So I am very pleased with what is going on over there.

And I am sorry, I think I am missing part of the question.

Ms. WEXTON. What, if any, plans and goals do you have for the center over the next year?

Chief MANGER. So we want to continue to get it fully staffed. And we want to make sure that we continue to remove any stigma that anybody—that the department might have that would make someone hesitant to use the services there.

We do, in fact, do surveys so that we can get feedback from folks that are using it. People can give confidential feedback about the services they get and maybe why or why not in terms of using the services.

So we will continue to do that and, again, continue to fully staff the center. And our director, Rachel Kaul, is just doing a terrific job.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you. She is.

As always, it was a pleasure.

And I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

Chief, just briefly, for Members and staff who may not be familiar, could you just, without telling any secrets, tell us who your team is here today with you?

Chief MANGER. I don't know these people. No, I am kidding.

Mr. AMODEI. That is what I thought. So I am just trying to help you out.

Chief MANGER. No, I am blessed to have an amazing staff, and I dearly love these folks.

Cherry Clipper, our chief financial officer; Magdalena Boynton, our chief administrative officer; Tad DiBiase, my general counsel; Dawn Stalter, who is the deputy CAO; Assistant Chief Jason Bell; my new assistant chief, who we stole from MPD, Ashan Benedict; my assistant chief, Sean Gallagher; and the FOP president, Gus Papathanasiou.

Mr. AMODEI. Great. Thank you.

A couple of followups.

A lot of Members have asked questions, and rightfully so, about how are you going to react, what is the deal, what are you doing at the airport—you know, all those sort of operational things.

One of the things—we had the Comptroller General in earlier today talking about his budget and things like that. And one of the things that came up was, they had prepared a report, you know, on January 6 saying, hey, here is what—and one of the things in that was talking about intelligence. In other words, you know, what did we know? When did we know it? Did we talk to anybody? Did anybody else talk to us? So this isn't all focused on your organization.

But could you describe, without telling any secrets, just how that intelligence-gathering and also, you know, crosshatching with all the other intelligence agencies—how you have changed from what happened in the spin-up to that to, this is how we synthesize intelligence? Because, obviously, how you do that helps you figure out when to call who or not and what to call for.

So could you give us a little update on how that mission has evolved as a result of January 6?

Chief MANGER. So it is night and day from what it is today compared to what it was pre-January 6. That was one of the first operations that we knew we needed to invest in because of how critically important it is.

So the way we gather intelligence—I mean, we have folks out in the entire region. We are connected to agencies—all Federal agencies, but we are also connected to other police departments. Chief Benedict and I just were up at NYPD a couple weeks ago, where we talked to their chief of intelligence to make sure that we had the right connections there. NYPD, there is no other police agency in the world that has—local police agency—that has their intelligence capabilities. They are, in fact, worldwide.

So we have plugged people in. We have U.S. Capitol Police employees that are sitting in joint operations centers, that are sitting in other agencies, so that we immediately get that information.

But we are also doing two things that weren't being done very well before, in my view. We are analyzing that information to see what is credible and what operational strategies we need to put into place. But we are also sharing that information, which we didn't do very well, pre-January 6. We are sharing that with our own folks on a daily basis. Real-time, they are getting our intel. They all got—you remember, we talked before—they all got phones, and we push intel information out to them every day. And we also are sharing information with our partners nationwide.

And the numbers of people, the number of analysts, the number of folks that we have plugged into the other agencies, is a real indication of how big our operation is becoming.

Mr. AMODEI. OK.

And, then, as a follow-up to that: So can you describe, within your organization, who takes all that data on a daily basis or whatever and gets together and sits down and goes, OK, do we think we have a problem here or do we not think we have a problem?

And if we are not sure but we want to make sure we are not surprised, who synthesizes that within your organization? Not who by name, obviously. But I assume there is some sort of evaluation group that says: "Hey, I think we have a problem next Thursday. Let's ramp up in case we do. Blah, blah, blah".

Describe that function for me, if you would, please.

Chief MANGER. So our analysts do the bulk of that work, but they don't pretend to know exactly what we should do operationally. So they make sure we have all the information—that our operational folks have all the information they need to make the operational decisions.

We have an intelligence analysis report that comes out every single day, and all of us get it. And I think it is primarily Chief Gallagher and our operational folks that are looking at that and say, OK, we know what is going to happen tomorrow, we know what is going to happen next week, and we start planning for those operations.

And calls get made to our allied agencies for mutual aid. The notices get put out to our officers that, you know, we are going to restrict leave for this weekend because of this event.

So we start immediately, as soon as we get the information, to plan to make sure we have everything we need for when that event occurs.

Mr. AMODEI. Thank you.

And then, finally, could you talk a little bit for our record in terms of the cost—not the specifics or giving away any secrets—the cost of those protection details and compare them with other protection detail missions that are not in the Capitol Police?

I think in the discussions that this committee has had before, it is not like the old days where you have a dozen people that are, you know, hey, the Speaker is going somewhere, or the Minority Leader is going somewhere, and there you go, and go get them.

If you could put a little bit of information on the record as to how that mission has evolved and not shrunk.

Chief MANGER. First of all, we have two people who are in the line of succession for the Presidency who are Members of Congress.

Mr. AMODEI. For the record, none of them are on this committee, so don't anybody—

Mr. QUIGLEY. Amen.

Chief MANGER. But when you look at the level of protection that these folks get and then go compare it to the Vice President. You have got the Speaker of the House. You have got the president pro tem in the Senate. Well, then you have got the Secretary of State. If you look at the—just let's look at the Secretary of State's detail, which is three times as big as any detail we have. And they are further down the line of succession.

So, clearly, we are not—in my view and, I think, in the view of the department, we know we have to expand the protection for the individuals that are in the line of succession, which means it is not only 24/7 when they are here, it is wherever they are, it is wherever they travel to.

But it is 24/7 at their home, it is 24/7 here. We can't just go back to the days when we say, well, we will just follow them around and we will make sure they are well protected wherever they are. Because their homes, their family are at risk, and we can't just all of a sudden not be watching 24/7 every place they live.

So that is just common sense. And we have to get to that point and keep at that point. And so you are going to see in this year's budget—in fiscal year 2025, fiscal year 2026, and fiscal year 2027, you are going to see us building the kind of protection details that we need for the level of threats that we are dealing with today.

Mr. AMODEL. OK.

And then the final one for me is: I know you have your—and I say this term with affection—your bean-counter here. Could you provide the committee, in the context of the budget request, say, hey, here is magic stuff because it is a Presidential election year, which means here are convention costs we didn't have times two, here are—whatever those costs are, to say, yeah, you have got an increase in funding, but this is attributable to doing this, this, and that, which is the every-4-years stuff, just so when that number is being digested, we can have a point of reference to go, this piece of that pie is because it is a Presidential election year, with all that goes with it?

Chief MANGER. We can provide that to you, yes. And I don't have it off the top of my head, but I just know that it is one of those things where it is a massive undertaking for us and it will impact our ability to keep the overtime in check this year.

Mr. AMODEL. Right.

And then, finally, the gentleman from Georgia, who is enthusiastically in attendance at this point in time, the floor is yours.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry I had to step out. Another committee hearing. That is the way it goes here, I guess.

Well, first off, Chief Manger, thank you. And I want to give my utmost appreciation to all the officers of the Capitol Police, who work day-in and day-out to ensure the safety of the legislative process, the Capitol Hill buildings, Members of Congress, staff, and visitors to Capitol Hill.

So, again, thank you, sir.

Chief MANGER. Thank you.

Mr. CLYDE. In recent years, the radical, pro-criminal DC City Council has systemically gutted the Metropolitan Police budget, amended the DC criminal code to allow violent criminals to be sentenced with no jail time, and attempted to lower maximum sentences for violent crime like carjackings, robberies, rapes, and even homicides.

The DC Council's pro-crime policies were so bad that, last year, Congress had to step in and enact H.J. Res. 26, my resolution of disapproval, that overturned the council's pro-violent-criminal legislation that threatened the well-being of the Washington city resi-

dents and visitors alike. Even President Biden felt the pressure and signed the legislation into law.

Despite this win, the DC City Council is still reaping the rewards of its systematic catering to criminals in our Nation's capital. During a time when violent crime has declined nationwide, our country's capital city saw violent crime shoot up 39 percent in 2023. And, last year, there were nearly 1,000 reported incidents of carjacking, more than six times the number of incidents that were reported in 2019.

Since last year, the start of the 118th Congress, we have had a Member physically assaulted in an elevator in her Washington, DC, apartment building; one carjacked at gunpoint outside his apartment building less than a mile from where we sit today. Numerous congressional staffers and reporters have been victimized across Washington, including in the neighboring Capitol Hill and Navy Yard communities.

So, Chief Manger, how does the United States Capitol Police track and investigate violent criminal activity perpetrated against Members of Congress and their staff when the crime occurs off the Capitol campus?

Chief MANGER. So we do keep track of that. We provide any assistance we can to MPD. They are typically the lead agency.

But one of the things that I talked about earlier—I think it was during the time when you were not here—is the fact that we are working in our extended jurisdiction zone, which goes almost to Navy Yard—I would like to expand it to cover Navy Yard here we are patrolling, we are responding to 911 calls when we are out there, and we are assisting MPD whenever we can.

We are paying close attention to the areas where we have a lot of Members live. And while we have plenty of things to do here on campus, when we hear an assault call come out at Union Station or, you know—we know that there is every chance it could be a staffer, someone that was visiting here, or even a Member.

And so we are trying to take a greater role in terms of patrol and response in and around the Capitol complex, you know, beyond our extended jurisdiction.

And the one other thing I will say is that we also want to look at congressional events. Like, when we have the Congressional Baseball Game, the softball game that we have jurisdiction, we have responsibility, so that we don't have to wait and call MPD, that we can take immediate action on those things.

So we are working with the District to try and get that worked out so that we can have a greater role in terms of protecting our folks in and around this area.

Mr. CLYDE. OK.

Other than Navy Yard, is there any other area where you would prefer extended jurisdiction?

Chief MANGER. I could get you that. I mean, I know Assistant Chief Benedict can—

Mr. CLYDE. I would love to see that.

Chief MANGER. Yeah, we can get you the—we have a map that shows a little heat area where most of the Members live. So we are looking to see if we can assist in those areas.

Mr. CLYDE. OK.

Have you noticed a noticeable increase in criminal activity perpetrated against Members of Congress in the last year or two?

Chief MANGER. Certainly, the threat environment—and, yeah, I mean, anecdotally, there is certainly—and, look, I have been here for 3 years, so I can't compare it over long periods of time, but I can tell you that, certainly, anecdotally, over the last couple of years, it has been of concern.

Mr. CLYDE. An increase?

Chief MANGER. Yes.

Mr. CLYDE. A concern.

Chief MANGER. Yes, a concern. I don't want to say—

Mr. CLYDE. All right. Fair enough.

OK. So I understand that on numerous occasions, as you have said, that Capitol Police officers have been dispatched to assist Metro Police officers in curtailing criminal activity occurring in neighborhoods surrounding our Capitol complex, including an incident in February where U.S. Capitol Police officers responded to a shooting of a housing authority officer about a mile from the Capitol. And, just last month, officers assisted MPD in a manhunt for a shooting suspect at an apartment complex just a couple of thousand feet from the Longworth Office Building.

So does this increase in criminal incidents outside the Capitol complex strain the resources of your department?

Chief MANGER. Our resources are strained with or without that. But I would say that this is a good investment for us to take on, to assist MPD with these kinds of things.

Just a few weeks ago, there was a guy throwing rocks at a front door of a house. It was the neighbor of a Member of the Senate. And we were the first ones there. We took the guy into custody. And that is the way it should be. If we are close by when we hear a call come out, we should be responding, we should be assisting. And oftentimes we can resolve cases like that very quickly.

Mr. CLYDE. Well, that is good to hear, because I think MPD right now needs all the help they can get because of their lack of budget and because of their lack of priority by the city council.

So, I guess, with that, I am going to—I am out of time. I am going to yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. OK.

Any other members have any follow-up questions for Chief Manger?

Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I move to submit my opening remarks for the record.

Mr. AMODEI. Without objection, so ordered. And we will do that for the previous ones too.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Correct. OK.

Now, Chief, I just want to clarify my previous line of questioning and, like, stress my recommendation that you have a command post at the airport and Union Station. I think that the investment of—the deployment of officers will be limited. You could consider that during fly-in days and fly-out days, not the entire week. And I think it will go a long way in deterrence.

Also, I just want to say that I am of the belief that, unfortunately, a potential next attack will not be an angry, racist mob but it could be a different mode of attack.

In fact, in April 2023, the DC Health Link was hacked, a cyber attack that gave them access to confidential medical records of maybe some of our colleagues and staff.

And in September 2023, the JCI, Johnson Controls—no relation to the Speaker—was also hacked. And JCI oversees security systems in our district office. And we don't know to what degree that was compromised.

So I am concerned, Mr. Chairman, about a different type of attack that is not 10,000 people who want to kill us but a cyber attack or another form of attack using, perhaps, sophisticated weapons.

And I want to know what the role of your department is in helping prevent this.

Chief MANGER. So, certainly, we work with both the Senate and House Sergeant at Arms, as well as our Security Services Bureau, where we are putting additional resources into trying to prevent that.

A lot of it is education, you know, to get people to prevent themselves from, you know, being a victim. But, also, I think you are seeing on, a national level, Federal investigations that are having a little bit more success in identifying these actors and placing them under arrest.

So it is just a matter of having the resources to do it. And I think there are some specific things in our budget that will go directly to that concern about cybersecurity.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. AMODEI. Any other questions from members?

So, Chief, we encourage members, if they have questions, this isn't their one and only shot. So they will contact you and your staff or whatever if there are issues that they have as they are going over the budget request.

We also ask them to let Ms. Reinshuttle know so we can track that as we get ready to go into markup, if there are unresolved issues or whatever, not because somebody is right and somebody is wrong; we just want to know what to leave for time in terms of member discussion in markup, stuff like that.

We are not at the point where we are tentatively talking about when markups are going to be, but I will tell you that it is our intention to be crisp in terms of pursuing the committee's mission for getting Legislative Branch stuff at a point where we can bring it back in to the members, do the markup, and then report to big Approps and leadership, hey, we are ready for the committee, or whatever like that.

That is all along the idea of, we fully support trying to get us to the point where we do 12 appropriations bills and we are not way the heck gone past September 30th of this year. I will not editorialize beyond when I expect that to be, because that is a fool's errand, in my experience.

But so you know what we are thinking, stuff like that. Same thing as the last cycle you folks were through. Collaborative effort.

If you have concerns, by all means, reach out to us, and we will be in contact.

Thank you for your presentation and your folks here. And, with that, we are adjourned.

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

**Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch**

*Budget Hearing – Fiscal Year 2025 Request for the United States
Capitol Police
April 10, 2024*

Statement for the Record

Submitted by Ranking Member Adriano Espaillat

Chief Manger. Thank you and all the officers and civilians of the Capitol Police who work tirelessly to ensure the safety and security of the Members, employees, visitors, and facilities both here and within our districts. You do your jobs so that we can do ours.

Securing the Capitol is a priority for this Subcommittee. The Capitol Police has worked to accomplish that goal by training, equipping, and hiring more officers, implementing recommendations, monitoring the rising number of threats against Members of Congress, and ensuring the well-being of its workforce.

For fiscal year 2025, the Capitol Police has requested \$906.4 million, which is an increase of \$65.5 million or 14.5% over the fiscal year 2024 enacted level.

Chief Manger, I look forward to hearing your testimony and hearing how this budget request addresses the mission, staffing, training, and technology gaps identified in the recent concept of operations study, as well as the department's long-term plans to implement the study's recommendations.

I yield back.

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024

**JOHN C. STENNIS CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE
OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL WORKPLACE RIGHTS
CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL
LEADERSHIP**

WITNESSES

**BRIAN PUGH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOHN C. STENNIS CENTER FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE**

**MARTIN J. CRANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CONGRES-
SIONAL WORKPLACE RIGHTS**

**JANE SARGUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE FOR
INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Mr. VALADAO. The subcommittee will come to order.

The subject of today's hearing is "The Fiscal Year 2025 Request for the Stennis Center for Public Service, the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights, and the Congressional Office for International Leadership."

I would like to thank Ranking Member Espallat, committee members, and our executive directors for being here this morning.

The Stennis Center for Public Service was established to promote and strengthen the highest ideals for public service. The congressional programs we fund enable staffers across the Chamber and party lines to learn from each other and build relationships that would otherwise not be possible.

The Stennis Center fiscal year 2025 budget request is \$430,000, not a number we are used to seeing very often—the same as fiscal year 2024.

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights was established by Congress to administer the Congressional Accountability Act, which is done through outreach, advising services, and training programs tailored to the needs of the legislative branch.

OCWR oversees the operation of an Administrative Dispute Resolution Program, as well as inspecting over 18 million square feet of facilities and ground, to ensure that they are hazard-free and accessible.

OCWR provides recommendations to Congress regarding the applicability of the legislative branch, the workplace and accessibility laws, and administers the biennial Congressional Workplace Climate Survey of the legislative branch employees.

The budget request for OCWR for fiscal year 2025 is \$8.591 million, a 5 percent increase from fiscal year 2024.

And, finally, the Congressional Office for International Leadership was founded by Congress to support international outreach efforts by conducting exchanges that establish lasting professional

relationships between emerging leaders from strategic countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and, more recently, the Indo-Pacific and their U.S. counterparts. The COIL budget request for fiscal year 2025 is \$7.2 million, an increase of 20 percent.

I look forward to learning more about your programs today.

And I now yield to the ranking member, Mr. Espallat, for his opening remarks.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Chairman Valadao, and congratulations and welcome to the Leg Branch Subcommittee. I look forward to working with you.

Ms. Sargus, Dr. Pugh, and Mr. Crane, thank you all for testifying today on behalf your agencies.

Your agencies play a vital role in advancing workplace rights and providing future leaders with the tools required to develop and support democracy.

I believe this is the first time that this subcommittee has held a hearing for the Stennis Center, if I am not mistaken. Right?

Welcome, Dr. Pugh.

I look forward to hearing about the good things that the center is doing for our congressional staffers and emerging leaders. The center has had the same request for at least 14 years. I am interested in learning how the center manages to produce such a great program consistently with a flat request, Mr. Valadao, flat like a flat soda and a cold pizza in a college dorm on a Sunday morning.

Mr. VALADAO. Is cold pizza OK in New York?

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Yes, it is good.

So I am also excited to hear about the needs of the Congressional Office for International Leadership. Your fiscal year 2025 request is \$7.2 million, an increase of \$1.2 million over fiscal year 2024 enacted totals.

As the first Dominican American to serve in Congress, I am encouraged by the international outreach of your organization to share American politics, accountable governance, and citizen diplomacy. We love to see how we can expand that to the Western Hemisphere, Africa, and other places in the world as we see other countries or adversaries stretching out. You know, we should do the best we can to provide this vital training and benefit to people in other parts of the world.

Your request is timely, as we must continue to connect with generations through our democratic system, which is the foundation of our Nation and a melting pot and diverse Nation that we are.

Thank you so much, Mr. Crane. Congratulations on your promotion to Executive Director of the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights. I look forward also to your testimony regarding the great work that your organization does and your fiscal year 2025 request for \$8.6 million, which is an increase, as Mr. Valadao said, of 5.4 percent above the fiscal year 2024.

I am very supportive of the work you do, especially at a time when, in Congress, we continue to file bills that undermine labor rights, climate, OSHA, and roll back wage protections.

Thank you all for being here. I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Valadao. I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espallat.

Dr. Pugh, your full testimony has been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized for to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN PUGH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOHN C. STENNIS CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. PUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and other members of the committee.

And I will start out by just saying it is a pleasure to be here. And I have our general counsel, Eric Jones, here, as well. And I will keep this brief, but I will start by answering the question that the ranking member had, too.

We have been able to keep our budget flat because we have limited—

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Like a flat soda.

Mr. PUGH. That is right. Like a flat soda.

But we have limited the amount of congressional staff that we have accepted to the program. So, I mean, it is—there are consequences with that. But there is a growing demand for our programming, and we just cut off the amount of people we accept.

So that will be something that Congress may decide to—I mean, we continue that, or we can do something about that in the future if that is the—if that is what you guys would like.

So, just a brief history of the Stennis Center, we were created in 1988 by Congress to promote public service throughout America and to also get young people interested in careers in public service, as well as providing congressional staffer with training and development.

So the 430 supports our congressional programs, and we have other funding sources for other programming. But the 430 is specific to just our congressional programs that support our Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program, our Emerging Leaders Program, and also our congressional internship program. So that is how we—that's kind of the breakdown of the congressional program.

So, a little bit about it, we are governed by a board of directors. It is a seven-member board. In the House, The Speaker of the House gets two appointments to our board, 6-year terms. And then the minority leader gets one appointment. And the majority leader in the House—I mean—I am sorry—in the Senate gets two appointments and the minority one. So it's three from the House, three from the Senate. And it is meant to be bipartisan. And, by law, I am a voting board member.

So they continue to monitor the direction of the programs going into our budget, as well.

So, again, the 430, I mention that it supports those programs, and it has been stagnant. For the 118th Congress, for our Stennis Fellows Program, we had a large increase in congressional staffers that apply for the program. And one of the negative parts is when we select between 30 and 34 people to the program, we have to tell a lot of people no. And, in order to be eligible for the Stennis Fellows Program, you have to have at least 10 years of experience. That is what we usually tell the committee that selects the pro-

gram, which are senior Stennis fellows, which are basically congressional staffers that went through the program.

So that is, again, how we have pretty much been stagnant with the program is we have to say no to a lot of people, and that is unfortunate.

So, with the Stennis Fellows Program, we select between 30 and 34 senior-level staffers, and they go through training and development for just over a year and a half. And we bring them to—we have experts come in to talk about subjects that they are interested in. Some of them may have become chiefs of staff at an early age or something. And they may not have had management experience, or they may not have worked with Gen Z long. So that may be some of the topics that they want us to assist with. So that is, again, some of the things that we provide.

We take them out of DC. We have had a longtime relationship with Princeton where we take them up to—we will actually be going back up next month, I believe, to go where we utilize the faculty there in order to, again, provide some type of development for the staffers.

And, again, it is a really good program. And, if you look at, in the testimony, some of the people who have went through the program and are now referred to as senior Stennis fellows, it is a pretty amazing group of people.

So that is our flagship program, our Stennis Fellows Program. And we have an intern program, which is basically one-on-one mentoring where we pair senior Stennis fellows with junior-level staffers. And we try to place them based on, again, if you are in the House you or you are in the Senate and interest, as well.

So that program, it is not quite 30, like the Stennis Fellows Program—is around 25. But it is based on the amount of senior Stennis fellows that we get to commit to mentoring the junior-level staffers. And our Emerging Leaders Program is congressional Hill interns. A lot of them may be in your offices, but they apply to the program. And we have senior Stennis fellows come and basically talk to them about Congress as an institution, just a lot of different issues. And it is another very popular program.

And that is actually one of the programs of the three programs that we support with the congressional leg branch appropriation that actually has grown. We used to just have one cohort in the summer. We now have three cohorts. And, again, we selected around 30 students and—I mean, I am sorry—30 interns. And the demand has just grown significantly for that, too, though.

And how we were basically able to account for adding the two different classes is we used to provide them with refreshments and snacks and stuff. We utilize the CVC. So that is free. And then the staffers, the senior staffers, we don't charge. I mean, we don't have to pay. They don't charge us a fee or anything. But we have kind of cut back on refreshments and things like that. And, again, we have not grown. We increased the amount of cohorts. But, again, we keep to around 30.

So that is what the 430 pays for. We are very proud of the programs. And, just based on the people who have went through the program, we continue to get positive feedback, as well.

So that is a quick rundown, and I will be happy to answer any questions that you have.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Pugh follows:]



**Testimony of Dr. Brian Pugh, Executive Director
John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development**

Good morning Chairman Amodie, Ranking Member Espallat, and members of the Subcommittee. I am Dr. Brian Pugh, Executive Director of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development ("Stennis Center"). I am honored to speak to you today about the Stennis Center's \$430,000 appropriations request and our Congressional Programs.

History and Mission

The Stennis Center was established in 1988 by Public Law 100-458¹ with the statutory mission to 1) promote public service to young people and to get them interested in a career in public service, 2) to provide training and professional development opportunities to state and local elected officials and their staff, and 3) to provide training and professional development opportunities to Congressional staff.² We are overseen by a Board of Trustees that are required by law to be appointed by House and Senate leadership.³

The Stennis Center has a variety of programs to help us meet this three-pronged mission. Our Student Programs are aimed at college students and recent graduates who are featured in the Stennis Center's quarterly journal *Public Service Review*, which is dedicated to the publication and dissemination of young people's reflections and experiences in the public service sector through professional or volunteer opportunities. The purpose of the journal is to acknowledge and influence the important and substantive work carried out by young people in local, state, and federal government entities, universities and colleges, and nonprofit organizations across the United States.

Our programs that meet the third prong of our mission – to provide training and development opportunities to Congressional staff – are known as our Congressional Programs. Because the Stennis Center's request is for expenses related to these programs, I will focus on discussing those.

¹ Codified at 2 U.S.C. §1101 - 10.

² 2 U.S.C. § 1104.

³ *Id.* at §1103(b).

Congressional Programs

The Stennis Center has multiple ways that it meets its mandate to provide training and development opportunities to Congressional staff. Our flagship program is the Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program ("Stennis Fellows Program"). Established during the 103rd Congress, the Stennis Fellows Program is a year-and-a-half-long program that focuses on the challenges to Congress as an institution of American democracy and the role that Congressional staff play in meeting those challenges.

The Stennis Fellows Program occurs every Congress and selects 30-34 bipartisan, bicameral senior Congressional staff members to engage in professional development designed to help them be better managers and leaders, as well as be more productive staff members. The program includes roundtable discussions of relevant topics such as polarization, managing across a generational divide, staff capacity, and separation of powers. We also host overnight stays at a university such as Princeton University as well as the National Conservation Training Center.

Once a Stennis Fellow completes the program we then "graduate" them to Senior Stennis Fellows. These Senior Fellows play a vital role in the rest of our Congressional programming and our ability to meet the other two prongs of our mission. Given that these Senior Fellows are current or former staff, they have expert levels of knowledge and understanding about key facets of Congress. They are committed to public service and the institution of Congress specifically, and they can play a wide range of roles in the rest of our programs. Senior Fellows can speak on topics such as the Appropriations process or managing a Congressional office. They can mentor young staff to help them grow as a Congressional staffer and stay longer on the Hill. They can explain the legislative process to interns who are interested in becoming full-time staff. And they can share their personal experiences to show that public service can come from all walks of life. There are currently almost 400 Senior Stennis Fellows and in the 118th Congress alone we have already had over 50 of them volunteer their time to our programs. Stennis Fellows are also periodically featured in *Public Service Review*.

To give a sense of the people who have participated in the Stennis Fellows Program, who we now call Senior Fellows, I will just mention a few notable alumni: Jennifer Homendy the Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, Cheryl Johnson the former Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, Mike McCord the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Elizabeth McDonough the Senate Parliamentarian, Colleen Shogan the Archivist of the United States, Kristine Svinicki the former Chairwoman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Andrew Wheeler the former Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency, and Shalanda Young the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Another of the Stennis Center's Congressional Programs is the Emerging Congressional Staff Leaders Program ("Emerging Leaders Program"). This is a one-on-one mentoring

program where we pair a junior or mid-level staffer with a Senior Stennis Fellow. Though this, too, is a bipartisan, bicameral program, the Stennis Center strives to match mentees with a mentor who shares similar political ideology, issue area expertise, and, when appropriate, the same chamber of Congress. In addition to one-on-one mentoring, this program provides participants with roughly four group sessions to discuss topics such as advancing a legislative agenda, parliamentary procedure with the House and Senate Parliamentarians, and other relevant topics. The Emerging Leaders Program runs in the second half of every Congressional session.

Our final Congressional Program is the Stennis Program for Congressional Interns ("Stennis Intern Program"). The Stennis Intern Program is a bipartisan, bicameral program that hosts roughly 30 students every spring, summer, and fall for five 90-minute sessions on institutional aspects of Congress. These sessions are led by experts – typically Senior Stennis Fellows – about a specific topic and provide the interns with an opportunity to ask questions and network with these experts. We also provide them with a small group project where they are tasked with advising a fake Member of Congress and then are paired up with a Senior Stennis Fellow to discuss the finer points of being a legislative staffer. Participants selected for the Stennis Intern Program are required to write an article about their experience in *Public Service Review*.

FY 2025 Budget Summary

The Stennis Center for Public Service is requesting level funding, which is \$430,000. The Stennis Center strives to present the highest quality programs for congressional staff at the lowest possible cost. The Stennis Center has been operating on the same funding level for multiple years now. The appropriations request for FY 2025 is essential to enable the Stennis Center to continue to provide training and development opportunities to congressional staff as mandated by its authorizing legislation. Without the appropriation, the highly successful Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program, Emerging Congressional Staff Leaders Program, and Stennis Program for Congressional Interns would be severely reduced, if not eliminated.

Budget Request Details

Congressional Staff Programs (by Program Activity)

Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program	\$296,000
Emerging Congressional Staff Leaders Program	37,500
Stennis Leadership Program for Congressional Interns	37,500
Congressional Related Programs for Members and Staff	19,000
Senior Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program	<u>40,000</u>
Total	\$430,000

(by Object Classification)

Personnel	\$245,000
Direct Program Costs (including speakers, facilities, travel, food and lodging)	131,800
Office Lease and Utilities	48,900
Printing, Copying and Postage	1,300
Equipment and Supplies	<u>3,000</u>
Total	\$430,000

Possibility for Growth and Future Challenges

While the Stennis Center has not asked for an increase in funding for the next fiscal year, I want to note a challenge that our organization currently faces. Over the last 2 years, we have seen an increase in the interest of our Congressional Programs compared to years prior. For example, the number of applicants for the 118th Stennis Fellows cohort was 96. This is a 75% increase over the previous ten-year average of applications.⁴ Similarly, our Emerging Leaders Program saw a 53% increase for the 118th group compared to the same ten-year period in average applications. Furthermore, we have had triple the number of yearly participants in our Intern Program, going from 30 a year to 90.

I note this is a challenge because the number of participants that we can accommodate has stayed roughly stagnant for each cohort in our various programs. If we continue to have an increase in demand, then we will face the problem of telling more qualified people that they cannot participate in the programs that we have to offer. I believe that to meet our mission to provide training and professional development opportunities for Congressional staff, we must always look for ways to engage with those who want our programming.

To underscore this point, I want to give you an example. Because our Fellows Program is for senior staff, we advise our selection committee to view “senior” as having at least ten years of government experience. Due to the increased number of applicants for the 118th Congress, our average years of government experience for those selected was 15.8. Roughly two-thirds of the 96 applicants were qualified as senior staff, meaning that a third were left out despite being qualified due to the simple fact that we did not have enough room for them in the program.

The Stennis Center has tried to accommodate this increased demand in a few ways. First, we expanded our Intern Program from once every summer to three times a year. We were initially able to do this in 2021 by hosting the program virtually. While not as effective as an in-person discussion, this change was due in large part to the Capitol building closure during COVID-19. Once we were able to move back to in-person programming in the

⁴ This includes five application periods for the 113th Congress through the 117th Congress.

Capitol building, we were able to spread the yearly cost of the program to three groups a year by cutting the catering costs of snacks and refreshments we provide to participants during those sessions.⁵ Because the cost of catering was cut, the meeting space that we utilize is free, and our speakers are volunteers, the only other major cost for the Intern Program is the staff salaries involved in running it. Therefore, we were able to triple our program's reach on a similar budget to previous years.

We were also able to find savings for the Fellows Program by utilizing event space at the Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital. Prior to the 117th Congress, the Fellows Program consisted of four half-day roundtables, two of which were connected to a visit to a university and two were in Washington, D.C. We were able to expand the number of roundtables in D.C. to six by being more mindful of the cost of event space.

The Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital is considerably cheaper than other options in D.C. because it is run by a nonprofit organization. Over the years we have found that our Fellows are much more engaged if we take them off the Hill for these roundtables, and the Old Naval Hospital provides us with an incredibly cost-effective option. While this does not enable us to have more participants in each cohort, it does allow us to have more roundtable discussions per cohort. We believe this has made an already effective program stronger.

I mention these cost-saving measures in conjunction with increased demand to acknowledge that while we can maintain our programs at the requested level of funding, our cost-saving measures have made it very difficult to find new ways to meet this demand. We would be happy to work with the Subcommittee or the Committee at large to find new ways for us to meet our mission.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today about the Stennis Center's appropriation request and our Congressional Programs. I look forward to any questions you may have.

⁵ The Stennis Center is authorized pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §1108(a)(7) to make "expenditures for meals, entertainment and refreshments in connection with official training sessions or other authorized programs."



**Testimony of Dr. Brian Pugh, Executive Director
John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development**

Mission:

To promote and strengthen public service in America. The Stennis Center's mandate is to attract young people to careers in public service, to provide training for state and local officials, and to offer development opportunities for congressional staff. Products of the Stennis Center include training and professional development programs, conferences and seminars, one-on-one mentoring, and written publications.



FY 2025 Budget Summary

The Stennis Center for Public Service is requesting level funding, which is \$430,000. The Stennis Center strives to present the highest quality programs for congressional staff at the lowest possible cost. The Stennis Center has been operating on the same funding level for multiple years now. The appropriations request for FY 2025 is essential to enable the Stennis Center to continue to provide training and development opportunities to congressional staff as mandated by its authorizing legislation. Without the appropriation, the highly successful Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program, Emerging Congressional Staff Leaders Program, and Stennis Program for Congressional Interns would be severely reduced, if not eliminated.

FY 2025 Budget Request Detail

Congressional Staff Programs (by Program Activity)

Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program	\$296,000
Emerging Congressional Staff Leaders Program	37,500
Stennis Leadership Program for Congressional Interns	37,500
Congressional Related Programs for Members and Staff	19,000
Senior Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program	<u>40,000</u>
Total	\$430,000

(by Object Classification)

Personnel	\$245,000
Direct Program Costs (including speakers, facilities, travel, food and lodging)	131,800
Office Lease and Utilities	48,900
Printing, Copying and Postage	1,300
Equipment and Supplies	<u>3,000</u>
Total	\$430,000

As a Legislative Branch agency established to promote and strengthen the highest ideals of public service, the Stennis Center is uniquely positioned to provide training and development opportunities for congressional staff. Like their counterparts in the Executive Branch and similar to professionals in the private sector, congressional staff benefits from opportunities to strengthen their skills through training and development. Furthermore, the design of the Stennis Center's congressional programs enables staffers across chamber and party lines to learn from each other and build relationships that would otherwise not be possible. The Stennis Center is grateful for the opportunity to work with such highly-qualified individuals committed to public service in the Legislative Branch and eager for opportunities to develop their abilities further.

Stennis Center for Public Service, Training and Development									
	FY 2023			FY 2022			FY 2021		
	Budgeted	Actual	% of budget	Budgeted	Actual	% of budget	Budgeted	Actual	% of budget
Administration:									
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 145,000	\$ 144,996	100.00%	\$171,340	\$156,765	91.49%	\$174,225	\$101,592	58.31%
Staff Travel	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,846	105.64%	\$ 12,000	\$ 8,955	74.63%	\$ 10,000	\$ 6,204	62.04%
Rent and Utilities	\$ 25,230	\$ 24,880	98.61%	\$ 24,420	\$ 24,052	98.49%	\$ 24,160	\$ 24,150	99.96%
Phone and Data	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,150	86.00%	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,527	101.08%	\$ 3,150	\$ 3,064	97.27%
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 1,590	\$ 1,548	97.36%	\$ 1,440	\$ 1,440	100.00%	\$ 500	\$ 240	48.00%
Training and Development	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%
Office Supplies & Subscriptions	\$ 11,230	\$ 10,307	91.78%	\$ 2,700	\$ 990	36.67%	\$ 5,740	\$ 5,352	93.24%
Equipment	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,158	105.27%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%
Other General Overhead	\$ -	\$ 1,553	0.00%	\$ -	\$ 60,587	0.00%	\$ -	\$ 220,050	0.00%
Programs:									
Emerging Leaders	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,801	90.05%	\$ 4,600	\$ 422	9.17%	\$ 4,600	\$ -	0.00%
Fellows	\$ 216,250	\$ 216,545	100.14%	\$200,000	\$169,218	84.61%	\$191,625	\$ 67,749	35.35%
Interns	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,848	96.96%	\$ 6,000	\$ 4,444	74.07%	\$ 6,000	\$ 1,599	26.65%
New Member Orientation	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%
Look Ahead Leaders	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 5,000	\$ -	0.00%
Congressional Dialogue	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,210	100.45%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%
Senior Fellows	\$ 1,000	\$ 158	15.80%	\$ 5,000	\$ 600	12.00%	\$ 5,000	\$ -	0.00%
	\$ 430,000	\$ 430,000	100.00%	\$430,000	\$430,000	100.00%	\$430,000	\$430,000	100.00%
	FY 2020			FY 2019					
	Budgeted	Actual	% of budget	Budgeted	Actual	% of budget	Budgeted	Actual	% of budget
Administration:									
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 168,975	\$ 99,285	58.76%	\$146,190	\$108,425	74.17%			
Staff Travel	\$ 20,000	\$ 8,871	44.36%	\$ 25,000	\$ 24,102	96.41%			
Rent and Utilities	\$ 24,200	\$ 23,918	98.83%	\$ 26,000	\$ 25,602	98.47%			
Phone and Data	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,405	100.21%	\$ 3,250	\$ 2,068	63.63%			
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 500	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 900	\$ -	0.00%			
Training and Development	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 2,300	\$ 2,335	101.52%			
Office Supplies & Subscriptions	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,105	65.00%	\$ 2,280	\$ 2,131	94.29%			
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%			
Other General Overhead	\$ -	\$ 245,622	0.00%	\$ -	\$ 155,448	0.00%			
Programs:									
Emerging Leaders	\$ 4,600	\$ 3,482	75.70%	\$ 4,600	\$ 2,651	57.63%			
Fellows	\$ 191,625	\$ 45,312	23.65%	\$200,000	\$ 99,697	49.85%			
Interns	\$ 6,000	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 6,000	\$ 4,605	76.75%			
New Member Orientation	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,164	46.56%			
Look Ahead Leaders	\$ 5,000	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,692	33.84%			
Congressional Dialogue	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 1,000	\$ 80	8.00%			
Senior Fellows	\$ 5,000	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 5,000	\$ -	0.00%			
	\$ 430,000	\$ 430,000	100.00%	\$430,000	\$430,000	100.00%			

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Dr. Pugh. Mr. Crane.

STATEMENT OF MARTIN J. CRANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF
CONGRESSIONAL WORKPLACE RIGHTS

Mr. CRANE. Good morning. And thank you, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and distinguished members of the committee.

We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and to discuss the fiscal year 2025 budget justification for the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights.

Although I just recently became executive director of the OCWR and this is the first time I have had the honor to appear before this committee, I have been working with my colleagues at OCWR since 2017. And I thank you on their behalf for your ongoing and steadfast support.

When Congress passed the Congressional Accountability Act nearly 30 years ago with nearly virtually unanimous bipartisan support, it made a promise to the American people that it would apply to itself the same Federal workplace and accessibility laws that it applies to employers in the executive branch and in the private sector.

Congress established our office, the OCWR, as the independent nonpartisan office charged with ensuring that that promise is kept.

With only 34 FTEs, we are one of the smallest offices with a line item in the budget. However, the scope of the workplace laws that we enforce on the Hill and in offices throughout the country is one of the broadest in the Federal Government.

Like the EEOC in the executive branch, in the private sector, we administer the laws in the legislative branch that prohibit discrimination and harassment, as well as laws that require reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers and people with disabilities.

Like the Department of Labor, we administer laws that govern minimum wages, overtime, equal pay, job-protected family and medical leave, laws that prohibit discrimination against our Nation's veterans and provide them with enhanced opportunities for employment, as well as laws requiring services and facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, we administer laws in the legislative branch that require safe workplaces.

And, like the Federal Labor Relations Authority, we administer the laws in the legislative branch that govern labor-management relations.

To accomplish this wide-ranging mission, we develop and provide outreach, education and training to the congressional community. We provide privileged, confidential advising services for covered employees. We operate an administrative dispute resolution program, which includes administrative hearings and voluntary mediation.

Our Office of General Counsel enforces laws governing safety, accessibility, and labor relations, and also inspects, as the chair mentioned, more than 18 million square feet of facilities and grounds to ensure that they are and remain safe and accessible.

Our board of directors advises Congress on keeping CAA protections equivalent to the private sector and the executive branch, and we also administer a biennial Congressional Workplace Climate Survey to more than 30,000 legislative branch employees which assesses the congressional workplace and the effectiveness of reforms.

Our request of just less than \$8.6 million focuses on efficiency and considers only strictly mission-critical line items. It doesn't propose any new programs, but it would allow the OCWR to provide the same quality services that it has consistently provided to Congress.

In the current fiscal year, we have been able to hire experienced professionals as FTEs to perform in-house services previously provided by contractors and service providers. Although this has resulted in an increase in projected personnel costs, it has also resulted in a significant decrease in costs for contractual services.

Approximately 75 percent of our budget requests, or \$6.5 million, is for costs associated with 36 authorized FTEs. Because we depend on the ability to recruit and retain these employees, this amount represents a 25-percent increase above the fiscal year 2024 enacted level, which will maintain compensation levels comparable to those in the executive branch.

But, as I mentioned, non-personnel costs have significant decreased in fiscal year 2024. And we expect this trend to continue. Therefore, our request of approximately \$2.1 million for non-personnel costs represents a 36-percent decrease from the fiscal year 2024 enacted amount.

Accordingly, all but approximately \$450,000 in projected increases in personnel costs are offset by projected decreases in non-personnel costs.

Our budget request will allow the OCWR to succeed while serving as a responsible and efficient steward of taxpayer money. I therefore ask that you support it and our continued work to advance workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility on the Hill and in congressional offices throughout the country.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Crane follows:]

**Statement of
Martin J. Crane
Executive Director
Office of Congressional Workplace Rights**

**Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

**At a Hearing Entitled
“Budget Hearing – Fiscal Year 2025 Request for the
Office of Congressional Workplace Rights”**

**Presented
April 16, 2024**

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to submit this statement regarding the budget request of the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) for Fiscal Year 2025. We thank the Subcommittee for its steadfast support as we carry out our mission to advance workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility in the legislative branch.

For FY 2025, the OCWR requests funding of \$8,591,887, of which \$500,000 would remain available until September 30, 2026, and two additional full time equivalent (FTE) positions. This represents an increase of 5.42 percent above FY 2024 enacted levels.

I. The OCWR’s Statutory Mandate

Congress passed the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) more than 25 years ago with overwhelming bipartisan support. The CAA embodies Congress’s ongoing promise to the American public that it will hold itself accountable under the same federal workplace and accessibility laws that it applies to executive branch agencies and private sector employers. These laws prohibit discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the congressional workplace; they promote equal employment opportunity; they provide enhanced access to job opportunities for veterans; they guarantee minimum wage and overtime compensation, job-protected leave, paid parental leave, and unionization rights on the Hill and in congressional offices throughout the country; and they require hazard-free workplaces in the legislative branch, as well as services and facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Congress established the OCWR as the independent, nonpartisan office to administer the CAA. We are a very small office with a very broad mandate, performing many of the same functions for the legislative branch as do multiple agencies for and within the executive branch, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Federal Labor Relations Authority, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other components of the Department of Labor.

The OCWR has one program—to administer the CAA. To achieve our mandate, the OCWR operates several distinct but complimentary subprograms:

- We develop and provide outreach, education, and training to the congressional community, which promotes workplace rights, encourages the creation of hazard-free and accessible workplaces, and prevents disputes from arising in the first place.
- We provide privileged and confidential counseling and advice to covered employees about their rights and responsibilities under the CAA in light of their particular circumstances.
- We operate an Administrative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program, which includes voluntary mediation and administrative hearings, to resolve claims brought under the CAA.
- Our Office of General Counsel (OGC) investigates alleged violations of laws governing hazard-free workplaces, accessibility, and unionization; works with stakeholders to resolve alleged violations; and prosecutes violations of such laws. Each Congress, OGC also inspects more than 18 million square feet of facilities and grounds in the legislative branch to ensure that they are and remain hazard-free and accessible.
- Our Board of Directors proposes and, upon congressional approval, promulgates regulations to implement various statutes applied to the legislative branch through the CAA. The Board also recommends actions that each Congress can take to ensure the protections and responsibilities applied through the CAA are equivalent to those applicable to the private sector and the executive branch.
- We also administer the statutorily required biennial Congressional Workplace Climate Survey to more than 30,000 legislative branch employees, which assesses the workplace environment, including attitudes regarding sexual harassment.

II. The OCWR's FY 2025 Budget Request

The OCWR's budget request for FY 2025 focuses on its statutory mandates and on improving the delivery of services to legislative branch stakeholders. It does not embody any significant new program areas or large-scale initiatives.

In FY 2024, the OCWR has been able to hire experienced professionals as FTEs and rely on its newly acquired in-house expertise to perform services previously provided by contractors and service providers. Although, as discussed below, this has resulted in an increase in projected personnel costs, it has also resulted in significantly lower costs for contractual services. We anticipate that such non-personnel costs will also be substantially lower in FY 2025 and subsequent fiscal years.

Of the total FY 2025 request amount, the OCWR requests that \$500,000 remain available until September 30, 2026. This flexibility is especially crucial to cover costs for the services of essential contractors, including hearing officers, mediators, and expert consultants, because the timing of these expenses is not entirely within the OCWR's direct control.

A. Personnel Costs

The OCWR depends heavily on its FTEs to accomplish its varied mission. As a result, the majority of the OCWR's annual budget is for personnel costs, including pay and benefits, for OCWR staff. Specifically, approximately 76 percent of the OCWR's FY 2025 budget request, or \$6.5 million, is for costs associated with 36 authorized full-time FTEs, which includes the five part-time Board members, who serve on a "when-actually-employed" basis and together comprise one of the FTEs.

Because it is crucial for the OCWR to recruit and retain highly skilled professionals to carry out its mission, the amount the OCWR requests for FY 2025 represents an increase of 24% percent, or \$1,252,606, above the FY 2024 enacted amount. This increase incorporates a 4.5% across-the-board pay increase based on Congressional Budget Office projections.

B. Non-personnel Costs

The remaining approximately 24% of the OCWR's budget request is for non-personnel costs. These costs include contract services, such as contracted pay for our Hearing Officers and Mediators in our ADR program, and for other contract services, equipment, and supplies needed to operate the OCWR. These non-personnel costs also cover costs associated with our interagency agreements for services provided to the OCWR by partner federal agencies, including the Library of Congress and the National Finance Center.

As stated above, the OCWR's non-personnel costs have significantly decreased in FY 2024, and we expect this trend to continue in FY 2025. Therefore, the OCWR's request of approximately \$2.1 million for non-personnel costs represents a 36% decrease from the FY 2024 enacted amount.

I highlight some of the especially significant non-personnel costs below.

i. Administrative Dispute Resolution

The OCWR requests \$400,000 for non-personnel services for FY 2025 for the administration of its ADR processes. This amount includes funding to pay the contract rates for our Hearing Officers and Mediators. It also includes funding for technical services and necessary updates to support the operation of the ADR e-filing system.*

With respect to the ADR non-personnel cost projection, we note that it is impossible to predict with certainty the number of cases claimants will file with the OCWR's ADR program each year. In light of that, we based the ADR non-personnel estimate upon average actual expenditures from FY 2021 through FY 2023.

Although we believe that relying on FY 2021 through FY 2023 as guides for FY 2025 is reasonable, there is some risk that the number of cases could climb, or fall, from the caseload

* The requested amount does not include non-personnel costs associated with the Board of Directors' function as the reviewing body for claims that are appealed from OCWR hearing officers under the ADR program.

that sustained the FY 2021 through FY 2023 costs. We note that claims filed in FY 2023 nearly tripled over FY 2021, from 19 to 55. Moreover, requests for Confidential Advising increased approximately 86% from FY 2021 to FY 2023, from 66 to 123 requests. Similarly, requests for voluntary mediation more than tripled, from 11 in FY 2021 to 35 in FY 2023.

ii. *General Information Technology/Communications/Web Services*

IT modernization and security continues to be a key focus for the OCWR. The OCWR administers a local area network, inclusive of personal computers for employees and a number of on-site contractors, and the hardware and software required to support the network. The OCWR requests approximately \$710,000 for non-personnel services for FY 2025 for information technology equipment and operations. These non-personnel costs cover the necessary equipment, contractor, and interagency agreement costs to facilitate these efforts, which are in addition to the costs specifically for contractor support of the ADR e-filing system. This part of the non-personnel request also includes periodic upgrades to the OCWR's communications systems and website and the estimated costs of future enhancements to the Risk Management Suite used by OCWR safety professionals. The OCWR's request of approximately \$710,000 for non-personnel costs for this subprogram represents a decrease of \$1.5 million, or 47%, from the FY 2024 enacted amount.

iii. *Education and Training*

Among the OCWR's significant responsibilities is its statutory mandate to provide a program to educate Members of Congress and legislative branch staff on their rights and responsibilities under the CAA. OCWR trainers deliver remote and in-person training sessions tailored to meet the unique needs of legislative branch stakeholders. Demand for OCWR training and outreach services continues to increase, and the OCWR has continued to enhance its training program, delivering new and informative modules via web-conferencing, in-person sessions, and on-line videos.

The OCWR requests \$155,000 for non-personnel services for FY 2025 to facilitate OCWR staff in support of this program, a decrease of \$75,000, or 56%, from the FY 2024 enacted amount. These non-personnel costs include contracts for editing, website operation and updates, along with development and refreshing training videos and materials.

Congressional Workplace Climate Survey

As noted above, the OCWR is responsible for administering the biennial Congressional Workplace Climate Survey. This confidential survey of legislative branch employees covers the workplace environment. \$350,000 of the requested non-personnel amount would be used to pay for services necessary for OCWR staff to construct, administer, and tabulate the surveys.

iv. *Inspecting Legislative Branch Facilities*

The OGC is responsible for inspecting all facilities in the legislative branch for occupational safety and health violations at least once each Congress. The OGC is also responsible for inspecting the public areas of all facilities in the legislative branch for compliance

with titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In FY 2024, the OCWR has been able to hire as FTEs experienced safety professionals and perform inspections and investigations previously provided by contractors and service providers. As such, the non-personnel allocation includes \$100,000, a decrease of approximately 67% from the FY 2024 enacted amount.

v. *Miscellaneous Expenses*

The remaining projected non-personnel costs would pay for contract services, including cross-servicing providers, such as the Library of Congress and the National Finance Center, and other services, equipment, and supplies needed to operate the OCWR.

III. Conclusion

The OCWR is committed to executing our crucial mission in the coming fiscal year. I believe this budget request will allow the OCWR to succeed while remaining efficient and serving as a responsible steward of taxpayer's money. As such, I respectfully ask for your support of this request. I look forward to providing this Subcommittee with any additional information it may require at this hearing and the coming days as part of the appropriations process.

Thank you.



Office of Congressional Workplace Rights

Mission Statement

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) was established by Congress in 1995 to administer the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA). **The mission of the OCWR is to advance workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility in the legislative branch.** Its vision is a respectful, safe, healthy, and accessible congressional workplace with equal employment opportunity and treatment for all.

The CAA applies numerous employment, safety, and accessibility laws to the legislative branch that:

- Prohibit discrimination, harassment, and retaliation;
- Promote equal employment opportunity, including providing enhanced access to job opportunities for veterans;
- Govern working conditions, including minimum wage and overtime compensation, job-protected leave, paid parental leave, and unionization; and
- Require hazard-free workplaces that are accessible to people with disabilities.

OCWR administers the CAA by:

- Developing and providing outreach, education, and training programs tailored to the needs of the legislative branch community;
- Providing advising services to covered employees, on a privileged and confidential basis, about their rights and responsibilities under the CAA;
- Operating an Administrative Dispute Resolution program, including voluntary mediation and administrative hearings, to resolve alleged CAA violations;
- Investigating alleged violations of laws governing unionization, hazard-free workplaces, and accessibility, and prosecuting violations of such laws;
- Inspecting more than 18 million square feet of facilities and ground in the legislative branch to ensure that they are and remain hazard free and accessible;
- Providing each Congress with recommendations regarding the applicability to the legislative branch of workplace and accessibility laws, to ensure that they are equivalent to those laws applied to the executive branch and the private sector; and
- Administering a biennial Congressional Workplace Climate Survey of legislative branch employees and the workplace environment, including attitudes regarding sexual harassment.



advancing workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility in the legislative branch

Office of Congressional Workplace Rights

FY 2025 Budget Justification

\$8,591,887 IN DISCRETIONARY FUNDING, of which **\$500,000** would remain available until September 30, 2026, and **2 additional FTE positions**

- Constitutes an increase of **\$441,887** or **5 percent** above FY 2024 enacted amount.
- Meets anticipated program costs associated with the OCWR's mandate to **administer the Congressional Accountability Act**, which applies numerous workplace, employment, safety, and accessibility laws to Congress and other employing offices of the legislative branch.
- **76 percent** of the requested amount would provide pay and benefits for **34 currently authorized and 2 requested FTE positions**, including anticipated COLA increases.
- **24 percent** of requested funds would cover anticipated **non-personnel costs** associated with:
 - Continued implementation and administration of OCWR Programs, including:
 - A **Training and Education Program** to reduce the occurrence of workplace disputes;
 - An **Administrative Dispute Resolution Process** to resolve workplace disputes when they occur;
 - A mandated **Biennial Workplace Climate Survey** of legislative branch employees;
 - A **Program of Disability Access and Safety & Health Inspections** covering more than 18 million square feet of facilities and grounds; and
 - A **Program of Enforcement** of laws governing Disability Access, Safety & Health, and Labor-Management Relations in the legislative branch; and
 - Services, equipment, and supplies needed to operate the OCWR.

OCWR Appropriation Summary

	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2025 Requested
Budget	\$6,332,670	\$7,500,000	\$7,500,000	\$8,000,000	8,150,000	\$8,591,887
% Change from Previous FY	0	18.43 [*]	0	6.69	1.88	5.42
FTEs	28	31	31	34	34	36

^{*} The 18.43% increase from FY 2020 and 3 additional FTEs were associated with costs related to implementation of the changes embodied in the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act, which became effective in FY 2019.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Crane.

I now recognize Ms. Sargus for a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF JANE SARGUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Ms. SARGUS. Good morning, Chairman Valadao and Ranking Member Espaillat.

Thank you to all the members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Congressional Office for International Leadership, COIL.

COIL's mission is to assist Congress in its foreign oversight responsibilities through the administration of the Open World program, an exchange dedicated to engaging rising parliamentary rule of law and civic leaders to build mutual understanding across borders.

Our program centers on unfiltered dialogue and brings together professionals and communities with common challenges to discuss their perspectives and best practices.

Introducing decisionmakers from critical regions of the world to Members of Congress and American experts leads to important inroads in bilateral relations, in government, and in civic life in these countries.

To support this, COIL held nearly 200 congressional meetings in calendar year 2023, both on the Hill and in district offices across the country. Since our founding in 1999, we have responded to congressional interests by expanding to 23 countries throughout Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific, bringing hundreds of delegates annually to meet their counterparts in the United States.

In 2023, COIL initiated an experimental model of regional program in the Balkans, bringing together Kosovars, North Macedonians, and Serbians, providing a forum for conversations that COIL is uniquely positioned to facilitate. This model will be expanded to Central Asia later this year.

COIL also inaugurated parliamentary programs with several Indo-Pacific countries on congressional requests due to concerns with the ongoing rise of Chinese malign influence. These parliamentary programs enable regional decisionmakers to speak directly and frankly about trade, national security, and bilateral relations.

Of note, the National Assembly of Vietnam specifically voiced its appreciation for COIL as an important opportunity for further engagement between legislatures.

As COIL seeks to serve every corner of America, the Open World program operates in every State, in over 3,000 local host communities. Open World delegations have traveled to each of your districts, and your constituent communities have reported back meaningful results.

With high demand, we can only accommodate about a quarter of the hosting demand for our program due to budgetary limitations. This brings us to our request for a budget increase. We have been at or below a \$6 million appropriation for the last 11 years while at the same time being as creative as possible in searching for funding and cost-share opportunities with grantees, hosts, U.S. em-

bassies, and other stakeholders further defraying the overall cost for participants.

Nevertheless, the per-person cost rose more than 60 percent between 2020 and 2023 and is insurmountable despite the extensive cost-limiting measures that we implemented.

After cautious consideration, we have concluded that a budget increase is essential to optimally fulfill our duties and mission of supporting Congress. With this increase of \$1.2 million, we expect to add one FTE, a specialist in the Indo-Pacific region, and to expand our Indo-Pacific program, as Members have also expressed that, with the rise of malign influence from China, having conversations on trade, security, and diplomacy between legislatures takes on additional significance and impact.

Having said that, these programs are far more costly than Eurasian programs, with airfare alone being multiple times the cost of other delegations.

Therefore, the \$1.2 million budget increase would allow a more robust Indo-Pacific program and restore full funding to our national and regional programs in the Balkans, Central Asia, and Central Europe.

With a fully funded fiscal 2025 budget, COIL will remain a resource, an asset, and an investment for all Members of Congress and their constituents. Each day, COIL's quiet but impactful work brings together Americans and their international peers to take tangible steps forward in their professions and in our country's relationships.

Thanks to each of you today for hearing my testimony. I appreciate it, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sargus follows:]

Testimony of Jane Sargus
Executive Director, Congressional Office for International Leadership
For the Subcommittees on the Legislative Branch
Committees on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
April 16, 2024

“For almost 25 years, NNIC has grown alongside the Open World program – where the beginnings of our work to present the Reno-Tahoe area as a rapidly developing international community can be connected to the ability to host Open World programs, furthering our combined efforts to foster citizen focused diplomacy and human connection. As hundreds of visitors have come through Reno, so too have these hosts welcomed visitors into their homes for a week at a time to make an impact on the world through citizen diplomacy.”

Sara Jones, Northern Nevada International Center, Nevada

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat and Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record on the Congressional Office for International Leadership (the Office, COIL). Congressional participation on our governing board and in our programs has made the Office uniquely qualified to support Members’ conduct of Congressional diplomacy and to serve Members, their constituents and communities across America. All of us at the Office are deeply grateful for your support.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Congressional Office for International Leadership. The Office administers the Open World program, which is a legislative branch program that has brought international leaders to the United States since 1999. Our program is dedicated to engaging rising leaders from post-Soviet countries, and to building mutual understanding and informal networks between our nations. Since then, we’ve responded to congressional interest and have expanded to 24 countries throughout Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific, bringing hundreds of delegates annually to meet their professional counterparts across the United States.

Overview

Our program is centered on the American community – showing Open World program delegates how Americans work and live for ten days. COIL coordinates with on-the-ground partners in each participating country to nominate young, rising leaders in the thematic area of the program. Once selected, the delegates visit the United States for ten days. Two days are spent in Washington, DC, where experts introduce concepts of American culture, history, and civics, and delegates meet with Members of Congress and their staff. The meetings are generally arranged around common issues – their constituency, their committee assignments, and their approach to government. The balance of the program is spent in a host community, where a local grantee

arranges a rigorous professional program during the day, centered around the theme of the delegation. A unique feature of the Open World program is that participants stay in the homes of the local community, gaining an intimate view of the lives of their American colleagues. Our experience has determined that this model, of bringing together Americans and their peers, is an extremely effective way of building a successful program, and a network that supports both professional and social connections that stand the test of time, and lead to notable results that improve lives both at home and abroad.

Serving Member Interests

COIL's mission is centered on its service to the Congress and seeks to support the legislature however it may through the Open World program. What started as the Russian Leadership Program in 1999 has now expanded to 24 active country programs through the process of congressional requests. Our programming closely adheres to the concerns and priorities of the Members, and we frequently add program themes to track ongoing challenges that the United States faces. Our Baltic countries feature strong cybersecurity programs as their infrastructure, as well as ours, is challenged by malicious digital actors. Concerns over security and trade issues related to an increasingly aggressive China resulted in our Indo-Pacific parliamentary program, which will encompass five key regional players by FY2025. COIL, and its Open World program, exist as a means of delivering poignant, unfiltered information directly to the decision-makers on Capitol Hill.

Benefit to American Communities

The Open World program has worked with local partners to host delegates in over 3,000 communities in every state across America. The program has broad appeal, and demand is so great that the agency can only accommodate 25% of all proposals yearly. Local organizations like Rotary clubs, world affairs councils, and community colleges, host programming year after year, encouraged by building relationships with interesting delegates, pride in their community, and a modest but important revenue stream. As a program that is proudly American, nearly all appropriated funds are spent in the United States – reinvesting American dollars into American communities.

Strengthening Constituent Collaboration with Open World Countries

COIL's programming leads to tangible benefits for American communities, and lasting partnerships with the agency's 30,000 strong alumni network. After returning home, Open World delegates led the creation of a sister city partnerships between Cedar Rapids, Iowa and Ferizaj, Kosovo; worked with the University of Nebraska Medical Center to develop a medical scholarship for Ukrainians; formed a research collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, and much more. Host families frequently engage in reciprocal travel, maintain correspondence with their visitors, and develop projects together. One delegate even helped rescue an American's extended family in Ukraine at the beginning of the Russian invasion in 2022. The bonds created on the program are durable and enriching. Below, quotes from a variety of Open World hosts are included, discussing the importance of the program to themselves and their locality.

COIL's Future

In a continually shifting geopolitical and socioeconomic landscape and Congress' considerations along with it, COIL will continue to bring relevant, impactful delegations to brief Congress and to build relationships with ordinary Americans. With a fully funded budget in FY2025, we plan to expand our programming in the Indo-Pacific to heavily emphasize trade and security issues. The agency will also devote additional staff support to forming the critical partnerships and projects that become the legacy of the Open World program. COIL also will expand its regional model, bringing multinational delegations on common issues, giving programs a novel, holistic element to the common challenges that are discussed. Finally, COIL will increase the overall delegate count to counter the attrition caused by inflation over the past several years. This will allow the agency to connect with more host communities, and create a broader, stronger hosting base. Understanding the stewardship and responsibility that comes along with public funds, COIL has exercised cautious judgment about requesting an increase. FY2025 is the first time in 11 years that the agency has requested an appropriation above \$6 million – despite cost saving measures, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain optimal operations. We respectfully request an increase of \$1.2 million in FY2025.

Quotes from Hosts

Sheila Offman Gersh, Lehman College, Bronx, New York

"I have been involved in Open World for about 8 years hosting young Eastern European professionals. Not only have these professionals been introduced to professionals related to their careers, but also to members of the local communities and in some cases, long lasting friendships. Lehman College recently hosted a group from Moldova where they were provided with expert information about their counseling program and how they prepare future counselors. This interaction was a "two-way" experience as Lehman College learned from the group and the group learned from Lehman College.

"Working with Open World has provided me with an outstanding experience of meeting young professionals from Eastern European countries. It's always a highlight of my professional life to meet the outstanding delegates. I am so happy to be part of the Open World team."

Judge Suzanne Mitchell, U.S. Magistrate Judge, OKC Rotary Club, Oklahoma

"Over the past decade, Oklahoma City and Rotary Club 29 have hosted delegations from Azerbaijan, Georgia, North Macedonia, and Armenia, to name a few. We have made lasting friendships, continuing correspondence via email and in person, as I was fortunate enough to visit Skopje and continue discussions with our Macedonian colleagues. Currently, we are in discussions to create a Sister City relationship between Oklahoma City and Yerevan. COIL's programs inevitably lead to better understanding, lasting relationships, and unforeseen positive outcomes!"

John Kun, Vice President, U.S.-Ukraine Foundation, Falls Church, Virginia

“In early 2019, the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation administered a Ukrainian “Renewal Energy” themed delegation. Ms. Oleksandra Tryboi was one of the Ukrainian delegates who was hosted by Ken and Sonja Ruffner, who reside just a few homes away from mine in Fairfax County, VA. Their bonds were very strong and in 2023, when Oleksandra and her family became refugees, it was the Ruffners who welcomed and sponsored her family’s pathway to the United States under the 2-year temporary Federal program, Uniting for Ukraine.

“The Tryboi family resided with the Ruffners for about six months until they were able to find employment and suitable, affordable housing in Herndon, VA.”

Sherry Wileman, President, Friendship Force of Big Canoe/North Georgia, Georgia

“Our club has been fortunate to host 6 Open World (OW) delegations. The delegates always ask the hosts to visit them in their own country. Our club was able to respond “yes” to that invitation from the three delegations from the Republic of Georgia. The delegates arranged memorable experiences for us and proudly shared their accomplishments since returning from their visit with us. All repeatedly expressed their gratitude to the OW program and our club members. We believe the impact the OW program has on the delegates is one they will never forget. As hosts, we treasure the relationships with the young people who visited us.”

Carl Johnson, Kiwanis Club of Lansing, Kansas

“As recently as last week, 18 months after the delegation, I heard host families sharing news and details, (wedding, new babies, job promotions etc.) of the delegates they had hosted. News from the delegates suggest that their careers have advanced very rapidly following their return, in part, I am sure, because they are remarkable individuals, but I like to think also benefited by the experience with the U.S. District Court and the Kansas Court system and homestay with Kansans.”

Olya Czerkas, Ukrainian National Women’s League of America, Florida

“Americans have greatly benefited from the Ukrainian team’s visit to the United States. Medicine was advanced as professional contacts were established, medical care systems were reevaluated, the delegation presented on their methods of surgery and patient treatment, and the impact of weaponry on victims. There were also non-medical benefits to our organization; hosts observed cultural differences, learned Ukrainian life during the ongoing war, connected with interested political officials, and established relationships with three other local organizations during the visit.”

Elena Seitz, International Cultural Education Association, Illinois

“The impact of the Open World program on our subsequent activities has been enormous and strongly educational. I personally coordinated a program in Boston for university librarians. My mother was the head of a library in a small Belarusian town for 40 years, and I grew up surrounded by books. It was a blessing for me to get into the famous libraries of Harvard University, MIT, Boston Public Library, etc. This program influenced my future choice of activities.”

Excerpts have been edited for length and clarity.



CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE FOR
INTERNATIONAL
LEADERSHIP

Mission Statement

The Congressional Office for International Leadership engages Members of Congress and their constituents in congressional and citizen diplomacy with political and civic leaders from around the globe. COIL achieves this through the Open World program, a ten-day professional exchange dedicated to strengthening mutual understanding and sharing best practices in accountable governance, civil society, the private sector, and the rule of law.

Open World Program

The Open World program is a ten-day professional exchange built on the foundational values of authentic communication and immersive cultural experiences. The program begins in Washington, DC, where delegates explore the concepts of American federalism, culture, and leadership. Delegates engage with Members of Congress and their staff to discuss common challenges and participate in unfiltered dialogue. Traveling to communities across the United States, delegates meet with their professional counterparts to share expertise and establish lasting partnerships. During the program, delegates stay with host families, giving them an intimate view of American life. There is a network of over 30,000 Open World alumni in more than 30 countries.



CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE FOR
INTERNATIONAL
LEADERSHIP

Five Year Summary of COIL Budget Requests

COIL spends its appropriation in two categories: Direct Program Costs and Administration Costs. Direct Program Costs include a logistical coordinator contract; grants to host organizations across the United States; Memoranda of Agreements with U.S. embassies in Open World countries; and about 70% of the salary and benefits of COIL staff. Grants/Other Hosting Costs refer to national and local hosting organizations (such as Rotary Club, Friendship Force International, and community colleges) that plan and execute an 8-day local program for each delegation as well as a logistical services contract. The Administrative category includes an interagency agreement with the Library of Congress for infrastructure services; small contracts for professional services; postage, telephone, cell phones; equipment and software; and office supplies and materials. COIL benefits from lower administrative costs due to its physical location in the Library of Congress.

As a resource, an asset, and investment for Members of Congress, COIL is planning a modest increase in delegate count in FY2025 to satisfy congressional interest in a robust Indo-Pacific program and to accommodate demand for delegations from American communities. Additionally, a fully funded budget request will enable much-needed additional support to American communities interested in institutionalizing relationships with visitors, deepen participants' partnerships with organizations throughout the United States, and strengthen alumni engagement efforts. The funding increase to an otherwise remarkably stable budget will be applied to the Direct Program Cost category, adding one program staff member, trickling into COIL grants to local Open World hosts, enhancing the Open World delegate count, and augmenting memoranda of agreements with U.S. embassies to stimulating alumni engagement efforts.

Fiscal Year	Appropriation	FTE
FY2025 (Requested)	\$7,200,000	8.0
FY2024	\$6,000,000	7.0
FY2023	\$6,000,000	9.3
FY2022	\$6,000,000	8.6
FY2021	\$6,000,000	8.7
FY2020	\$5,900,000	9.3

Mr. VALADAO. Well, thank you to our witnesses for testifying before this committee today.

And, as the new subcommittee chairman, I look forward to learning about all the different programs and your agencies in greater detail.

I will call on members based on seniority of those present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority. Then I will call on members in order of their arrival. Each will have 5 minutes.

I now recognize myself.

I will start with COIL. How does COIL and your exchange program support Member interests and responsibilities exactly? And can you give me an example of how it affects an individual district?

Ms. SARGUS. Well, an individual district could have any number of local hosting organizations which are the heart of the success of the exchange program. They provide members of their community to give places to stay for the delegations.

We do not believe in the hotel approach to international exchange. All of our delegates stay with American families. So they see the United States from the inside of a house, often at a kitchen table. And you learn a lot about your communities and the countries that are visiting you over a cup of tea.

So the communities love to share and show off their place, their best practices, their citizenry, their libraries. They share a lot about what makes their community accessible, pleasant, and desirable. But also they are willing to share what is not working. So they bring the conversation around to "let's see if we can come up with a new solution."

Every community benefits from an Open World delegation because they are part of the reason the delegation is able to experience the best part of American society.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Crane, my understanding is that there is not enough congressional staff that know about your programs. So what outreach are you doing into the congressional community?

Mr. CRANE. Our outreach is really a daily function of the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights. We continually engage in it. One of the primary means by which we do so is the biennial congressional climate survey, which permits 30,000 legislative branch employees to answer questions. So that allows us to provide our Oversight Committees with information as to—so they can consider determining whether the reforms that are set forth in the Reform Act have been effective.

We have training on all of the laws that are incorporated and applicable to the legislative branch through the Congressional Accountability Act.

Our general counsel has a brown bag series on items of interest for legislative branch legal counsel, both who represent employees and employing offices on the Hill.

We have outreach programs for the district offices. Our office—our safety professionals regularly provide the district offices with technical assistance. They have administered online safety and health survey recently. We have quarterly newsletters. We have labor-management forums.

And so, as I said, every day is—a part of our job is outreach to the congressional community that we serve.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Thank you.

Mr. PUGH, there is a lot of leadership programs out there. Why is it important for us to fund yours and not focus on one in the private sector?

Mr. PUGH. Thank you.

The summary of the testimony is that we have multiple funding sources. The 430 is specifically for the congressional programs.

One of the things that we have found is, with some of the other programs that are in the private sector, a lot of the times they are providing donations.

Our programming, it is funded by Congress. And we don't want the private sector to make a donation and want additional access to Members of Congress, your staff basically.

And a lot of the times, again, I mentioned that our enabling legislation allows us to solicit funding from private sector. But, I mean, I was a former appropriator. And I have been in leadership programs where it was funded by government relations or lobbyists or whatever, too, though. And a part of that was they wanted access to us, and that is what we don't want for the congressional staff.

So that is why we think it is important for Congress to continue to provide funding for this particular program within Congress.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Thank you.

I am now going to recognize our ranking member, Mr. Espallat, for his 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Valadao.

Ms. Sargus, as I mentioned during my opening statement, China now is making a full-court press in the Americas. And, of course, they have been in Africa for some time now. And your particular initiative is concentrated in the Indo-Pacific.

What would it take in terms of funding to expand it to our backyard really where we need to have an impact and counter that malign influence, not just in the Americas but also I would say in the continent, in the developing continent of Africa where it is vital for us to be on the cutting edge?

Ms. SARGUS. Thank you for the question.

I would answer that by saying that, much like the Indo-Pacific, programs with Africa have a cost challenge because of the distance. Someone coming from Serbia is not the same as someone coming from Papua New Guinea. And I imagine the same would be true for some—one of the countries of Africa.

So, from a budgetary standpoint, it would take an increase that would cover a per-person cost. So, from that region of the world, the per-person cost is higher than it might be—

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Have you made an analysis of what it would take to expand to let's say getting folks from Venezuela or, you know, the continent, right, right in our backyard, right next door where, you know, there is a strong presence and a real push by China?

Ms. SARGUS. Yes, that is true. We actually had a pilot program for Peru some years back because Peru was one of the countries covered under the House Democracy Partnership, and our board

has allowed us to participate in programming for any country in the HDP portfolio.

So, to do—to add countries, the board, our board, which is made up of Members of Congress and private citizens, would have to approve the new country.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. OK.

Ms. SARGUS. And most of the time what it takes for the board to approve that addition would be a bipartisan letter or indication of a bipartisan letter of support. And that is how the Indo-Pacific program was launched, with a bipartisan letter that we presented to the board who voted to agree to do the Indo-Pacific region.

We discovered only after we started there what the budget challenges were. I don't call them obstacles. I call them challenges because there are solutions to funding these kinds of programs, and I imagine we could do it anywhere.

And one of the reasons we did this program in Peru, we wanted to see how generic, how adaptable our program was in different regions of the world. And we found that it worked very well.

We would be open to Venezuela. We would be open to Cuba. We would be open to a number of places with that bipartisan indication that it would be useful to do that. It would take bipartisan on-the-record request that the board would then respond to. And then we give a notification to the subcommittee, 90-day notification, that a new country has been added.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And I recognize that the largest number of participants in the program, in your program, are from the Ukraine.

Ms. SARGUS. Currently. That is our largest cohort.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And this happened after—

Ms. SARGUS. After 2022, that is true. We suspended the Russia program in 2022, for obvious reasons. We don't have a path forward to restarting it, for obvious reasons.

But, in the words of the late, great Dr. James Billington, who founded the agency in 1999, keeping a door open, keeping a way forward, having an opportunity for dialogue is very important. We have 20,000 alumni in Russia. We don't have contact with them necessarily, but sometimes somebody reaches out to us. We are not interested in endangering anyone, but we also don't want to endanger our own program.

Our agency is still allowed to operate there, should we choose to do so. We have not been declared a foreign agent. Because we are associated with Congress and not a Presidential administration, we have a certain access.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. One last question. How do you protect yourself from being infiltrated by foreign agents? Are there any mechanisms that would—

Ms. SARGUS. Not a formal mechanism. A lot of it has—such a tiny agency. There are seven of us. So we talk about these sorts of things constantly. We inform each other of funny things happening. We try to keep informed. We also ask questions when we can.

The first time I ever testified, I appeared on Russian media everywhere.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. OK.

Ms. SARGUS. And that was not a comfortable feeling, I will tell you, honestly.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. This meeting may be in Russia—

Ms. SARGUS. It may be. It may be very well. You know, they pronounced my name right. I was quite happy about that but—but, yes, it is—it is dicey.

But the people I met from Russia are just like Americans. They may or may not love their government, but they love their country, and I respect that.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. LaTurner, 5 minutes.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you and congratulations, Mr. Chairman. So happy to have you.

My first question is for Director Crane. Are there any other—other than the annual mandatory training for staff and Members, do you offer any other services and training throughout the year?

Mr. CRANE. Well, we offer a full range of training, which is all listed on our website, and we can give it at any time throughout the year.

Mr. LATURNER. Is it upon request or—

Mr. CRANE. It is upon request. These are most of them are voluntary training and education programs. They can be given in person. They can be given virtually, which enhances our ability to comply with the congressional mandate that we provide equity of access to employees in district offices throughout the country.

Mr. LATURNER. How often are those utilized, the upon-request training?

Mr. CRANE. On a fairly regular basis. It would really depend on the particular training. The most popular is obviously the training that concerns all the rights and protections under the CAA, followed by voluntary training modules on subjects such as labor relations, developments in discrimination law, and various other topics.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Director Sargus, so you mentioned 20,000 in Russia alone have gone through this. What would be examples of the fruits of that interaction that we have had, not just there but everywhere?

Ms. SARGUS. One example is the partner—sister city relationships that started. Now sister cities are all at risk now because there are no relationships with Russia. But, during the course of our program in Russia, there were lots of sister city relations that were created.

And I can tell you that Rotary International is probably hands down singularly—responsibility for the success of this program in Russia with Russian citizens. There became many, many Rotary Clubs in Russia that didn't exist before our program. And that would be one.

The other one is a very simple example of a delegate who came to the United States from Russia in 2005, went to Texas, stayed with a host family. They had horses. He rode horses on the farm. They had a barbecue as part of a community event. He had Texas barbecue. He had a wonderful time.

And his name appeared in a report in 2005 from the facilitator who joined the group as someone to keep an eye on, and his name

was Alexei Navalny. And it was very important to us to watch how he did and what he did over the years. We considered it a loss almost at a personal level at his death. But we are also very proud of the fact that his vision of the world, part of it was born in Texas.

Thank you.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you very much.

Dr. Pugh, I am curious. Two questions for you. I think you said it has been around since the late eighties. Is that right?

Mr. PUGH. 1988.

Mr. LATURNER. 1988, yes.

How close does the current program look like to the original one in 1988, the original intent?

Mr. PUGH. So it is quite different. The Stennis, use the Stennis Fellows Program, our flagship program. It was started with the 103rd Congress. So that wasn't actually started in 1988, but it has changed drastically.

When we have—the 103rd Congress, we didn't get nearly as many senior-level officials or staffers applying for the program, and now it is a lot more senior. I think the average government experience for the 118th Congress that is part of the program is like 15.8 years. So it is a lot more senior-level staff.

And, really, just depending on what the congressional class wants, that is—that really decides what the curriculum is. So it evolves. Right now, again—

Mr. LATURNER. You talked multiple times about different funding sources. How many different funding sources? How big, how big of a portfolio are you managing?

Mr. PUGH. So it is just under \$2 million. So we have civil-military programs.

Mr. LATURNER. Just under \$2 million?

Mr. PUGH. Just under \$2 million.

Mr. LATURNER. OK.

Mr. PUGH. Correct. We have a civil-military program, and we get a transfer from the DOD for that portion. And we also work with our—our congressional fellows actually touch every—all of our programs.

And we also have an endowment. When we were created in 1988, it was about \$7.5 million. But the interest over that period of time, too, is just under \$18 million in endowment. So the principal off the endowment actually supports our student program. So that is kind of what we use for that.

Mr. LATURNER. Understood.

Thank you all for being here today.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. LaTurner.

Mr. Franklin, you have got 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And congratulations. It has a very nice ring to it.

Mr. Crane, a couple of questions regarding your budget. I am just still trying to understand how these are put together. The \$500,000 carryover that you are requesting to go beyond the end of the fiscal year into the next, is that something that is a recurring component of your budget? Do you currently have a half million that is going go into the fiscal year 2025 or 2024?

Mr. CRANE. The 500,000 that we are requesting as multiyear money, we use that money to pay for non-personnel costs, such as contractors and service providers. In the past, we have asked that more—for more money to obligate up through the following fiscal year.

But we have reduced that quite a bit simply because we anticipate and we project for fiscal year 2025 that we are going to have lower, non-personnel costs. So since we only use that to cover non-personnel costs, and we expect those to be lower—we have reduced—we have reduced the amount.

But what we do use that for is what we consider the known unknowns. Every one of our hearings, our hearing officers are contractors. Our mediators are contractors. So we don't—we simply don't know how many cases we are going to get in a given year.

But, if there is an unanticipated increase, then we would—we would rely on that \$500,000 in 2-year money to cover those costs.

Mr. FRANKLIN. That kind of sounds like you are anticipating lower expenses, but you don't want to give up that money. So you are asking to keep it in the budget and carry it forward. I don't really understand why things are different. And, if you are projecting less, why don't you request less?

Mr. CRANE. Request less in 2-year money or request less altogether?

Mr. FRANKLIN. If I understood, you said you are expecting your needs to be lower in the year.

Mr. CRANE. We are expecting our non-personnel costs to be lower, but we are expecting our personnel costs to be higher. So all but \$500,000 of what—of our request are—the—that is all personnel costs increasing. The \$500,000 more or less represents that portion of increased personnel costs that aren't offset by non-personnel costs, anticipated non-personnel costs.

Mr. FRANKLIN. OK. That is still clear as mud to me.

But, in the last Congress, it was approved to allow offices to unionize. Just wondering how that program has progressed. How many—how many are unionized now? How many are in the process? And how has that impacted your workload of your team?

Mr. CRANE. As far as numbers, in fiscal year 2023, we had eight representation election petitions filed, and we conducted 11 representation elections and issued certifications in those cases.

We haven't had a petition filed in fiscal year 2024. We did receive a disclaimer petition in 2024, but recently we haven't had a lot of activity on the unionization front.

We have an FTE to process those union petitions when they come in. That person does a number of other tasks for us. So I would estimate that about 20 percent of his time is spent on processing union petitions.

And our non-personnel costs concern processing union petitions are de minimis. We use a contractor that allows us to conduct virtual secret ballot elections for employees both on the Hill and in the district offices. But the contracting costs, that is a contractor that is also used by the Federal Labor Relations Authority in the executive branch. But our contracting costs are de minimis.

Mr. FRANKLIN. All right. Very good.

Dr. Pugh, quick question. I noticed a lot of your budget is funded from the trust fund originally that was established, and you feed a lot off of the interest on that.

What is the corpus of that trust fund? What are we talking about?

Mr. PUGH. Initially it was \$7.5 million. And, again, it has grown. But, in our enabling legislation, it is really restrictive. So we can only invest in Treasury bonds. So it hasn't grown nearly as much, but we don't touch the 57.5 million. And interest right now is, with low interest rates, I mean, if I had—

Mr. FRANKLIN. It is going up. You are probably the only person around who—

Mr. PUGH. Exactly.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Hopefully you will be coming back to us needing more because the interest rates are lower.

Mr. PUGH. So, if I had to—I am trying to think of the number last year. It was under \$200,000. I mean, even with the large amount, like I mentioned, it was let's just say approximately \$18 million, too, though—it doesn't generate a quarter of a million dollars in interest. So and that is with the conservative Treasury bonds that we are restricted to.

Mr. FRANKLIN. I understand. OK.

Mr. PUGH. Again, whenever—in 1988, when it was created, interest rates were just under 10 percent. So it was generating \$600,000. That is not the case now.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Right. Understand. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Mrs. Bice, 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Chairman, congratulations and welcome to the Leg Branch Approps Subcommittee.

Mr. VALADAO. Welcome back. I was here a few years ago.

Mrs. BICE. Well, not since I am here. So I am happy to have you.

I want to start by speaking to Ms. Sargus. Last Congress, the GAO identified that COIL actually doesn't have oversight from an inspector general. Is that accurate that you do not have an IG that oversees COIL to conduct regular audits and performance evaluations, et cetera?

Ms. SARGUS. It is half true.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you.

Ms. SARGUS. We occupy space in the Library of Congress by agreement. And, as such, we also ride the contract for the annual audit with the Library of Congress. So their IG manages that contract, which means, by extension, they provide support to us for the annual audit. But it is limited. The IG support is limited only to the annual audit.

Mrs. BICE. So are you suggesting that it would be incumbent upon the LOC to request an either independent inspector general or for them to conduct a full audit of COIL, moving forward?

Ms. SARGUS. Well, we get a full audit.

Mrs. BICE. A performance audit?

Ms. SARGUS. Oh, a financial statements audit.

Mrs. BICE. I am looking for a full audit.

Ms. SARGUS. I see. My understanding is that GAO would be able to determine whether that is under—that is under their purview.

Whether—I don't believe I have the ability to ask the Library's IG to do such a thing, and I don't believe the Library's IG would do it just because I requested it. I believe GAO would have to provide some guidance, some sense of whose purview this falls under to determine how it would be done.

Mrs. BICE. Well, so, last year, your office was in discussions with the Library of Congress IG and the House Administration Committee to explore having an IG serve as an independent IG to your office. But those discussions abruptly ended, and I believe it was claimed that COIL was not accountable to the House Administration Committee, which oversees LOC.

Ms. SARGUS. I don't know who claimed that.

Mrs. BICE. OK.

Ms. SARGUS. But COIL has a very strong relationship with the House Administration Committee. We have for many years, both from a programmatic sense but also from an agency sense.

We work very closely with the Library, and we appreciate very much the services we get from the Library, but we can't demand from the IG service or coverage that is not within their purview to give to us.

Mrs. BICE. So let me make sure that we are tracking on the same path here.

Ms. SARGUS. Sure.

Mrs. BICE. If I, as an appropriator and a member of House Administration, want to ensure that COIL has a full audit, not just a budgetary audit, are you agreeing that that should happen and that we should try find a way to execute on that?

Ms. SARGUS. I think we would be amenable to a full audit if that is what was deemed important, necessary, and customary. We would be happy to do it.

Mrs. BICE. I think almost every agency has a full audit on a semiregular basis. It could be every 3 years, 4 years, 5 years. Who knows?

Ms. SARGUS. OK.

Mrs. BICE. And it seems that that hasn't happened with COIL. So I think for me as, again, as an appropriator on leg branch but also as member of the House Administration Committee, I think it is incredibly important that we have visibility and insight and transparency.

Ms. SARGUS. Yes.

Mrs. BICE. So I appreciate your willingness to allow us to try to figure out a way that we can incorporate a full IG into your organization to ensure that, you know, that you are meeting all the needs.

The other question I have for you is, looking at that time fiscal year appropriation requested, you had, in fiscal year 2020, the appropriation was 5.9 million, and you had 9.3 full-time employees. You are asking for an increase from that 2020 appropriation to 7.2 but a decrease to 8 employees.

Can you explain that?

Ms. SARGUS. Yes. The program cost has grown exponentially. The per-person cost for our program from 2020 to 2023 has increased

by 60 percent. A lot of that is airfare, but also the home hosting costs have increased.

So a delegation is six people. To rent a van and a driver and have those kind of resources available takes more money in the local grants.

So the cost of our program has increased in grants and in the contract that we have with an NGO to be our implementer, to be our logistical implementer. So those costs have gone up exponentially.

Mrs. BICE. How many cohorts do you host annually?

Ms. SARGUS. About 550, between 500 and 600 a year.

Mrs. BICE. And you are doing them in groups of six? Did I hear that right?

Ms. SARGUS. Yes.

Mrs. BICE. So a hundred of them, you are doing a hundred individual programs annually.

Ms. SARGUS. Yes.

Mrs. BICE. OK. All right.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield. Thank you.

Ms. SARGUS. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mrs. Bice.

If there are no further questions, I would like to thank Dr. Pugh, Mr. Crane, and Ms. Sargus for being here today.

Members may submit any additional questions for the record.

And the subcommittee stands adjourned.

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL**

WITNESSES

CARLA HAYDEN, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

JOSEPH DIPIETRO, ACTING ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Mr. VALADAO. The subcommittee will come to order.

The subject of today's hearing is the "Fiscal Year 2025 Request for the Library of Congress and the Architect of the Capitol".

I would like to thank Ranking Member Espaillat and committee members and the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, and the Acting Architect, Joe DiPietro, for being here today.

The largest Library in the world, the Library of Congress, is the main research arm of Congress. The Library of Congress fiscal year 2025 budget request, with offsetting amount, totals \$898 million, a 5-percent increase from fiscal year 2024.

The funding would support acquisition, preservation, programming, and technical development for the Library of Congress, as well as administer the Nation's copyright lawsuits. The funding would also provide authoritative, confidential, objective, non-partisan, and timely research and analysis to Congress and circulate millions of copies of braille, audio, and large-print items to the blind and print-disabled patrons.

I understand the Library just concluded the biggest Gershwin Prize for Popular Song to date, honoring the legendary songwriting duo of Elton John and Bernie Taupin.

And I offer my congratulations to you and the Library's team for the program's great success. I happened to be there and enjoyed the show.

The Architect of the Capitol is the steward of 18.4 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art that 30,000 occupants of the Capitol campus and 5 million annual visitors experience daily.

The Architect of the Capitol fiscal year 2025 request is \$1.3 billion, an increase of 9 percent. This funding allows for the daily operations and maintenance responsibilities, as well as critical security and life-safety priorities, Capitol renewal projects and deferred maintenance that support Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Library of Congress, the United States Capitol Police, and numerous other AOC-managed facilities.

I also understand congratulations are in order to the Architect of the Capitol for recently being awarded the prestigious Associations of Government Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting for the preparing in excellent fiscal year 2023 Performance and Ac-

countability Report. Congratulations to you and the CFO accounting operations and Integrated Risk Management Division.

I would also like to thank the witnesses for being here today.

And I now recognize my ranking member here for his opening remarks.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Chairman Valadao.

Good morning, Dr. Hayden and Mr. DiPietro. I echo the chairman's words and welcome you to discuss your agencies' budget requests for fiscal year 2025.

This has been quite the year for the Architect of the Capitol. I know that the role of the AOC is a difficult one, especially given the agency's current challenges.

Mr. DiPietro, thank you for leading the team until a new AOC is found.

Also, congratulations to the AOC Office of the Chief Financial Officer for receiving the prestigious Association of Government Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting. I understand this award is for preparing an excellent fiscal year 2023 Performance and Accountability Report. Great job, and keep up the good work.

For fiscal year 2025, the AOC has requested \$1 billion, an increase of \$84 million, or 9 percent, over 2024 enacted levels. This increase addresses backlogs and deferred maintenance projects that are necessary across the Capitol complex.

I would also like to, Mr. Valadao, be on the record expressing my concerns regarding the delay in installing the honorific plaque to honor U.S. Capitol officers and other members of law enforcement. I know at this point the AOC is ready and awaiting clear directions to install the plaque. The project required by Public Law 117-103 is on hold without explanation from leadership. I hope others on this subcommittee also share my desire to see this honorific plaque promptly installed.

Dr. Hayden, the Library of Congress is a national treasure and your leadership there is unprecedented. You do great work, and I appreciate your commitment to making the Library and its collection most discoverable and accessible to the public, as well as your continued emphasis on technology development and security.

Mr. Valadao, the access to the Library of Congress information and data is a national security issue. And Dr. Hayden has taken the detailed emphasis and concentration of making sure that we are protected.

And I also would like to extend a special thanks to the Library's dedicated staff for their continuous and essential support to Congress, especially to our appropriations committee.

For fiscal year 2025, the Library has requested \$944 million, an increase of \$46 million, or 5.1 percent, over the fiscal year 2024 enacted levels.

As a ranking member, I am committed to ensuring the Library and the AOC have the resources they need to fulfill their mission, safeguard their staff and infrastructure, and provide needed services to all Americans.

Thank you all again for being here, and I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Dr. Hayden is joined here today with Shira Perlmutter, the Registrar of Copyrights and Director of U.S. Copyright

Office, and Dr. Robert Newlen, the interim Director of the Congressional Research Service.

Both of their testimonies have been submitted for the record.

Members are welcome to address questions to either, in addition to Dr. Hayden.

Dr. Hayden, your full testimony has been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF CARLA HAYDEN, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

Ms. HAYDEN. Thank you, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the subcommittee.

I am very pleased to be able to have this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2025 budget.

In fiscal 2023 and 2024, the Library, with the support of Congress, met its mission to, quote, "engage, inspire, and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity."

We do this in both traditional and innovative ways. And today with nearly 178 million items in the physical collections and many more in digital form, the Library remains the steward of the largest collection of information and research ever assembled, not as a memorial but as a living source of knowledge and creativity for Congress and the betterment of all.

I would like to express my gratitude for the ongoing support of the Library from Congress and this committee in particular for funding our IT investments.

Also, special thanks for your support of the visitor experience. We will open the first permanent Treasures Gallery in June of this year and expect that the Youth Center, called The Source, will open in 2025, in time for the Nation's semiquincentennial in 2026.

I come before you today to discuss the Library of Congress' fiscal 2025 appropriations request for \$943.7 million, a 5.1-increase over the Library's 2024 appropriation. This request includes 38.9 mandatory million in pay and price level increases, and the remaining increases represent critical investments necessary to meet the Library's mission.

In recognizing that economic conditions are different from when they were 8 years ago when I became Librarian, we are requesting the lowest programmatic increase in my tenure.

The two new requests for fiscal 2025 further the goals of the Library's new strategic plan for fiscal year 2024-28, A Library for All, to expand access, enhance services, strengthen our capacity, and foster innovation.

We are asking, first, for an investment to strengthen the Library's infrastructure, including staff with advanced skills, to support digital collections processing and acquisition as we move increasingly toward digital as the preferred format. This includes digital content in copyright deposits, which are central to building our collections.

The second request supports collections handling for expanded exhibit spaces in the Thomas Jefferson Building that will display over 1,000 items worth millions of dollars, a 50-percent increase over the previous year's exhibit capacity. This request ensures that

exhibit items are secure and supported by an appropriate level of trained and experienced staff.

And, in keeping with our strategic goals, we are also resubmitting three vital requests that were not funded in fiscal 2024. The first will enable both CRS and the Office of the Chief Information Officer to expand CRS' quantitative data analysis and policy simulation capacity to analyze, "big data" for congressional clients.

The second re-request will enable the Library to meet the growing demands for accessibility services to improve access to our digital products, materials, and services for Americans with disabilities.

The third resubmission, expanded contracts and grant staffing as we face an attrition rate as high as 28 percent with heavier workloads and increasingly complex contracts, particularly for IT-related acquisitions.

So, in summary, the Library's 2025 congressional budget justification advances necessary work initiated in previous years to move the Library forward, while preserving our world-class resources and making them, most importantly, accessible for those who will come after us.

I am happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hayden follows:]

**Statement of Carla Hayden
The Librarian of Congress
Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

Fiscal 2025 Budget Request

April 16, 2024

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2025 budget request.

The mission of the Library of Congress is to “Engage, inspire and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.” Above all, the Library exists to serve. Service to the Congress remains the foundation for the Library’s mission every day with analysis, policy consultations, briefings, programs and constituent engagement. The U.S. Copyright Office within the Library promotes creativity and knowledge by administering the nation’s copyright system for the benefit of all. And service to the American people – Copyright users, researchers, visitors, teachers, students, veterans, and blind and print disabled citizens, among many others – delivered in countless ways, takes a user-centered approach with access in person and in digital form.

The Library’s resources are authoritative, expansive, and evergreen. In a time of rapidly evolving technology in a fast-changing world, the Library of Congress stands as it has for 223 years as the steward of the largest collection of information and resources ever assembled – not as a memorial but as a living source of knowledge and creativity for Congress and the betterment of all. The Library meets its responsibility to collect, preserve and share these treasures every day by constantly renewing the collections and the services it provides to the Congress and the American people. With congressional support, the Library is extensively modernizing and optimizing systems, processes, and staff. Throughout, the Library never stops its drive to engage, inspire and inform, increasingly through digital means.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and extraordinary support that this committee and all of the Congress gives to the Library. In particular, I appreciate the funding you have provided for major Information Technology (IT) investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools. These investments include the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS); CRS’s Integrated Research and Information System (IRIS); the National Library Service’s Braille Audio Reading by Download (BARD) and next generation devices; the Library Collections Access Platform (L-CAP); Congress.gov; and the Library’s core IT infrastructure and IT security.

I would also like to give special thanks for your support of the Library's Visitor Experience initiative over the last five years. We are excited to open the Treasures Gallery in June of this year and we expect the Youth Center, named "The Source," will open by the end of 2025, in time for the nation's semiquincentennial in 2026. Further, in addition to the funds appropriated by the Congress, we have raised more than \$20 million in private donations for this project. We remain in constant coordination with the Architect of the Capitol and are grateful for the Committee's involvement to ensure the success of the Orientation Gallery, a critical element of the project.

I come before you today to discuss the Library's fiscal 2025 appropriations request of \$943.7 million, which represents a 5.1 percent increase over the Library's fiscal 2024 appropriation, including \$38.9 million in mandatory pay and price level increases. The Library has absorbed especially high pay and inflationary increases over the last three years, with a 5.3 percent pay raise and inflationary increases at 3.4 percent in fiscal 2024 alone. The need to absorb these increases threatens all that we do and has a permanent impact. This is particularly the case for the Library of Congress, Salaries & Expenses appropriation because it provides centralized support services to the entire Library.

The budget request reflects the resources needed to sustain the Library's mission of service to the Congress and the American people, and its strategic priorities to be digitally enabled, user centered, data informed, inclusive and welcoming, with meaningful collaboration and partnership and active engagement with our communities. It builds on multiyear strategic efforts to rebuild the information technology foundation and to optimize advanced IT systems and business processes, while at the same time enhancing access and customer services. And it invests in the future, ensuring that the Library can safeguard and support its collections, services, and workforce in person and online.

The request aligns with the strategic goals set forth in the new fiscal 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, *A Library for All*. Expand access, enhance services, strengthen capacity, and foster innovation. The goals affirm the Library's user-centered mission of service. The Library's formerly standalone Digital Strategy is now fully integrated into the new Strategic Plan, in recognition that technology must be "baked into all that we do." Digital technology indeed permeates every aspect of the Library as a modern knowledge institution, and it is used deliberately and strategically to meet the needs of a quickly changing world. None of the Library's strategic goals or themes in today's context could be achieved without the contributions of digital technology.

Recognizing that economic conditions are different than they were eight years ago when I became Librarian, we are requesting the lowest programmatic increase of my tenure -- \$11.3 million compared to the highest at \$55 million. We have minimized programmatic increases by deferring those without critical impacts, not because our needs have decreased, but out of concern for the impact of absorbing mandatory pay and price level increases given current economic conditions and other external forces. We have taken great care to make only programmatic requests that are necessary and have a meaningful impact on our service to the Congress and the American people.

The two new requests for fiscal 2025 further the goals in the new Strategic Plan:

Digital Collections Processing Capacity and Infrastructure

In alignment with the Expand Access strategic goal, digital collections processing capacity and infrastructure meet the strategic objective to invest in end-to-end modernization of IT infrastructure to support the centrality of digital collecting and strengthen staff capacity with advanced skills in processing digital content and the supporting IT systems. These resources are necessary to support a host of IT infrastructure and systems to redesign and refresh workflows critical for the Library to meet the objectives, principles and targets to acquire, preserve and make accessible digital content as set forth in the Library's Strategic Plan.

The new initiative for digital collections processing capacity and infrastructure is essential as the Library increasingly moves toward digital as the necessary preferred format for acquiring items for the collections that were born digital or converted from analog form. Existing digital systems that support most digital collections were developed iteratively more than a decade ago and are in need of investment to better standardize, integrate, and modernize to accommodate the rapidly growing scale of digital collections growth.

The initiative will support the ongoing work to digitize and manage materials from the collections, and the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format. To achieve this, the request will provide resources critical to upgrading and improving the IT systems, workflows, and processes necessary to support ongoing work to digitize and manage digital materials from our collections, and to support the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format. Copyright deposits, for example, are central to building the Library's collection, and it is critical for it to be as easy as possible for digital content and metadata delivered to the Copyright Office to be considered for additions to the Library's collections. This request also includes staffing with advanced skills to process and describe content to make it accessible, as well as staff to support IT systems for digital content management and processing.

Center for Exhibits and Interpretation Collections Handling

In pursuit of the Library's strategic goals to expand access and enhance services by transforming in-person experiences the Library will open more than 12,000 square feet of public space in the Thomas Jefferson Building. The expanded exhibition spaces will display over 1,000 items at any given time, a nearly 50 percent increase from previous years. A majority of the objects on view must be rotated every six months or less, which means that each item must be reviewed, cataloged, mounted, installed, and deinstalled by trained and experienced registrars. The level of permanent registrar and production staff has remained flat for the last decade, and is not sufficient to accommodate the support requirements to cover the expansion of the Library's exhibition spaces. The Library has stewardship over the collections, including those on display worth millions of dollars. This request is put forward to ensure that additional items on exhibit are secure and supported by an appropriate level of staff.

Fiscal 2024 Re-Submissions

In keeping with our strategic goals, we are re-submitting three vital requests that were not funded in the 2024 budget request. These initiatives support the 2024-2028 strategic goals of expanding access, enhancing service, strengthening capacity and fostering innovation. The initiatives are:

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

CRS is working to diversify its new product offerings. Examples include the American Law Division's weekly Congressional Court Watcher distributed to congressional clients interested in notable federal court cases, an infographic on Middle East Natural Gas, a podcast on AI noting the availability of a published report on the same subject, and a bill summary available in voice version.

CRS is also working to make finding reports and experts easier on CRS.gov and exploring AI and machine learning for analyzing legislative bills and text to expedite summaries and searches. CRS divisions are developing interactive tools for Members, so that Members can determine more easily and immediately how multiple policy approaches might impact specific constituencies. CRS experts are also using big data to improve their analysis. The request includes staffing to strengthen existing capabilities and an investment in the tools and datasets required to broaden the depth of quantitative analysis and models by leveraging big data.

Language from the Joint Explanatory Statement, accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 Public Law 117-328, directs CRS to explore ways in which it could expand the ability to perform quantitative analysis of research data and conduct a feasibility study. The study was completed and presented to Oversight and Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate. In September 2023, the Library awarded a one-year contract to pilot a small set of cloud-based quantitative data models for CRS consistent with the guidance in the feasibility study. CRS has also initiated an AI working group to explore how AI technology can enhance work for the Congress.

Expanding the Digital Accessibility program (Expanding Access) will more equitably enable the Library to meet its mission in the information age. The Library's digital products, materials, and services must be accessible to all, including those with disabilities. With that in mind, the Library established a small digital accessibility program in fiscal 2020 with one FTE. This office provides in-house digital accessibility expertise and guidance for Library IT projects and other digital initiatives, utilizing supplemental resources from another office. Additional resources will mature the enterprise digital accessibility program, expanding capacity to meet growing Library demands for accessibility services including consultation, compliance assessment, and remediation. Establishing greater capacity and tools in the Digital Accessibility program will enable the Library to meet growing demands for accessibility services including consultation, compliance assessment, and remediation and to improve access to the Library's digital products, materials, and services for Americans with disabilities. Direct patron and staff feedback, along with preliminary expert

assessments, point to a large gap between the Library's products, materials, and services and federal/international accessibility standards. The Library seeks to expand the program so that accessibility is addressed at the same time the Library enhances current digital products with custom development, releases new IT development efforts, and procures new commercial-off-the-shelf and software-as-a-service products. This includes training staff and integrating accessibility from the beginning of the software development lifecycle.

Expanded Contracting and Grants Directorate staffing (Strengthening Capacity) is requested in response to the staffing shortages stemming from increased contract complexity, and unusually high and sustained FTE attrition. Expanded contracting staff will support comprehensive, optimal acquisition planning, execution, contract management, and oversight. The Library, like other federal agencies, is facing substantial attrition of its contracting staff as workloads increase and contracts become more complex, particularly for IT-related acquisitions. These are already hard-to-fill positions and a government-wide shortage of contract specialists makes recruitment and retention even more challenging. Additional staffing will support technology innovation and development contracts, integrate digital accessibility into the Library's IT acquisition process and contracts, monitor the Library's 400-plus Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) workforce, and strengthen oversight of policies and procedures. The ability to properly handle increased contract volume and complexity in areas such as development of major IT systems and digital accessibility will be resolved. The requested funds will also be used to integrate a web-enabled solution for the grants lifecycle to support grant application, award, and management processes into the eAcquisition system. By integrating the Grants Management System with the eAcquisition System, an efficient, fully automated CGD office that connects the grants process with the acquisition and financial IT systems will be established.

In closing, the fiscal 2025 budget request carefully furthers the modernization efforts of recent years and supports the goals of the new fiscal 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. In a time of rapid change, in technology, in society, and in the world, the Library has a responsibility to preserve and use its resources for the greatest benefit today and for decades to come. With the consistent support of the Congress, the Library has never and will never stop enhancing and extending its service to this country.

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for supporting the Library of Congress and for your consideration of our fiscal 2025 budget request.

Library of Congress Mission Statement

Our Mission

Engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

Every day, millions of people of all ages engage with the Library of Congress to be informed...to be inspired...to seek and to create knowledge. As the nation's first federal cultural institution and the world's largest library, our vast and expanding collections engage intellect, cultivate curiosity and spark creativity. Our collections reveal the stories of our nation and connect us with the world. Service to Congress steadfastly remains the foundation for the Library's mission. We continue to engage, inspire and inform Congress through our collections, services and experiences, including on-demand analysis, policy consultations, briefings, events, programs and constituent engagement. Within our walls, the U.S. Copyright Office promotes creativity and knowledge by administering the nation's copyright system for the benefit of all.

Service to the American people requires a user-centered approach for ever-growing, ever-changing communities, to welcome those visiting and interacting with the Library in person and many more interacting online. To fulfill our role as steward and resource for all our users, the Library continues to mature our digital capabilities and strategically integrate digital approaches in all we do. We use the promise of technology to enable new and innovative approaches to meet in-person and online needs.

Engage

Researchers, learners and creators from across the globe turn to the Library for our unparalleled, freely-available source materials. Drawing knowledge and inspiration from the Library's extensive collection of manuscripts, maps, rare books, photographs, films and sound recordings, our users produce fresh works that will in turn benefit future generations. Celebrated artists and public figures, as well as the many associations, libraries, educators and others with whom we collaborate, amplify our message: there is something for everyone at the Library.

Among the Library's most engaging programs, our National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled provides life-enhancing service to millions of Americans with blindness and other print disabilities through a national network of libraries that distribute the latest contemporary literature in a variety of accessible formats.

Inspire

Conceived as a monumental temple to knowledge, the soaring frescoed spaces and gilded halls of the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building have made it a prominent landmark in the nation's capital, drawing visitors from far and wide. Every day that the Library opens its doors to researchers and the public, thousands of visitors draw inspiration from the building, our staff and our collections. Beyond the Library's physical spaces, exhilarating digital experiences and content await our virtual visitors. Regardless of where they are, people can connect with our collections and experts.

A variety of in-person programs, exhibitions and events such as the National Book Festival, the upcoming permanent Treasures Gallery and Live at the Library are enhancing the in-person experience and engaging new audiences. As well, the crowdsourcing platform By the People and livestreams of the Library's unparalleled literary content do the same in our digital space.

Inform

Every day, we add thousands of new items to our collections, both physical and digital. We know that we have something for everyone, and we make our collections, records and products as widely accessible as possible. Now, students can reference our collection items in their school papers, hobbyists can access materials related to their interests, and academic researchers can embark on their next projects, all from their schools, homes or offices. Whether they need on-site or online access to our resources, our expert staff will be here to help them.

For users in the legislative, judicial and executive branches, our scholars and specialists from the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. Copyright Office, the Law Library of Congress, our reading rooms, the Kluge Center and our Federal Research Division provide authoritative knowledge via our collections and through direct consultation. With our on-site and online services, users near and far are able to access our wide body of resources and expertise.

Library of Congress
5-Year Appropriation Level Summary
Fiscal Year 2019 - 2025
(Dollars in Thousands)

	Fiscal 2019		Fiscal 2020		Fiscal 2021		Fiscal 2022		Fiscal 2023		Fiscal 2024		Fiscal 2025 Request							
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount						
Library of Congress, S&E	2,193	\$ 489,050	2,278	\$ 504,164	5.0%	2,206	\$ 523,664	3.8%	2,227	\$ 559,621	5.1%	2,272	\$ 582,529	5.6%	2,272	\$ 592,411	1.7%	2,308	\$ 824,908	5.5%
Copyright Office, S&E	429	\$ 94,407	429	\$ 91,840	-1.7%	464	\$ 93,416	1.7%	472	\$ 98,038	4.9%	478	\$ 100,674	2.7%	478	\$ 107,433	4.2%	478	\$ 107,433	4.2%
Congressional Research Service, S&E	621	\$ 125,698	621	\$ 120,495	-4.1%	633	\$ 125,495	4.1%	633	\$ 126,109	2.9%	641	\$ 133,600	5.9%	641	\$ 146,485	9.5%	641	\$ 146,485	9.5%
NLS - BRPH, S&E	113	\$ 27,795	115	\$ 68,903	11.0%	113	\$ 59,950	1.7%	113	\$ 61,227	2.8%	113	\$ 66,120	12.7%	113	\$ 65,912	-0.3%	113	\$ 65,912	-0.3%
Total Library Budget Authority	3,336	\$ 761,910	3,443	\$ 775,062	3.1%	3,416	\$ 882,128	3.5%	3,445	\$ 888,992	4.6%	3,564	\$ 897,460	4.3%	3,604	\$ 897,749	2.5%	3,640	\$ 943,738	6.1%

> Total Library Budget Authority amounts displayed include spending authority derived from offsetting collections

Mandatories, Price-levels & Programmatic Increases by Year -
(Dollars in Thousands)

	Fiscal Year 2020 Increase	Fiscal Year 2021 Increase	Fiscal Year 2022 Increase	Fiscal Year 2023 Increase	Fiscal Year 2024 Increase	Fiscal Year 2025 Request Increase
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Fiscal Year 2020 Increase

Fiscal Year 2021 Increase

Fiscal Year 2022 Increase

Fiscal Year 2023 Increase

Fiscal Year 2024 Increase

Fiscal Year 2025 Request Increase

Price Level Increase

Non-Floor Increase - Requested

Program Increase - Directed

Program Increase - Requested

Other Funding Increases

Fiscal Year 2020 Increase

Fiscal Year 2021 Increase

Fiscal Year 2022 Increase

Fiscal Year 2023 Increase

Fiscal Year 2024 Increase

Fiscal Year 2025 Request Increase

Price Level Increase

Non-Floor Increase - Requested

Program Increase - Directed

Program Increase - Requested

Other Funding Increases

Fiscal Year 2020 Increase

Fiscal Year 2021 Increase

Fiscal Year 2022 Increase

Fiscal Year 2023 Increase

Fiscal Year 2024 Increase

Fiscal Year 2025 Request Increase

Price Level Increase

Non-Floor Increase - Requested

Program Increase - Directed

Program Increase - Requested

Other Funding Increases

During Dr. Hayden's tenure, the Library embarked on a strategy of modernization in almost every area in the Library to continue to lead the world's Libraries and achieve the strategic goals of greater access and customer service for all Americans.

Budget Change from 2019 to 2020 (+3.1%)

The 2020 budget request reflects the Library's strategic plan, several significant initiatives totaling \$27.9 million were enacted in the 2020 Budget, including: Data Center Transformation, Copyright Office Enhancements, BARD Infrastructure Modernization, eReader and Digital Talking Book Machine, and Enriching the Visitor's Experience. The Library received directed funding to support the Office of the Inspector General.

Also in 2020 all IT funding (\$13.559M) was centralized into LCL, S&E/OCLIO from CRS, Copyright and NLS. This explains the decreases in CRS and Copyright. While NLS also transferred IT funds, the NLS increase comes from the two large modernization initiatives enacted: BARD and eReader & DTBM.

Change from 2020 to 2021 (+3.5%)

In 2021 modernization continued with \$16.2M of new initiatives enacted, including: Science & Technology Research Capacity, Law Library Replacement, Shelving, Acquisition and Contract Management, Cybersecurity Automated Records Management and Personnel Security Case Management System. The Library also received directed funding to support Life Sciences operational costs.

Change from 2021 to 2022 (+4.8%)

With Copyright ECS, CRS IRIS and OCLIO Modernization efforts already underway, \$26.5M of new modernization initiatives were enacted in 2022, including: Library Collections Access Platform (L-CAP), Integrated Electronic Security System (IESS), Microsoft 365, Cellular Upgrade, and Copyright CASE Act. The Library also received directed funding for the Congressional Legal Education Forum.

Change from 2022 to 2023 (+4.3%)

The modernization sequence continues in 2023 with \$22.0M of initiatives enacted, including: OCLIO Cloud Hosting Office, Optimization of Financial Infrastructure, Legislative Branch Financial Management System, Enterprise Planning and Management, Strengthening IT Planning and Project Management, and CRS IRIS implementation and continuous development. In 2023 NLS had a negative change due to the non-recur of \$4.6M of the 2020 BARD Infrastructure initiative. The Library also received directed funding for Lewis Houghton, Mass D, COVID-19, Little Scholars senior staff salary reimbursement and continued support for Congressional Legal Education Forum.

Change from 2023 to 2024 (+4.5%)

The Library's modernization strategy that began in 2023 with CRS IRIS. Funding received in 2024 supported some infirmity costs, Copyright ECS Continuous Development, and NLS Devices. Other funding increases were provided to support NLS continuous development and to OCLIO for centralized support of IT initiatives. The Library also received directed funding towards the Data Storage and Migration Method Pilot and continued support of the Congressional Legal Education Forum.

Change from 2024 to 2025 Request (+5.1%)

The 2025 request aligns with the Library's new strategy plan and strategic goals to expand access, enhance services, strengthen capacity and foster innovation. The funding requested includes infirmity pay and other infirmity costs, programmatic increases, and offset by non-recurring funding. The Library also received directed funding for the Congressional Legal Education Forum, Digital Collections Planning and Contract Management, Expanding Data Analytics Capacity (CRS), and Ensuring Access and Inclusion through a Digital Accessibility Program.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Dr. Hayden.
I now recognize Mr. DiPietro for a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH DIPIETRO, ACTING ARCHITECT OF THE
CAPITOL

Mr. DIPIETRO. Good morning, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Architect of the Capitol's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

I would also like to thank members of your staff, particularly Michelle Reinshuttle and Faye Cobb, for their expertise, solution-mindedness, and consistent professionalism.

I welcome this opportunity to share more about the agency's work in preserving the historic buildings and grounds that inspire our Nation in serving the 30,000 daily occupants and 3 million annual visitors to the Capitol campus.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the 2,400 dedicated AOC employees who work diligently to support the daily operations of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, and the many other AOC-managed locations, all which requires the daily care for the 18.4 million square feet of historic facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art that make up our historic campus.

In addition to supporting the daily operations of Congress, the Architect of the Capitol inspires the public by providing tours and exhibits of the U.S. Capitol, the surrounding grounds, and the U.S. Botanic Garden. Our staff remains committed to preserving and maintaining the historic buildings, monuments, art, and gardens on the campus.

While the commission works through the process of appointing a permanent architect, I am honored to serve in this interim role, leading the women and men who work tirelessly to accomplish our mission. I am continually amazed by their professionalism and dedication of service.

The AOC's \$1.03 billion fiscal year 2025 budget request is focused on three key priorities: physical security, life safety, and critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus. Additionally, this budget ensures adequate funding is available for the staffing levels necessary to oversee our planning and project management needs and to deliver quality services to Congress.

Through the agency's strategic initiatives, we continue our commitment to offering world-class service and doing the deep work that leads to transformational growth. This focus enables the agency to build a safer, more inclusive, and more effective workplace.

Across the agency we dedicate time and attention to safety training, processes, procedures, and operations. This budget request recognizes these essential measures with a concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks, and interruptions.

Security is a key priority. With the support of this subcommittee and oversight committees, the AOC has made significant progress to improve the security posture across the campus. The AOC also coordinates daily with our partners across the campus to improve security for staff and visitors.

Improving physical security is imperative to the operation of the campus, and we will continue to balance and maintain critical infrastructure, while remaining prepared to respond to any new developments.

The critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus also remain a top priority. AOC employees work behind the scenes day and night to provide Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Library with the facilities and infrastructure to conduct their business.

The AOC is committed to a long-term approach to the facilities' management, focused on maintaining and preserving the Capitol campus, while also modernizing these facilities.

The aging infrastructure comes with many challenges. The AOC is developing an Enterprise Asset Management system that will provide a structured approach for the development, coordination, and control of asset-related activities across their lifecycle. This will enable centralized asset monitoring, forecast resource requirements, and translate risks into asset management plans and effectively prioritize condition-based facility maintenance.

Additionally, an established asset management system will provide additional detail to improve data-driven fiscal decisions and prioritize projects that reduce backlog.

As you know well, the safety, physical security, and critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus are a 24-hour-a-day operation that could simply not be accomplished without hard work. As I close my statement today, I would again like to thank the AOC staff for their professionalism and dedication to mission accomplishment.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and members of the subcommittee, thank you again for your continued support and consideration of the Architect of the Capitol's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

[The prepared statement of Mr. DiPietro follows:]



Statement of Joseph DiPietro, Acting Architect
Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request, Architect of the Capitol
 Legislative Branch Subcommittee | House Committee on Appropriations
 April 16, 2024

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget for the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). We are committed to working closely with you and your staff to ensure the AOC meets the needs and expectations of the U.S. House of Representatives in service to the American people.

On behalf of myself and the AOC leadership team, we express extreme gratitude for the 2,400 hardworking, devoted AOC employees who tirelessly carry out their duties each day to support the functions of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress (Library), and the many other AOC-managed facilities.

I joined the AOC in 2023 as the Chief of Operations. This office oversees the lifecycle operations and maintenance of the Capitol campus's buildings, grounds, gardens and infrastructure. In this role, I establish policies, standardize procedures, and coordinate operations and facility management functions across the AOC's operational jurisdictions.

As you know, I was asked to take the mantle of agency leadership as the Acting Architect effective February 9, 2024. Leading our team is both an honor and great responsibility which I take with dedication and care. One of my initial goals is to work closely with AOC staff to continue to foster trust and confidence in AOC leadership and emphasize our appreciation for their exceptional work. I am committed to transparent and timely communication to ensure accountability and coordination with this Subcommittee, Congress, and AOC-internal entities.

I. Overview

The AOC plays a vital role in supporting the day-to-day operations of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Library. Our staff works tirelessly to preserve and maintain over 18.4 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art. This 24 hour a day, 7 day a week operation works in concert to preserve our historic buildings and improve aging infrastructure.

The FY 2025 budget request of \$1.03 billion reflects an 8.8 percent increase from the FY 2024 enacted funding. It builds upon the accomplishments of the previous fiscal year by addressing critical and urgent priorities such as physical security, life safety, and critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus. Furthermore, this budget includes funding to increase staffing levels necessary to oversee proposed planning, acquisition and project management needs to deliver quality services to Congress. The FY 2025 budget submission acknowledges the fiscal challenges facing our nation and the Committee.

Prioritizing Physical Security & Life Safety

Ensuring physical security and life safety is paramount.

With your support, the AOC has made significant strides in enhancing security measures across the campus. Projects identified after the completion of the physical security assessment in 2022 are prioritized to implement consistent security standards campuswide. The FY 2025 budget request aligns with our coordinated approach to address security projects, consisting of significant construction or system replacement requirements to support the United States Capitol Police and House and Senate Sergeant at Arms's missions.

The life safety of our workforce and visitors is also a critical focus. Across the agency, we dedicate time and attention to safety training, processes, procedures and operations. This budget request recognizes these essential measures, with projects and requests that focus on supporting our concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks and interruptions.

II. Supporting the House Community

The AOC's FY 2025 budget request highlights significant priorities for the House office buildings and House operations. Through close collaboration with this Subcommittee and the Committee on House Administration, the FY 2025 budget request identifies critical needs for the House office buildings and operations, ensuring they are met.

The Cannon House Office Building Renewal project is nearing completion, addressing unique challenges to preserve its historic spaces while enhancing functionality. Challenges such as increased material and equipment costs, and availability of skilled labor have impacted the project's initial budget. However, progress continues to improve critical building systems and infrastructure for enhanced accessibility, efficiency and adaptability.

Looking ahead, planning is underway to also modernize the Rayburn and Longworth House Office Buildings. We will also address each facility's deferred maintenance, systems and capital renewal requirements. The FY 2025 budget request includes a study that will provide comprehensive pre-design services for the Rayburn House Office Building renovation.

III. Modern Management of Aging Infrastructure

Aging facilities and infrastructure pose ongoing challenges exacerbated by increasing material costs and competition for skilled laborers. The AOC's funding request addresses essential issues like hearing room modernization, mechanical system replacements, and fire alarm and sprinkler replacement. The AOC is committed to a long-term approach to facilities management---focused on maintaining and preserving the Capitol campus while also modernizing these facilities. The AOC is also developing an Enterprise Asset Management system to provide a structured approach for developing, coordinating and controlling asset-related activities across their life cycle. This will enable centralized asset monitoring, forecast resource requirements, translate

risks into asset management plans, and effectively prioritize condition-based facility maintenance. An established asset management system will provide additional detail to improve data-driven fiscal decisions and prioritize projects. This approach will also help address backlog and deferred maintenance needs.

IV. Recognizing Employee Accomplishments & Meeting Mission Requirements

The AOC remains focused on improving employee development and morale. Our Human Capital Strategy revolves around three pillars: talent acquisition, talent development, and engagement and retention of employees.

The AOC's talent acquisition goal is to attract, recruit and onboard a highly skilled and diverse workforce to meet the agency's current and future mission needs. Once on our team, we work to develop and retain these talented employees. Notably, our staff accomplished more than 40,000 individual training completions in FY 2023 and 22,000 completed year to date in FY 2024. The AOC is dedicated to providing training and resources for our employees to excel in their roles and support seamless operations.

V. Conclusion

On behalf of the hardworking public servants at the AOC, I extend our gratitude to this Subcommittee for your ongoing support. Your dedication and partnership in service to the American people is integral to our daily operations and mission accomplishment. Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your time and support in consideration of the AOC's FY 2025 budget request.



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Who We Are

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) traces its beginnings to 1793 with the laying of the Capitol cornerstone. Today, the AOC is responsible for the care and operation of the Capitol campus, which includes more than 18.4 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds and thousands of works of art. The AOC's employees work behind the scenes day and night to provide Congress and the Supreme Court with facilities and infrastructure to conduct their business.

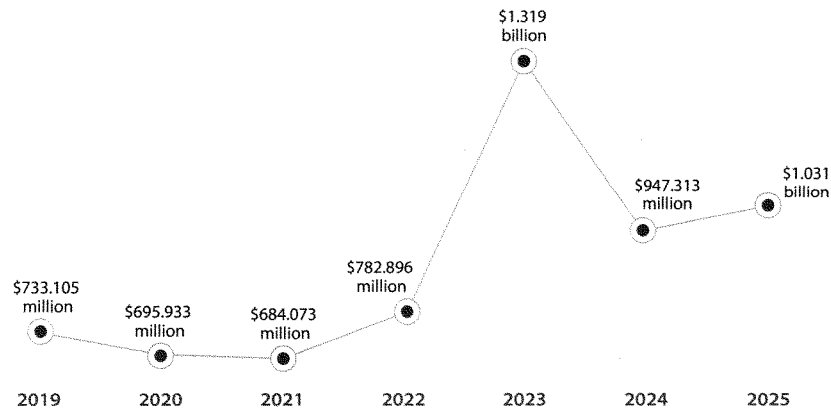
Our Mission

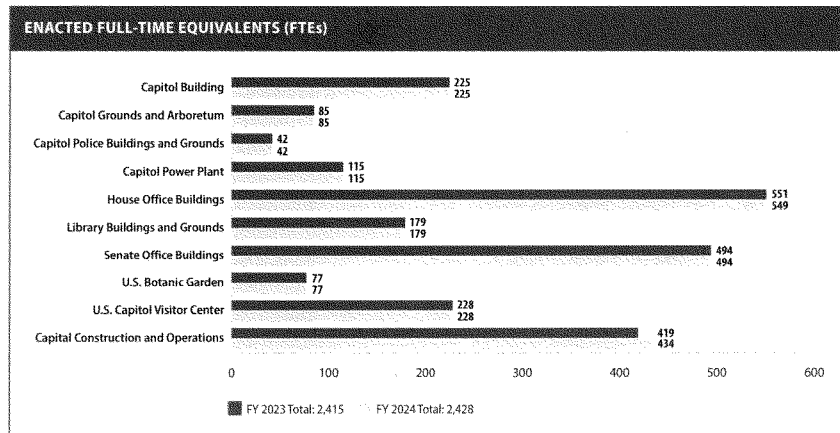
Serve Congress and the Supreme Court, *preserve* America's Capitol and *inspire* memorable experiences.

Our Vision

Working together, we strengthen and showcase the foundation, facilities and functions supporting American democracy.

ENACTED FUNDING PER FISCAL YEAR





Mr. VALADAO. Again, thank you to our witnesses for testifying before this committee today. And as the new committee subcommittee chairman, I look forward to learning more about both of your departments.

I will call on Members based on seniority of those present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority, and then will call on Members in order of their arrival. Each will have 5 minutes.

And so I will start with myself. I now recognize myself.

Dr. Hayden, how are the current economic conditions affecting the Library's budget and your priorities for the subcommittee to consider?

Ms. HAYDEN. The Library's first priority is to be able to cover the inflationary costs, such as mandatory pay and price level increases because preserving our staff and the experience that they have is our top priority.

Eighty-five percent of the Library's requested increase this year is for inflation in pay and nonpay areas. And the increases in the programmatic areas support improving our digital strategy, ingesting the new digital collection flows that we see coming, as well as the exhibits. That will be expanded, as well.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. DiPietro, last year the AOC reported that phase 4 of the Cannon Renewal Project would be completed by end of calendar year 2024. Is this still accurate?

Mr. DiPIETRO. Yes, sir. We are tracking to complete floors 1 through 4 by the end of October. The contractor will be turning 24 Member suites over to us then, and we will working with our partners in the House CAO to install the IT and furniture and other equipment needed to support Congress.

Mr. VALADAO. So there will be offices available for next Congress' office move?

Mr. DiPIETRO. That is correct.

Mr. VALADAO. Dr. Hayden, Congress has supported the Library's modernization efforts, and the Library has come a long way in modernizing its internal systems and closing GAO recommendations to address serious vulnerabilities in your IT infrastructure.

What is the next highest priority in your investment?

Ms. HAYDEN. The staff expertise, our greatest resources, that is the highest priority. And then the next highest priorities involve the modernization efforts to provide that greater access.

And so the digital collection processing request is at the top of our initiative request this year. We will update and integrate a number of legacy standalone IT systems, and it will also help us improve our capacity for preserving and giving access to these digital collections.

So those two in terms of modernization are our highest priorities.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Thank you.

Mr. DiPietro, I understand the AOC does not have a great reputation for cost estimating. What is the AOC doing to ensure future projects are properly scoped, avoid cost overruns, and end on time?

Mr. DiPIETRO. I think the way to address the scope, the cost, and the schedule of projects is to follow a standard engineering construction process.

So typically what you do is you start a project with a study, and then you move from your study into a design phase. There is different elements of that design phase. And then you put the project out for bid, and you have a contractor construct the work for you.

Sometimes what happens is, at the end of the study phase, we tie a cost and a schedule to the project before we have fully done the design. I think that is a mistake to be doing that, and it is better to wait further into the design process to when the requirements are better defined. You have a better idea of the full scope of the project and could advise on the costs and the schedule.

So, following that, normally industry practice I think would help us to help control the scope, the cost, the schedule of future projects.

Mr. VALADAO. What is the agency's biggest hurdle or challenge addressing the deferred maintenance? I mean, it is, what, \$2 billion deferred maintenance we are looking at? And what is the plan to overcome that?

Mr. DiPIETRO. So, when you are looking at deferred maintenance, there is—we talk about two elements of deferred maintenance. There is the deferred piece, which means it is maintenance that hasn't been done. It has become overdue. And then the second piece is capital renewal. That is maintenance that is going to be coming up within the next 5 years.

And so that makes up your backlog, and the best way to address that is to perform facility condition assessments of your building on a regular basis—we do it every 4 or 5 years—and to look at that piece of how much backlog you are building up and then be able to translate that into our budget request, indicating here is how much money we are going to need to maintain that facility over the next several years.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Thank you.

And now I am going to yield to the Ranking Member Espallat for his questions.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Valadao.

Mr. DiPietro, Earth Day is Monday, April 22. I am a huge advocate for our planet. In fact, I have drafted the Earth Act bill, which is a very comprehensive bill that highlights the importance of environmental conservation and sustainability. To this end, we in Congress can be role models, right within our own place of business.

Can you provide the subcommittee with an update on the AOC recycling efforts, as well as any other AOC programs that aim to reduce our carbon footprint and protect our environment?

Mr. DiPIETRO. OK. With respect to Earth Day, AOC is actually doing a small program on Earth Day with our Capitol Grounds and Arboretum jurisdiction. They are going to have a small event to recognize Earth Day and to be able to celebrate that.

Sir, with respect to recycling, we recycle about 36 percent of the waste within the Capitol building. And then, with respect to construction, we actually recycle 95 percent of the construction waste. So, when we are renovating a building, there is copper. There is concrete. All that, we try to recycle as much of that as we can. About 95 percent of that gets recycled.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

And, as I mentioned during my opening remarks, there is an honorific plaque for the U.S. Capitol Police that is still on hold. Can you give us the status on that?

Mr. DiPIETRO. So our Capitol Building jurisdiction stands by. They are ready to support putting that plaque up once we are directed to be able to do that, sir.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. You haven't been directed.

Mr. DiPIETRO. Correct.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

And, finally, Dr. Hayden, I look forward to working with you on this year's series of activities and commend your efforts to work on the Visitor Center and other major initiatives, including the upgrade of accessibility to Library materials and the digitalization of the Library and the critical infrastructure.

Where are we in terms of processing digital collections? Where are we now, and where do we stand in comparison to other major libraries across the world in that department?

Ms. HAYDEN. Due to the investment that Congress has made in the Library's IT infrastructure in the past few years, we are well-poised to continue developing the necessary infrastructure.

And this year's request will give us that capacity to sunset legacy systems that were standalone systems. And now with this year's request, will be able to ingest things that were born digital, years ago. For decades, the Library has had the capacity to preserve documents and photos and film and all of these types of things that are waiting, quite a few of them, to be processed.

The new digital volume that is coming in and will continue to come in requires that we put that infrastructure in place. And so we are well-poised to do it, and that is why this request that we have for this year emphasizes getting ready for that. We see it expanding like a firehose, as our chief information officer has said.

And so we need to be ready to do it. We have a short window of time. With manuscripts and papers and things, you have a longer period of time. They are waiting. For digital collecting and things that are born digital, you have a short window of time capture them. So you have to have the digital infrastructure to be able to get those things quickly and then get them out and then keep developing the digital infrastructure.

It is an exciting time. We are poised for it, and we are looking forward to it.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you. Thank you so much.

I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espailat.

Mr. LaTurner.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Hayden, how do you feel the Library's Visitor Center Experience initiative will bring value to both the Library and visiting taxpayers?

Ms. HAYDEN. Oh, my goodness. Before the pandemic, the Library's iconic Thomas Jefferson Building, which is the front door to the three buildings that are on Capitol Hill with the Library of Congress, over 2 million visitors visit each year. And what the new Visitor Experience project will allow people that are coming to that iconic building to have orientation to what the Library of Congress

is and, what can it do for them. For instance, the Veterans History Project and Copyright. There will be a special section on creativity and the history of the Library.

For the first time, and I think I mentioned that in the opening, a permanent Treasures Gallery that will be able to rotate some of the items that are rarely on display. And we will have for the first time a dedicated Youth Center so the young and the young at heart will be able to learn about research and using the Library's collection.

So it is going to greatly expand the public's understanding of what the Library of Congress does and what it can do for them.

Mr. LATURNER. The ranking member's question sparked my interest. You mentioned the libraries around the world. What libraries around the world do you look to or do you learn things from that are doing things maybe unique from us?

Ms. HAYDEN. Well, two major libraries that are comparable in terms of a national library, the British Library in London and the Bibliotheque nationale de France. The Bibliotheque nationale, for instance, just opened a Treasures Gallery. We were a little jealous. It is—it is pretty good.

But we are using the same, for instance, the cabinetry cases are going to be the same. They are top-of-the-line Goppion. They use Ferrari parts in the things. The British Library also has a Treasures Gallery and a very robust retail aspect in terms of their shops similar to a museum shop. So those are in terms of national libraries.

Of course, we look to some of the major university libraries that are doing innovative things. Quite a few of them are really upping their IT game in terms of what their online presence is, too.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you.

Mr. DiPietro, a portion of your budget justification covers the need to prioritize physical security infrastructure. Tell me about your—what it looks like, the collaboration with the Capitol Police and Sergeant at Arms. And can you provide the committee with rough estimates for the costs of these projects?

Mr. DiPIETRO. So we work very closely with the House and Senate Sergeant at Arms and the Capitol Police on all the physical security projects. They determine the requirements, but we support them on the build-out of that infrastructure to make sure that it meets their needs.

With respect to the cost, I would have to get back to you on those.

Mr. LATURNER. OK. I would look forward to that.

It was mentioned earlier with the chairman the Cannon Renewal Project. What is the total time from start to finish, and what is the rough cost from start to finish of that entire project? I just don't know the answer to that.

Mr. DiPIETRO. I can tell you the cost. The cost is around \$970 million total. The schedule for the complete time it has taken from when we started the study to when we will finish out the last element of that courtyard, I have to get back with you on that.

Mr. LATURNER. When did it start? When did the study start?

Mr. DiPIETRO. That is 9 or 10 years ago, but I would have to get the specific dates for you on that so to be accurate.

Mr. LATURNER. I look forward to knowing that.

You talked about the study, design, bid, you know, and then I guess build process. You outlined the best practices for that and how you can improve the accuracy of estimates.

Is that being implemented? And, if so, when can we expect that change, to see that change?

Mr. DIPETRO. So that is normally implemented on most projects. Sometimes projects get pushed a little bit faster. I think there is a desire to get things done a little bit quick, more quickly. And sometimes we, again, we, not that we skip steps in the process, but we lock into what we believe the cost will be and what the schedule will be very early in that process. And then I think that leads to disappointment later on when it appears that the cost has grown, that it has taken longer to complete a project.

Mr. LATURNER. Sure. OK. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. LaTurner.

Mr. Quigley, you have got 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sir, upon the ranking member's question about being ready to mount the plaque honoring the police, just for the record, who gives you that direction to actually do the mounting?

Mr. DIPETRO. I would have to get specifically which committee gives us that, sir. I don't have that information here.

Mr. QUIGLEY. It is not leadership? It is a committee that does that?

Mr. DIPETRO. I believe so, but I would have to get back to you on that.

Mr. QUIGLEY. I mean, to your knowledge, was there any communication request asking for it, or did they bring the direction to you?

Mr. DIPETRO. They coordinate with our Legislative and Public Affairs Office on that issue.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Could you find that out and report back to myself and the committee, please?

Mr. DIPETRO. Certainly.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And we certainly heard a lot about Cannon this morning, and I appreciate that.

But, since my office is in Rayburn, we are curious what the plans are for Rayburn in the coming years.

Mr. DIPETRO. So we are looking at doing a renewal of the Rayburn Building, as well. And we want to follow that process that I outlined before where we start with the study phase. We are working to reprogram some funding to support. Looking at a swing space study because Rayburn is large.

And how we phase that work is really going to play into how long it takes and how much it costs to be able to do that.

Mr. QUIGLEY. But the general plan is to do what you did in Cannon. That is basically the ground up.

Mr. DIPETRO. Yes. The building is at the age where it requires a renewal, correct.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And, when you talk about a swing, you mean that shifting a certain amount of office space someplace else.

Mr. DiPIETRO. Exactly, to another location so that the Members can continue their work while we are able to renew or modernize a portion of that building.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And what kinds of places would that be for Rayburn?

Mr. DiPIETRO. So that is one of the things that we are going to have the study take a look at, how we would be able to accommodate that. Since Rayburn is so much larger than Cannon, that is first phase of the project is that study is to look and say, how would we go about doing that?

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you.

Dr. Hayden, it is a pleasure to see you here today. Go Roosevelt.

I want to follow up. In a hearing we had last week, I talked to the GPO Director, Mr. Halpern, about the implementation of access to congressionally mandated reports, a bill I was proud to sponsor. It has bipartisan support.

Reported that GPO has set up an online portal for congressionally mandated reports that now has about 300 of those reports for public viewing, transparency, openness in government. We create a lot of these reports, and they collect dust. The idea is to share them with the American public, what we are up to, but they also include a lot of vital information.

So does the Library of Congress list a reports link to reports on the GPO portal yet, and how could the Library and GPO collaborate to link the LOC's listing of executive communications to the GPO documents?

Ms. HAYDEN. And we are very fortunate to have the Acting Director of CRS here, Robert Newlen, who has been doing quite a bit and who could address this—

Mr. NEWLEN. Thank you.

So many of those CRS reports are currently available—in fact, I believe over 10,000 on our CRS.gov website. Right now—and I am glad you brought this up—we are in the process of doing an update of CRS.gov to improve accessibility.

Someone asked earlier about what we are doing in terms of accessibility. We have already completed that phase on our website, and we hope to implement it within—later this year, probably in the fall.

Mr. QUIGLEY. OK. Let us know how we can help and move forward and let us know how that is proceeding.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Quigley.

And, if there are no further questions, I would like to thank Dr. Hayden and Mr. DiPietro for being here today.

Members may submit any additional questions for the record.

And the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

Statement of Robert Randolph Newlen
 Director, Congressional Research Service
 Before the
 Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
 Committee on Appropriations
 U.S. House of Representatives
 April 16, 2024

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the fiscal 2025 budget request on behalf of the Congressional Research Service (CRS). In addition to outlining CRS's budget requirements for the upcoming fiscal year, my testimony will provide an overview of several noteworthy CRS accomplishments in its support for Congress during fiscal 2023, and update you on the Service's progress with respect to several strategic initiatives.

FISCAL 2025 BUDGET REQUEST AND PROGRAM INCREASES

CRS's budget request for fiscal 2025 is 145.485 million dollars, an increase of 9.405 million dollars (or 6.9 percent) over the amount appropriated for fiscal 2024. The requested increase includes 6.579 million dollars for mandatory pay related and price level increases. It also includes a programmatic increase to support continued enhancement of the Service's quantitative data analysis capabilities and the integration of artificial intelligence technology into CRS's workflow. As in previous fiscal years, staff pay and benefits account for approximately 90 percent of the amount requested by CRS.

Bolstering Quantitative Data Analysis Capabilities

CRS's requested program increase for fiscal 2025 includes approximately 3.5 million dollars and 1 FTE to enhance the Service's capability to perform quantitative data analysis and policy simulation, including the modeling of "big data" sets, for congressional clients. In recent years, CRS has observed growing demand from Members and Committees, to provide this type of analytical support. In the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Congress encouraged CRS "*to explore ways to expand its ability to perform quantitative analysis of research data....*" and directed the Service to "*engage with an external entity to produce a report detailing the feasibility of CRS engaging in the analysis and modeling of big data sets by highlighting the information technology infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain such a capability.*" While CRS has conducted some limited quantitative analysis and policy simulation, currently it lacks the capacity to provide this service on a broader scale. In response to the direction provided in the Joint Statement, CRS contracted with a company in fiscal 2022, to conduct a study identifying the IT infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain a greater data analytics capability. In September 2023, CRS procured a vendor to pilot a small set of cloud based quantitative data models consistent with the recommendations in the study. Enhancing this area of its service offerings, would enable CRS to provide congressional requestors with a more granular view of the impact of legislative proposals on various demographic groups, as well as the interaction of such policies with other programs.

CRS is also exploring opportunities to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) applications into the day-to-day work of the Service. The Service established an Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG) to make recommendations to CRS leadership on best practices and operational processes

necessary for the adoption of AI technologies. CRS's adoption of AI technology promises to create efficiencies in the development and publication of its products for Congress.

CRS would utilize 2.826 million dollars of the requested amount to set up and maintain a secure cloud computing environment, and to contract personnel (data scientists, programmers, and digital interface designers) to develop and maintain data analysis models and projects in that environment. The funds would also be used to invest in the software, modeling tools, and training necessary to develop these capabilities. An additional 643 thousand dollars is requested on behalf of the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to hire 1 FTE to design and support the systems needed to implement the program.

In addition to the initiatives outlined above, CRS's priorities for fiscal 2025 include hosting a successful New Member Seminar in January 2025 for the newly elected Members of the 119th Congress; continuing efforts to strengthen the diversity and inclusiveness of its workforce and working environment; and supporting continuous integration and development of a modernized IT infrastructure. As always, CRS will focus primarily on the delivery of timely, authoritative products, services and programming tailored to meet the needs of the 119th Congress.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The program increases requested by CRS are key components of the Service's broader initiative to explore innovative approaches to enhance its products and services and to ensure that Congress has access to the highest quality research, analysis, information, and expertise available. The following is a brief summary of CRS's progress in achieving these important objectives.

Interactive Graphics and Other Visually-Based Products

CRS is developing new, visually-based products through the efforts of its Data Visualization and GIS Section, within the Office of Publishing (PUB), and under the guidance and oversight of the Interactive Graphics Working Group (IGWG). During the past year, the IGWG has worked to streamline the production of such products, address technical issues that arise, facilitate innovation in interactive displays, and expand interactive visual options. In addition, the Group has explored adaptation of content into interactive infographics within the CRS Insight product line; acquired additional libraries to support more options for creating interactive graphic formats; and worked closely with OCIO to ensure that CRS's IT infrastructure is more compatible with its interactive graphic needs.

As of March 2024, CRS's product line includes 44 Infographics and 25 interactive graphics. CRS is also working on the prototype of a new "storymap" product, a next-generation storytelling platform that puts together multiple visual elements to create a narrative. These innovative products present exciting possibilities for CRS to present its research, analysis, and information to Congress in new, accessible, and user-friendly formats.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

CRS continues to recruit, retain, and professionally develop a diverse, highly skilled workforce. During fiscal 2023, CRS developed 100 recruitment plans for merit selection positions, and attended over 20 recruiting events, many of which were sponsored by minority-serving institutions and organizations with a focus on underrepresented groups. Attendance at these events provided an opportunity to engage with a variety of prospective candidates, to increase awareness of CRS's brand as well as available employment and internship opportunities. The Service also supported several

paid summer internship opportunities through the Student Diversity and Inclusion Internship Program. Updates on diversity and inclusion efforts are communicated to staff through messages from leadership, CRS's staff newsletter, and the Service's internal Diversity and Inclusion website.

Exploring Artificial Intelligence Applications

Under the guidance of the CRS AIWG (noted above), CRS has initiated a number of AI related activities including: the launch of an Artificial Intelligence Research Portal to provide resources for CRS staff related to the field of AI; evaluation of new, generative AI components of a commercial legal research database; the development of an internal inventory of potential use cases for incorporating AI into the work of the Service; and the issuance of guidance to CRS staff prohibiting the use of Chat GPT or other AI tools in their work for Congress without prior CRS or Library approval.

In collaboration with the Library's OCIO, CRS is also exploring the utilization of automated processes to expedite drafting, reviewing, and publishing of bill summaries and the assignment of geographic and organizational subject terms. These activities involve the evaluation of models and methods using generative AI, traditional AI/Machine Learning, and Natural Language Processing tools, and assessment to identify baseline expectations for acceptable accuracy rates, objectivity, and performance standards for machine-generated summaries and subject terms.

IT Modernization/Integrated Research and Information Systems (IRIS)

CRS continues to work with the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to modernize its IT infrastructure with the deployment of new tools and software to enhance support to congressional stakeholders. The Integrated Research and Information System (IRIS) initiative is a multi-year effort to update the Service's mission-specific information technology to provide CRS staff with the best resources to create and deliver products and services to Congress.

Several applications have been successfully deployed to CRS users. The Minerva request management application was released to users in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2023; updates and enhancements continue monthly. In addition, the Text Analysis Program (TAP) for supporting bill summaries and bill comparisons was released in the second quarter of fiscal 2024. CRS and OCIO are continuing to execute several additional work streams to include CRS.gov website redesign with an enhanced taxonomy and new search capability, authoring and document management, and content management. CRS anticipates a release of the newly redesigned CRS.gov website that includes an enhanced taxonomy and a new search capability early in the fourth quarter.

Technical solutions have been designed and adapted to maintain alignment with Library of Congress and Legislative Branch cloud strategies. Projects are currently proceeding consistent with contractual requirements, schedules, and resources. Solutions are being informed by both internal CRS staff as well as congressional stakeholders. These efforts are essential to modernizing CRS mission-critical applications, to achieve the Library's "digital first" strategy and meet the growing needs of the Congress, in the areas of information research, policy and data analysis, content creation, and product delivery.

Congress.gov

The United States House of Representatives and Senate produce, and own, the data that is accessible to Members of Congress, legislative agencies, and the general public from Congress.gov. This fiscal year marks an historic, behind-the-scenes accomplishment for authoritative information provided by

our data partners. First generation, 30–40-year-old out-of-date systems and workflows are being retired.

The Library, including CRS, has worked closely with House and Senate data owners to incorporate data standards and best practices into the new systems and workflows that produce data for Congress.gov. Along with the Library, CRS is deeply appreciative for our data partners' initiatives to improve data quality by standardizing formats for legislative documents. The United States Legislative Markup, or USLM, is a legislative branch-wide standard that is integral to editing and publishing interoperability within the legislative ecosystem. Modernizing behind-the-scenes workflows advances our legislative data partnerships in support of better tracking legislative information and Member contributions through Congress.gov.

We are preparing for the future, and continue to bring historical materials into Congress.gov. To date, researchers can access more than 3.2 million historical and contemporary items from Congress.gov. We remain committed to working with our data partners, including the House Clerk, to continually improve accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of legislative information available from Congress.gov—the official website for U.S. federal legislative information.

CONAN Modernization

Known officially as the “Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation,” CONAN serves as the official record for Congress of the U.S. Constitution’s interpretation. In 2019, CRS collaborated with OCIO and the Law Library to introduce a website for CONAN: constitution.congress.gov. The site features hundreds of pages of updated constitutional analysis and content. During fiscal year 2023, CRS legal staff continued to provide comprehensive analysis of the Supreme Court’s jurisprudence as it relates to every provision of the U.S. Constitution, including the implications of recently decided cases. To make CONAN more accessible to online users, new and existing content has been drafted and revised in the form of short, granular essays that focus on specific, discrete topics. CRS legal staff have also begun the organizational work to begin preparing the printed pocket parts to the decennial 2022 edition of CONAN, unless a legislative fix obviates the need to continue to produce hardbound and print publications of CONAN. Since the launch of the public website in 2019, CONAN online has received more than fifty million views and has served as a valuable reference source for Congress and the public.

CRS has requested a legislative change to eliminate the requirement to produce the hardbound version of CONAN, which is quickly outdated, and rely exclusively on the CONAN website, which provides timely updates.

Knowledge Management

CRS continues to develop and implement strategies to capture, manage, preserve, and distribute institutional knowledge that it relies upon to provide exceptional service to Congress. CRS staff utilize the Research Portal, which is available on the Service’s intranet, as a hub for digital resources. It provides staff with quick and easy access to information needed to research, analyze, and advise on legislative issues. By the end of fiscal 2023, CRS staff had access to 46 research portal sites. The Service sponsored multiple activities to facilitate the sharing of information, knowledge, and best practices and enable staff to learn from one another’s experiences including quarterly Knowledge Café’s, an annual Summer Series on emerging technologies, and communities of practice such as the SharePoint Users Group. In addition, CRS continued its efforts to improve its onboarding and

offboarding procedures to ensure the timely transfer of knowledge held by senior analysts, attorneys, and information professionals.

Access to Executive Branch Information

In addition to the legislative change regarding CONAN (see above), CRS has requested a legislative change to improve access to executive branch information, which will enable the Service to respond to requests from and provide products to Members and their staff in a more timely and authoritative manner.

SERVICE TO CONGRESS

As in previous years, CRS provided support to almost every Member and committee office in fiscal 2023. CRS experts responded to over 76,000 congressional requests; prepared nearly 1,200 new products; and updated over 1,800 existing products. The Service posted 117 new videos to CRS.gov and published 36 podcasts on a variety of topics including: the Metaverse, judicial conduct, the executive budget process, federal research and development (R&D) funding, defense topics, the role of the federal government in redistricting, and Medicare drug prices.

In fiscal 2023, CRS experts provided extensive support to Members, committees, and congressional staff on a wide range of legal and public policy issues including: defense budgets and operations; energy supply and security; regulation of the financial sector; border security and immigration; tax and fiscal policy; the war in Ukraine; and US-China relations. CRS legislative attorneys advised congressional clients on the implications of recent Supreme Court opinions; and on legal questions associated with the termination of the COVID-19 public health emergency declarations; federal antitrust enforcement actions against large technology companies, social media regulation; and intellectual property and privacy concerns raised by artificial intelligence technology. In addition, CRS analysts and attorneys provided testimony before congressional committees on issues related to federal contracting; social security; strategic competition in the arctic; congressional oversight; and seating a delegate of the Cherokee Nation in the House of Representatives. CRS also continued to provide guidance on questions regarding legislative and budget process, congressional oversight, and the annual appropriations bills.

During fiscal 2023, CRS hosted a variety of seminars and programs for Members and staff including its annual Issues and Policies seminar; a Legislative and Budget Process Institute; a series on legal research; and the biennially scheduled Federal Law Update series. The Service also conducted sessions on FEMA disaster assistance; cybersecurity and infrastructure security; and seminar series on issues related to financial services; disruptive technology; COVID 19; and defense. In addition, CRS successfully launched its Congressional Legal Education Forum (CLEF), a program that provides congressional staff a foundational legal education in matters relevant to Congress's legislative and oversight functions. In total, CRS conducted over 300 seminars that were attended by approximately 13,000 congressional participants.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, the initiatives noted in today's testimony, reflect CRS's ongoing commitment to enhance its product and service offerings to meet Congress's diverse and evolving needs and to do so as comprehensively and efficiently as possible. CRS values its role as Congress's trusted resource and is committed to providing exceptional research, analysis, and information to meet the needs of every Member and

committee. On behalf of my colleagues at CRS, I would like to express my appreciation to the Committee for your continued support and for your consideration of CRS's fiscal 2025 request.

**Written Statement of Shira Perlmutter
Register of Copyrights and Director, U.S. Copyright Office
Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
April 16, 2024**

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the United States Copyright Office's fiscal 2025 budget request. The Copyright Office is tasked with overseeing the national copyright registration and recordation systems, advising Congress on copyright policy and legislation, working with the Department of Justice and other federal agencies on copyright litigation and international matters, conducting administrative and regulatory activity including with respect to statutory licenses, and educating the public about copyright.

I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress on our new Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), with several modules already in production and being used by the public. In addition, processing times for both registration and recordation services remain low. We are well into our current initiative on artificial intelligence; coming up on almost two years of smooth operations of our new small claims tribunal; and actively engaged in regulatory work, including the ninth section 1201 triennial rulemaking and a review of the designation of the entities established by the Music Modernization Act (MMA). And public engagement with the Office is breaking attendance records through stakeholder events and targeted outreach around the country.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

Administration of the Copyright Act

Registration: The Office continues to effectively administer the national copyright registration and recordation systems. In fiscal 2023, we registered over 441,526 copyright claims involving millions of works. Over the past three years, we have markedly improved registration processing times: the average for examining all copyright claims stands at 2.1 months for the first half of fiscal 2024. For fully electronic claims that do not require correspondence, the average is just 1.2 months.¹ Electronic applications with physical deposits without correspondence average 3 months, while paper applications have remained at an average of 4.1 months for claims without correspondence.

Recordation: In fiscal 2023 the Office recorded 16,592 documents containing titles of 1,165,653 works, including 5,875 documents and 568,618 titles of works through the new self-

¹ Registration processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/registration/docs/processing-times-faqs.pdf>. For the October 1 to March 31, 2024 timeframe, 82% of all registration claims were eService claims (online claims and electronic deposits); 14% were deposit ticket claims (online claims with separately mailed physical deposit materials); and about 1% were mail claims (paper claim forms and physical deposits).

service portal.² Our online recordation pilot, launched in April 2020, has significantly shortened processing times, with the average from electronic submission to generation of the public record now measured in weeks rather than months. On August 1, 2022, we opened the pilot to all members of the public, and have seen an increase in users to over 80% of all recordations. And while the pandemic caused some delays that resulted in longer processing times for paper recordations, we have cut down those times as well.³

Public Records: The Office is the custodian of many kinds of records related to registration and recordation. We are working to make these records, many going back more than a hundred years, available online. In fiscal 2023, we continued development of the Copyright Public Records System (CPRS) (which includes both recordation and registration records, and hosted 104,095 unique visitors. The CPRS has expanded online access and research options by adding 1,143,779 card catalog records. Furthermore, in 2023 we completed the consolidation of offsite materials from three separate warehouses into our new storage facility in Cabin Branch, Maryland. In February 2024, the facility dedicated the Marybeth Peters Copyright Archive, in honor of the eleventh Register of Copyrights.

Licensing: The Office maintained our effective stewardship of over \$1.6 billion in statutory licensing revenues as of the end of fiscal 2023.⁴ For the sixth consecutive year, we received an unmodified or “clean” audit opinion of the fiscal 2022 statutory licensing fiduciary asset financial statements.

Other Major Activities

The Copyright Office continues to provide advice and impartial expertise to Congress and the courts, and information to the public. Below are a few highlights:

Copyright Claims Board: By the end of March 2024, over 800 claims had been filed with the Copyright Claims Board (CCB), and it had issued 16 final determinations. Claims have come from forty-six states and thirty-two countries. This past year the Office completed several rulemakings to update the CCB’s processes and operations. The CCB and other Office staff have participated in scores of public events to discuss and promote its use, and have reached audiences in-person and virtually from every area of the United States.

Initiative on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence: In early 2023, the Office announced an initiative to examine the copyright law and policy issues raised by generative AI, including the

² There are three primary types of documents that may be submitted for recordation: transfers of copyright ownership, other documents pertaining to a copyright, and notices of termination. The pilot and newly released system are currently focused on only the first category (section 205 documents).

³ Recordation processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/recordation/>. The Office of Copyright Records is currently processing March 2023 basic (section 205) recordation filings and July 2023 notices of termination. Regardless of the processing time, the effective date of recordation is the date the Copyright Office receives the complete submission in acceptable form.

⁴ The Licensing Section is responsible for helping to administer the various statutory licenses and similar provisions, including secondary transmissions of radio and television programs by cable and satellite systems; making and distributing phonorecords of nondramatic musical works; and importing, manufacturing, and distributing digital audio recording devices or media.

scope of copyright in works generated using AI tools and the use of copyrighted materials in AI training. After convening public listening sessions and hosting webinars to gather information, the Office published a notice of inquiry in August 2023 that elicited over 10,000 comments by the December 2023 deadline. In February, we provided Congress with a detailed update on our 2023 accomplishments (including policy guidance on registration, litigation and Review Board activities, and the notice of inquiry) and our plans for next steps.⁵ In 2024, the Office plans to issue a report in several sections, which will be published separately as they are completed.⁶

Regulatory Work: The Office has a number of rulemakings underway,⁷ two of which are mandated by law. In July 2023, we commenced the ninth triennial proceeding under section 1201 of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) regarding temporary exemptions to section 1201's prohibition against circumvention of technological measures that control access to copyrighted works. We have solicited supporting and opposing comments related to any newly proposed exemptions, using the streamlined process of the prior two rulemakings. Public hearings will be held in mid-April.

In addition, under the Music Modernization Act (MMA), the Office maintains an oversight role as directed by the statute, as well as engaging in education and outreach activities. In January 2024, we issued a notice of inquiry seeking public comments regarding the periodic review of our designations of the mechanical licensing collective (MLC) and digital licensee coordinator (DLC). The Office also has a number of other open rulemakings underway, including proposed group registration options for two-dimensional artwork, updates to news websites, and proposed clarifications to regulations involving termination rights and the MMA's blanket license.

Working with Congress and Other Agencies: The Office provided legal advice and assistance across the government regarding complex areas of copyright law and policy, including Supreme Court and appellate litigation and interagency collaboration on international matters and trade. On March 12, we published a joint study on non-fungible tokens and intellectual property with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.⁸

Outreach and Education: The Office engages in numerous outreach activities to provide clear and accurate information on copyright law and to raise awareness of the CCB and other Office resources and programs. In fiscal 2023, we hosted or participated in 185 public events and speaking engagements, surpassing the prior fiscal year by 25 percent. We engaged with many different audiences, from copyright stakeholders to lawyers and intellectual property experts to students. Our Public Information Office and our new reading room are now open and provide in-person services by appointment. Last month, we launched a webpage focusing on our economic research agenda and providing easy access to data used in our 2022 study, *Women in the Copyright System*.⁹

⁵ U.S. Copyright Office, Letter to Senators Coons and Tillis and Representatives Issa and Johnson (Feb. 23, 2024), <https://copyright.gov/laws/hearings/USCO-Letter-on-AI-and-Copyright-Initiative-Update.pdf>.

⁶ For more details on the Office's work on artificial intelligence, see our AI webpage, <https://copyright.gov/ai>.

⁷ U.S. Copyright Office, Rulemaking landing page, <https://copyright.gov/rulemaking>.

⁸ U.S. Copyright Office and U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Non-Fungible Tokens and Intellectual Property: A Report to Congress (March 2024), <https://www.copyright.gov/policy/nft-study/joint-USPTO-USCO-Report-on-NFTs-and-Intellectual-Property.pdf>.

⁹ The webpage and data are available at <https://copyright.gov/economic-research/>.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The modernization of the Office's information technology (IT) continues to be a top priority as well as a strategic goal. We are committed to ongoing updates and improvements so as to avoid repeating the experience of having to overhaul severely outdated legacy systems. Funding received in the fiscal 2024 budget enactment supports the implementation of this goal, providing continuous development resources as well as enhancing the use of data. Under the Library of Congress's centralized IT structure, we collaborate closely with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to provide the business information for IT development. Our Enterprise Copyright System development includes workstreams on recordation, public records, registration, and licensing. The OCIO is leading work on user experience design and platform services—that is, the design and architecture capabilities underpinning the ECS.

Recordation: Our online recordation system was the first ECS application to be released to the public, enabling recordation of documents under section 205 of title 17. As noted above, in August 2022 full access was provided to all members of the public. We are now incorporating user feedback to make iterative improvements as well as to build new functionality for processing notices of termination. Once that is done, recordation will transition to continuous development.

Copyright Public Records System (CPRS): Our second ECS application to be publicly released was a pilot for the new Copyright Public Records System (CPRS). This system provides access to registration and recordation data with advanced search capabilities, filters, and improved interfaces for the public and for Office staff. The CPRS has expanded online access and research options by adding 1,143,779 card catalog records. It is poised to replace the existing Copyright Office Online Public Catalog and become the Office's sole source of authoritative online copyright information by summer 2025.

Registration: Registration is the most complex of the Office's services and the focus of the greatest public attention. During the initial ECS development work, we have made considerable progress on both the external (public) and internal (staff) components of the new registration application. We have also established a new electronic Deposit (eDeposit) development team to create enhanced upload and rendering capabilities, necessary to support the submission of large numbers of files uploaded in one group application, such as photographs, and very large files, such as feature-length motion pictures and television episodes. This eDeposit system is intended to render electronic deposits much more efficiently to staff for examination. With continued support, we plan to conduct stakeholder testing of the upload capabilities by the end of calendar 2024 and conduct testing of the file-rendering functionality soon thereafter.

Licensing: For the past three years, the Office has been developing user experience design and initial automated workflows to replace outdated licensing processes. We are focusing on implementing the statement of account examination processes in ECS and transitioning all royalty accounting processes onto the Legislative Branch Financial Management System to streamline them and eliminate duplication. We expect to make the redesigned licensing processes available for staff use in early 2025.

Historical Public Records: As part of the Office's commitment to the preservation of and access to our historical records, we are digitizing print and microfilm records and making them

available online. This includes the old card catalog,¹⁰ the Catalog of Copyright Entries (CCEs), microfilm, and the record books. Digitization is the first step, to be followed by metadata capture to enhance searchability, with all records eventually available through the new CPRS. Great progress has been made this year to digitize and make publicly available the Office's 26,000 record books, which contain well over 26 million pages of records between 1870 and 1977. The first 500 books were published on the Library's website in February 2022,¹¹ and now over 11,807 books are available online. Work is being done in reverse chronological order from 1977, with the scanned books posted in batches.

Contact Center: The Office's modernization of customer contact routing and reporting is moving forward. Working with the GSA Centers of Excellence program, we developed a roadmap for a new high-performing, multi-channel contact center to enhance our communications with the public. This Contact Center is designed as an integrated solution to support public inquiries on copyright information. We successfully implemented the first phase in 2023, and are now using a best-in-class software system to receive, track, and route calls and emails. In 2024, we will continue designing and implementing the next phases to enhance call center operations.

Copyright Public Modernization Committee: In January 2021, the Librarian of Congress appointed a Copyright Public Modernization Committee (CPMC) to enhance communication with external stakeholders about the technology-related aspects of the Office's modernization initiative.¹² The CPMC is made up of thirteen members from the publishing, music, and photography sectors, libraries and archives, and other fields.¹³ It holds public meetings twice a year as well as informal briefing sessions. Given the value of the expertise and insights obtained, the Library intends to reauthorize the CPMC for an additional term.

FUNDING AND UPDATE TO 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

The Copyright Office performs all of this work based on a relatively modest budget. We appreciate the Congress' support and the budget we have received in recent fiscal years. To summarize, we are requesting an overall fiscal 2025 budget of \$107 million in funding and 478 FTEs, of which \$45.9 million would be funded through offsetting fees collected in fiscal 2023 and prior years.

The Office's overall budget is composed of three separate budgets or program areas:

¹⁰ The Office already digitized and made available online our physical card catalog, which is available in the Virtual Card Catalog (VCC), as well as the CCEs. See <https://copyright.gov/vcc/>. The VCC Proof of Concept represents card records from 1870 to 1977, displayed in JPEG images, from the U.S. Copyright Card Catalog collection. The images are presented in a similar filing order as found in the physical card catalog. Initial work is underway to capture metadata on these cards.

¹¹ See U.S. Copyright, NewsNet 947, Copyright Office Launches Digitized Copyright Historical Record Books Collection (Feb. 7, 2022), <https://www.copyright.gov/newsnet/2022/947.html>. The scans are posted at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/copyright-historical-record-books-1870-to-1977/about-this-collection/>.

¹² Library of Congress, Announcement of Copyright Public Modernization Committee, 86 Fed. Reg. 8044 (Feb. 3, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-02-03/pdf/2021-02194.pdf>.

¹³ See Library of Congress Announces Copyright Public Modernization Committee (June 22, 2021), <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-21-034/library-of-congress-announces-copyright-public-modernization-committee/2021-06-22/>.

- (1) Basic Budget. This funds most of the Office's operations and initiatives, including the majority of payroll-related expenses and the operations of the CCB. Historically, the Basic Budget has been composed of a combination of appropriated dollars and authority to spend fee revenue, with fees constituting close to one half of this funding.
- (2) Licensing Division Budget. This is derived completely from collections of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licensees pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office; and
- (3) Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJ) Budget. Although the CRJ program is not part of the Office, we provide it with budget, financial management, and administrative support on behalf of the Library. CRJ appropriated funding supports payroll and partially funds non-pay expenses that are not supported by fees and royalty payments.

In recent years, we have used programmatic requests to implement Congress' statutory requirements as well as to support Office services. For example, the Office requested and obtained \$3.2 million in additional fiscal 2022 funding for the CASE Act¹⁴ to supplement our unfunded fiscal 2021 work, including hiring the CCB staff. For fiscal 2023, the Office obtained a single program increase of \$1.7 million to provide for new positions involving cost analysis, economic analysis, and statistic capabilities as well as software to support valuable skillsets that we currently do not have.¹⁵ In fiscal 2024, the Office's single program increase of \$4.3 million was obtained for three new USCO positions and contract support to strengthen capacity and sustain progress on continuous development.

Financial support for our modernization initiative, initially funded for five years as part of the fiscal 2019 budget, ended in fiscal 2023. Given that work to modernize our IT systems and services is still underway, continued fiscal support will be needed as the Office begins continuous development of ECS. The Library has transitioned to an agile IT development model based on continuous development, with emphasis on rapid design and delivery of new functions and features that optimize stakeholder experience. We have seen the benefits of this model to meet evolving changes in technology, provide secure and interconnected systems, and manage contract cost increases.

For fiscal 2025, the Office requests an overall budget of \$107 million in funding and 478 FTEs, of which \$45.9 million would be funded through offsetting fees collected in fiscal 2023 and prior years. Our fiscal 2025 requests for each budget are as follows:
Basic Budget. \$96.9 million and 445 FTEs, comprising \$38.025 million in offsetting fee collections (39%) and \$58.8 million (61%) in appropriated dollars. The request includes mandatory pay-related and price level increases of \$3.9 million.

¹⁴ The fiscal 2022 budget for CASE Act implementation included \$1.0 million in one-time costs for office construction and furniture, audiovisual system acquisition, and development of an online case management system, and \$2.2 million in recurring costs (\$1.7 million for salary, benefits, and related costs for the 8 FTEs and \$500,000 for systems operation and maintenance, printing, and other services).

¹⁵ Notably, that fiscal 2023 request was fully supported through an increase in offsetting collections authority and did not require an increase in appropriated dollars.

Licensing Division Budget. \$7.2 million and 26 FTEs, all of which are to be funded from collection of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licensees pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office. The requested increase is to cover mandatory pay-related and price level increases of \$0.278 million.

Copyright Royalty Judges Budget. \$3.2 million and 7 FTEs, with \$0.142 million to support mandatory pay-related and price level increases. Of this total, royalties and participation fees offset \$0.629 million (for non-personnel-related expenses). The remainder, \$2.706 million in appropriated dollars, is to cover the personnel and other related expenses of the three judges and their staff.

* * *

The Copyright Office appreciates the Subcommittee's and Committee's continued support of our work to further the Constitutional mission of "promot[ing] the progress of science and useful arts,"¹⁶ including continuous IT development for the benefit of the users of our services.

¹⁶ U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 8.

Library of Congress
Questions for the Record
Representative Espaillat

Copyright Royalties

The Copyright Royalty and Distribution Reform Act of 2004 established the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB), an independent tribunal within the Library of Congress that consists of three Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJs) appointed by the Librarian of Congress.

Question:

1. What aspects of the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB) proceedings and operations does the Library of Congress oversee, and could the Librarian provide a summary of the different aspects of that oversight?

Response:

The Librarian of Congress directly appoints each of the Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJs) and, following a 2012 decision by the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, may sanction or remove a CRJ at will.¹ 17 U.S.C. § 801. This appointment and removal authority is consistent with Constitutional requirements for oversight of federal officers who handle matters as significant as those before the CRJs.

Even so, the statute also provides that the CRJs “shall have full independence in making determinations concerning adjustments and determinations of copyright royalty rates and terms, the distribution of copyright royalties, ... and in issuing other rulings under this title, except that the Copyright Royalty Judges may consult with the Register of Copyrights on any matter other than a question of fact.” See 17 U.S.C. § 802(f)(1)(A) and (B).

The Librarian respects the independence and impartiality of the CRJs in handling distribution proceedings and other matters that come before them. For an adjudicative body such as the CRB, such independence is fundamental to the integrity and trustworthiness of its decisions.

¹ See *Intercollegiate Broadcasting System, Inc. v. Copyright Royalty Board*, 684 F.3d 1332, 1340 (D.C. Cir. 2012), cert. denied, 133 S. Ct. 2735 (2013). The Court “invalidated and severed” all the language in 17 U.S.C. § 802(i) after “The Librarian of Congress may sanction or remove a Copyright Royalty Judge” to avoid a constitutional conflict with the Appointments Clause, U.S. Const., art. II, sec. 2, cl.2.

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Through the Register of Copyrights, per § 802(f)(1)(D), the Librarian ensures that CRB decisions are correct as a matter of substantive copyright law. Procedurally, per § 803(a)(1), CRB work must be carried out in accordance with the Copyright Act, and, to the extent it is not inconsistent to do so, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. The Librarian also ensures that CRB decisions are made public via the *Federal Register*, per § 803(f)(1)(D).

Operationally, the CRJs and other CRB employees are subject to human capital, budget, and other programs administered throughout the Library. The budget for the CRB is administered through the Copyright Office, and the CRB seeks the assistance of the Copyright Office for many of its administrative needs.

Question:

2. According to the US Copyright Office website (<https://www.copyright.gov/licensing/>) the Licensing Section of the US Copyright Office is responsible for helping to administer the various statutory licenses and similar provisions, including: secondary transmissions of radio and television programs by cable and satellite systems. Is the Librarian aware that the CRB is responsible for commencing and conducting proceedings necessary for release by the Licensing Section of the cable and satellite retransmission royalties (17 USC 801(b)(2) and (3)A)-(C)), and that, due to delays in initiating and conducting those proceedings and issuing relevant decisions necessary for distribution of those royalties, there were - as of November 2022 - over \$1 billion in cable retransmission royalties sitting in the Licensing Section accounts?

Response:

The Librarian is aware of the CRB's statutory responsibilities to conduct proceedings to identify ownership of royalty fees on deposit and to order distributions as well as the volume of funds managed by the Licensing Division of the Copyright Office.

The royalty fees on deposit are not earmarked on receipt for any particular claimant or claimant group. Before ordering distribution, the CRJs must resolve any controversies over entitlement to payment. This entails public notices, complex evidentiary hearings, and nuanced determinations to resolve disputes between competing claimant groups or among claimants within a group, as well as decisions whether to disallow particular claims. Disappointed parties have the option to pursue litigation in federal court, and frequently do.

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While there are sometimes settlements among the parties, these cannot simply be approved by the CRJ. The statute requires the CRJs to solicit comments on proposed settlements and authorizes rejection of proposals for good cause shown. Settlements, when adopted as Final Determinations, may be reviewed by the Register for legal errors of substantive law, and for which the Librarian will cause publication in the Federal Register, per 17 U.S.C. § 802(f)(1)(D).

Because the path to final distribution of royalty fees is long, the CRJs regularly order partial distributions to owners per 17 U.S.C. § 801(b)(3)(A). This preliminary payout requires public notice and confirmation that there are no reasonable objections, and also agreement from the recipients to return funds if necessitated by the final allocation decision. Because the royalty funds are invested and earning interest for owners while on deposit, as a practical matter, partial distributions must be timed to avoid any penalties caused by early redemption.

With respect to the 2014-2017 cable royalties, hundreds of millions of dollars have already been distributed to claimants. The Initial Determination issued last fall was the subject of two motions for rehearing, which the CRJs resolved. The CRJs have issued a Final Determination order which is now under review by the Register of Copyrights for legal error.

Since issuing the 2014-2017 Initial Determination last fall, the CRJs have ordered the following partial distributions:

- 2020 cable and satellite royalties totaling more than \$90 million.
- 2016 and 2017 cable royalties (which are part of the 2014-2017 proceeding) were distributed to the Moving Music Claimants (BMI, ASCAP and SESAC) equivalent to all but 1.5% of the undistributed Music Category Share.
- Additional partial distributions are under consideration at this time, including further partial distributions in the 2014-2017 proceeding, as well as approximately \$90 million in 2021 cable royalty funds. The CRJs have received objections to these requests.

Even after partial distribution, royalty fees will remain in the funds for further proceedings, often because their distribution is the subject of remaining controversies. In some cases, when all controversies have been resolved, to effect final distribution, it may be necessary for the

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Representative Espaillat

CRJs to order the Licensing Division to recover some previous partial distributions pursuant to signed repayment agreements.

Thus, in view of the complexities of the proceedings and the partial nature of most motions for distribution, it is common for royalty fees, even in relatively large amounts, to await final distribution in accounts maintained by the Licensing Division.

Nonetheless, the Library believes that royalty distributions can be made more expeditiously. As discussed in response to Question 3, an increase in CRB staffing has been approved.

Question:

3. It is understood that most of the \$1 billion + currently sitting in Licensing Section accounts is related to royalty years as far back as 2014-2022. At the current time, 2014-2017 royalties have been adjudicated by the CRB, with that decision issued only just last fall. The delays in the proceedings intended to release those funds - belonging to copyright owners - suggest a lack of resources by the CRB that has a great many administrative proceedings within its mandate. Is the delay in distributing the hundreds of millions of dollars belonging to copyright owners a concern to you? What can be done to provide the CRB with the resources it may need to address these extreme delays? Are there other things that you are considering to address the delays in proceedings at the CRB?

Response:

Any unnecessary delay in distributing royalties to copyright owners is of concern.

In 2023, the CRB provided its assessment of the resources needed to ensure timely and efficient operations with respect to its distribution and rate-setting functions, even in the face of events that occur without regularity, such as court-ordered remands and the voluntary separation of staff – the latter of which, for example, has left the CRB with only one attorney for more than a year. The CRB has stated its goal of making sure that each potential distribution and each upcoming rate-setting is consistently monitored and is promptly advanced even, for example, when the CRJs are in hearings or writing opinions.

Under the direction, and with the assistance, of the Library's Human Capital Directorate and Copyright Office, the CRB has a plan that includes the hiring of two additional attorneys, for a

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 Questions for the Record
 Representative Espallat

total CRB roster of 11 employees: the three CRJs (who, by statute, preside over cases and render decisions as a panel); four attorneys; one economist; two paralegals; and an administrative assistant. It is expected that the CRB will be able to onboard an attorney to fill the vacant position in the coming months, after which, the CRB will be able to fill the new supervisory attorney and staff attorney positions. A courtroom for the CRB to use for hearings and conferences is also being constructed.

Question:

4. Is it accurate that the three CRB judges and their current staff consider and administer the following licenses:

Section 111 – Statutory License for Secondary Transmissions by Cable Systems
 Section 112 – Statutory License for Making Ephemeral Recordings
 Section 114 – Statutory License for the public performance of Sound Recordings by Means of a Digital Audio Transmission
 Section 115 – Compulsory License for Making and Distributing Phonorecords
 Section 119 – Statutory License for Secondary Transmissions for Satellite Carriers
 Section 122 – Statutory License for Secondary Transmissions by Satellite Carriers for Local Retransmissions

What kind of staff support do the CRB judges currently have to ensure the timely consideration and administration of these licenses? How many total proceedings has the CRB handled each year over the past 5-10 years?

Response:

Yes, the three CRJs and their staff consider and administer the listed licenses. In addition:

- The CRJs administer the Section 118 statutory license for use of certain works in connection with noncommercial broadcasting. Proceedings regarding this license generally result in settlements.
- The CRJs conduct proceedings that adjust the amounts and terms of the Administrative Assessment that digital music providers and any significant non-blanket licensees must pay

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to fund the Mechanical Licensing Collective. Thus far, the Administrative Assessment proceedings have resulted in settlements.

Between 2018 and 2024 the CRB handled approximately 11 proceedings per year, as follows:

	Rate-Setting	Distribution	Administrative Assessment	Total
2018	4	7	0	11
2019	3	7	1	11
2020	5	7	1	13
2021	6	5	1	12
2022	6	5	0	11
2023	5	5	1	11
2024	5	5*	0	10

* In 2024, 3 distribution proceedings have commenced and 2 more are scheduled.

Each rate-setting proceeding consumes approximately 4-6 weeks for a hearing, preceded by months of pre-hearing review of voluminous direct and rebuttal fact and expert written testimony and legal briefing, and post-hearing, review of detailed proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law, followed in turn by the judges' conferences on the resolution of issues and the drafting of the determination.

Distribution proceedings consist of an allocation and distribution phase, each of which typically involves a hearing of at least three weeks, and entails the same pre-hearing and post-hearing work, as well as a separate determination. In addition, the distribution phase proceedings regularly entail claims disputes, necessitating a "proceeding within a proceeding."

Rate and distribution determinations must be issued by a statutory deadline, which requires the judges and the CRB staff to prioritize the completion of proceedings in progress.

The CRJs are currently supported by six positions: two attorneys (one position is vacant); one economist; two paralegals; and a program specialist for administrative support. A contractor works on the digitization of older, paper records of the CRB and predecessor bodies. The CRB will be adding one supervisory attorney and one staff attorney position, bringing the total CRB staffing to 11 – three judges and eight staff members.

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LOC Book Surplus Program

Question:

1. How can this subcommittee support the library's promotion of this program, especially in underserved communities, public libraries, and Title I and Title III schools, HSIs, HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities?

Response:

The Library's most important outreach efforts for the surplus book program are through Congressional offices – our critical partners in communicating the Surplus Books Program to eligible organizations including schools and public libraries. We appreciate your help in program promotion, as you best understand the needs of your communities, schools, and public libraries.

- Some Members have congressional staff assist with onsite selection and use Congressional Franking privileges to ship materials.
- The Library's Congressional Relations Office schedules appointments with new Member offices to discuss Library services for them, their staff and constituents, including the Surplus Books Program.

The Library does reach out to schools and other public entities about the surplus book program and maintains the Surplus Books website (<https://www.loc.gov/acq/surplus.html>) to communicate directly with interested organizations, including eligibility requirements and instructions on application. We also work with trusted partners to provide information they may post on their websites about the availability of the surplus books.

Because of the nature of the program, it is not well poised for further expansion to due to:

- The limited number and scope of materials (only those books not selected or retained by the Library) mean most content is appropriate for public or school libraries rather than college or university libraries;

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Questions for the Record
Representative Espaillat

- The need for shipping costs to be covered either by the recipient organization or through Congressional Franked mail (there are no Library funds designated for this postage);
- And the need for Congressional or recipient organization staff to select the materials on-site at the Library.

Question:

How can this program help address the needs of arts and humanities education across the nation in the face of cuts throughout the nation?

Response:

The Surplus Books program is designed to augment existing collections, often helping further enrich public and school libraries collections. Content from the Surplus Books program has also served as a base of new collections after natural disasters affect local libraries.

The limited scope of materials available – only those books not selected or retained by the Library – means the program is not positioned to address the needs of arts and humanities collections in the face of cuts throughout the nation.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WITNESSES

HON. KEVIN F. MCCUMBER, ACTING CLERK, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. WILLIAM P. MCFARLAND, SERGEANT AT ARMS, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. CATHERINE L. SZPINDOR, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. VALADAO. The subcommittee will come to order.

The subject of today's hearing is the fiscal year 2025 request for the House of Representatives.

I would like to thank Ranking Member Espaillat, committee members, Mr. Kevin McCumber, Mr. Bill McFarland, Ms. Catherine Szpindor, and all other House officers for being here today.

I know that all members of this committee share my appreciation for the critical work that you do to maintain the operations of the House.

We are experiencing the work your offices do in hearings this morning. The Clerk's Office provides a stenographer for a transcript, the Sergeant at Arms controls access through the Appointments Desk, and the sound equipment and live-streaming services come from the CAO.

You make the House work, and I look forward to hearing your testimonies and learning more about your budget priorities for fiscal year 2025.

I now recognize Ranking Member Espaillat for his opening remarks.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Ms. Szpindor, Mr. McFarland, and Mr. McCumber. I am looking forward to hearing from each of you regarding the fiscal year 2025 budget request.

I would also like to take a moment and thank all the officers, officials, and their staff for their extraordinary work over the past year to uphold the safety and the integrity of the legislative process and those who serve within that process.

You all do an exceptional job of serving this body and providing a host of services that are necessary for us to represent our constituents and address our country's critical needs.

The overall fiscal year 2025 request for the House of Representatives is \$1.9 billion, which is \$81.7 million, or 4.41 percent, above the fiscal year 2024 enacted level.

So, thank you all for being here, and I look forward to hearing your testimonies.

Mr. VALADAO. The Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, and Chief Administrative Officer are joined today by Mr. Matthew Berry, the House

General Counsel; Mr. Joseph Picolla, the House Inspector General; Mr. Ralph Seep, the Law Revision Counsel; and Mr. Wade Ballou, the Legislative Counsel.

All testimonies have been submitted for the record, and members are welcome to ask questions to any of the House officers here today in addition to our three main witnesses.

Mr. McCumber, your full testimony has been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. KEVIN F. MCCUMBER, ACTING CLERK, U.S.
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MCCUMBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for your ongoing support for the Office of the Clerk and our more than 215 staff, whose 2,500-plus years of service to this institution are a testament to their dedication and true commitment to public service.

I am extremely proud to testify on their behalf about our operations and fiscal year 2025 budget request.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank my colleagues beside me, Catherine and Bill. Their support and collaboration in managing the House's daily operations and advancing our modernization efforts is absolutely critical for our continued success.

To put the bottom line up front, we are requesting \$44,984,000 for fiscal year 2025. This is an 8.5 percent increase compared to our fiscal year 2024 enacted level.

There are two reasons for this increase. First, it supports our most valued asset, our staff. Second, the most significant increase is the line item for modernization projects, some of which received initial funding from the House's Modernization Initiatives Account. Our request enables us to continue these projects uninterrupted and meet required deadlines.

Excluding these modernization projects, however, our budget request is 2.8 percent below our fiscal year 2024 enacted level. This reduction is the result of our significant efforts to find and increase efficiencies, including reevaluating yearly services and contracts and locking in long-term pricing on scheduled projects, all without sacrificing mission-readiness.

A great example of these cost-saving efforts is our work on the Lobbying Disclosure Modernization Project. Working with our colleagues in the Secretary of the Senate's Office, we determined that our modernized lobbying disclosure system, including unique lobbyist ID capabilities, will be built on top of the Senate's recently revamped portion of the system. By not having to start from scratch, our agreement with the Senate means we will only use a fraction of the \$1.4 million appropriated for this project.

This request also supports additional modernization projects, including improvements to the eHopper and Comparative Print Suite and our ongoing redevelopment of the Legislative Information Management System.

The request also reflects our continued work on projects that received initial funding from the Modernization Account. This in-

cludes developing infrastructure for a committee portal, which will serve as a next-gen platform to manage committee work.

The first tool in the portal will be the Committee Vote Database Module—a recommendation from the former Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress—that will allow for the management of committee votes as data. Long term, the portal will include several modules to streamline committee work and reflects our commitment to the strategic development of our products.

By including these projects as a part our budget, we can continue them uninterrupted and stay on track to meet required deadlines.

As I mentioned at the outset, staff are our most valued asset. While I have discussed some of the future-looking projects that we have created, I would be remiss not to mention the Clerk staff who spend significant time and effort finding, cataloguing, and preserving the House's history.

To that end, I brought several items of historical significance with me today to highlight that work.

The first is a franked envelope signed by then-Representative Abraham Lincoln in 1848. This envelope is one of fewer than five in existence. We know he wrote and mailed this from Statuary Hall. The envelope is postmarked from the House Post Office, which is now, fittingly, the Lincoln Room.

The second is a letter from 1800 describing the brand-new Capitol just 5 days after the House moved its proceedings to Washington, DC. There wasn't yet a House Chamber or even wing of the Capitol. The House was meeting in what is now the Senate Republican Leader's Office. Written by Representative Lewis Morris of Vermont, the letter describes life in a boardinghouse owned by George and Martha Washington.

In addition to these two artifacts, I have also brought examples of our archival work—in this case, copies of your first certificates of election, which we have for you that we will distribute after the hearing.

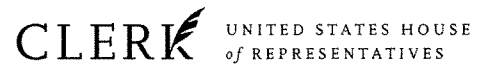
Our archivists work with the National Archives to ensure the House's records are properly stored so that, like the Lincoln envelope and the Morris letter, they remain in good condition and can inform the public about the House's history for decades to come.

I want to take a moment to thank the Clerk team, whose work day-in and day-out exemplifies our mission to provide the procedural support necessary for the orderly conduct of the House's official business.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and subcommittee members, the Office of the Clerk is committed to ensuring faithful stewardship of taxpayer dollars as we continue our service to this great institution.

Thank you again for your continued support and for the opportunity to testify. I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McCumber follows: follows:]



**STATEMENT BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
ON THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST**

**The Honorable Kevin F. McCumber, Acting Clerk of the U.S. House of
Representatives**

April 17, 2024

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am extremely proud to testify on behalf of the Office of the Clerk's 215 staff, whose more than 2,500 years of service to this institution are a testament to their dedication and true commitment to public service.

Thank you for your ongoing support for our Office and for the opportunity to testify about our operations and fiscal year 2025 budget request.

To put the bottom line up front, we respectfully request \$44,984,000 for fiscal year 2025, an 8.5 percent increase compared to our fiscal year 2024 enacted level. The reason for this increase is two-fold. First, this increase supports our most valuable asset: our staff. Our request includes longevities and cost-of-living adjustments. Second, the most significant increase is the line item for modernization projects, some of which received initial funding from the House's Modernization Initiatives Account. Our request enables us to continue these projects uninterrupted and meet required deadlines.

Absent the inclusion of these modernization projects, our budget request is 2.8 percent below our fiscal year 2024 enacted level. This reduction is the result of significant efforts to identify and increase efficiencies, including renegotiating contracts and locking in long-term pricing on scheduled projects, all without sacrificing mission readiness.

Critically, support for ongoing and mandated projects accounts for more than \$6,000,000 of our request. These projects include business continuity and disaster recovery activities, required maintenance of the Electronic Voting System (EVS), and modernization efforts. Specifically, our request funds ongoing development tasks concerning the Legislative Information Management System (LIMS), Comparative Print Suite (compare.house.gov), and the eHopper ([eHopper.house.gov](https://ehopper.house.gov)). This request also allows us to advance several House modernization initiatives, including the centralized Committee portal, collaborative legislative drafting tools, and the lobbying disclosure modernization project.

Seventy-nine percent of the requested amount supports nondiscretionary activities, including closed captioning and stenographic reporting contracts, salaries, and technology to carry out our existing and added responsibilities. Specifically, personnel expenses for 244 full-time equivalent positions account for \$32,521,861 of our fiscal year 2025 request.

The remaining twenty-one percent of the request addresses nonpersonnel expenses, including training, equipment, software maintenance and warranties, nontechnology contractor support, and contracts for activities such as curation and exhibition developments.

Your continued investment in our Office supports specialized, professional staff across nine divisions, the technology at the backbone of the legislative process, and the House's ongoing modernization efforts. It also enables us to provide information to the public about the legislative process, support the House's operations, assist Members in

fulfilling many of their statutory and constitutional responsibilities, and work to preserve this institution's history, art, and artifacts.

As you can see, our work is wide-ranging and interdivisional, but I would like to center my testimony on projects and personnel that support three main areas: (1) modernizing the legislative process; (2) providing transparency and public disclosure; and (3) supporting Members and the institution.

MODERNIZING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The Office plays a vital role in the House's daily legislative activities. We facilitate House proceedings; operate the EVS; produce the constitutionally mandated *House Journal*; transcribe Floor proceedings for the *Congressional Record* and hearings and depositions for Committees; process submissions of legislative documents; oversee the recording of Roll Call Votes; maintain Chamber technology and provide streaming video; prepare messages to the Senate about legislation that has passed the House; read bills, resolutions, amendments, motions, and presidential messages on the Floor; and make legislative activity updates publicly available via the Office of the Clerk website (clerk.house.gov).

During the First Session of the 118th Congress, we processed 8,036 bills for introduction—a 10 percent increase over the First Session of the 117th Congress. We hand-keyed the names of 103,231 cosponsors. We recorded 724 Roll Call Votes, supported 685 hours of legislative activity, and transcribed, proofread, and edited 7,021 pages of Floor proceedings for inclusion in the *Congressional Record*. Further, we assisted Committee staff in publishing 1,211 Committee meetings on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee Repository (docs.house.gov/Committee) and transcribed 147,121 pages of Committee activity.

I would like to highlight a few of our products and projects designed to improve the House's operations. These plans build upon our successes in 2023 and reinforce our commitment to engaging with users to refine our tools and deliver new features.

eHopper

Implemented in 2020, the eHopper remains the primary submission method for legislative documents. Last year the eHopper accounted for 88 percent of bill submissions. We continue to release new features to increase efficiency for House staff making submissions and Clerk staff processing documents. In February we deployed updates that allow House staff to submit cosponsors with just a few clicks. This secure tool improves the quality of submissions. We worked with House Leadership and the Committee on House Administration to demonstrate these features in recent briefings to Member and Committee staff. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Comparative Print Suite

In the first quarter of 2024, we delivered new features to the Comparative Print Suite, a set of applications that displays legislative text changes in context, including how a bill changes law and how two versions of legislative text differ. These features allow advanced users to see how an amendment changes underlying bill text and to compare selected provisions in a measure to a standalone bill. We continue to partner with the Congressional Staff Academy to conduct on-demand training for House staff to learn how to use the tool and to gain access to additional features.

This year we will extend access to the Senate through a pilot program and develop plans to expand staff access in the Congressional Budget Office, with the goal of reducing the time necessary to produce cost estimates for bills.

Legislative Information Management System

We will continue streamlining internal processes through the ongoing modernization of LIMS. This is a mission-critical system that we use to manage House legislative operations, record legislative activities, and exchange data with our legislative branch partners. Nearly all House legislative activities are recorded in LIMS.

Our fiscal year 2025 request includes funding for the next phase of the LIMS project, which entails updating several modules, notably the Floor Action Reporting System, and integrating the Member Information System (MIS) into LIMS. As the Subcommittee is aware, we have completed several phases. We continue to take an iterative approach. We develop and release software in short sprint cycles, which allow us to address critical feedback, resolve issues, make refinements, and respond to users' needs in real time.

We are also redesigning the MIS application and incorporating it into the new LIMS architecture. We use MIS to manage data and publish official lists of Members and Committees. To reduce duplication, improve workflows for our staff, and continue to maintain authority records in the LIMS environment, we are working to build a LIMS MIS module that will combine and improve data management from current systems.

Finally, through similar strategic planning and development, we will use the eHopper's new cosponsor feature as a foothold for importing data into Bill Briefs, a LIMS module that we redesigned last year. This feature will eliminate the need to hand-key hundreds of thousands of cosponsors and will dramatically increase accuracy and efficiency.

Centralized Committee Portal

This funding also supports the creation of a centralized Committee portal. Initially, the portal will provide the infrastructure to track Committee votes and legislative histories of bills referred to a Committee. Long term, the portal will feature several modules, including a replacement for the application that Committees use to publish meetings on the Committee Repository as well as draft meetings on the Deconflict Committee Scheduler.

Collaborative Legislative Drafting

Our request builds upon efforts to improve legislative drafting tools and facilitate collaborative drafting among Leadership, Members, Committees, and the House Office of Legislative Counsel. The funding supports our response to the recommendations of the ongoing study on legislative drafting and its ecosystem, which includes an exhaustive market review of available tools and will culminate in recommendations and a roadmap for improving and modernizing drafting tools and systems.

PROVIDING TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

In addition to supporting the legislative process, we provide information to the public and process, publish, and produce numerous required disclosures. For example, during 2023, Legislative Resource Center staff assisted nearly 7,000 people by phone, and the House Library disseminated more than 13,000 documents and answered more than 9,000 in-person, phone, and email reference questions.

Other transparency efforts include those required by law, such as the public disclosure of gift travel (1,594 documents published in 2023) and official foreign travel (104 documents published); financial disclosures (3,847 processed and published online) and periodic transaction reports (1,913 processed and published online); and lobbying disclosures (116,771 forms processed and published online), new lobbyist registrations (4,047), and registration amendments (556).

As the Subcommittee is aware, we are actively working with the Senate to modernize and harmonize the chambers' lobbying disclosure systems. Together, we created the Lobbying Disclosure Act Executive Decision Board, which reviewed proposals and decided on the next steps. The Senate is leading development and will build the modernized lobbying disclosure system on top of the Senate's existing framework, which was completed last year. We will ensure all tasks and outcomes align with House needs and requirements. These upgrades will improve the user experience, provide more efficient processing and automation, integrate the two chambers' systems, and allow for greater transparency. To solve the issue of duplicate accounts and to meet the request of assigning unique identifiers to lobbyists, which we shared in last year's testimony, we will build out protections for personally identifiable information.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND THE INSTITUTION

We support Members and the institution in myriad ways. For example, during the First Session of the 118th Congress, we conducted 78 required Workplace Rights and Responsibilities training sessions for Members, provided support for 12 Speaker-led ceremonial events, transferred more than 29 terabytes of electronic records and 700,000 pages of physical records to the National Archives, and processed thousands of stationery orders, franked envelope requests, and related requisitions.

In just a few weeks, we will launch our biannual efforts to prepare for the next Congress, which requires the efforts of dozens of our staff and coordination with our institutional

partners as we plan for New Member Orientation and Opening Day. We work with state election officials to provide guidance on, receive, and verify certificates of election that we use to prepare the official roll of Members. While the 119th Congress may seem a long way away, our team's early planning and experience allow us to best serve Members and Members-elect immediately following the election.

In addition to preparing for the future, many of our staff support efforts to preserve the House's history, art, and artifacts. Last year, we answered more than 1,000 reference questions, moved or installed 765 pieces of art, and updated the histories of more than 500 rooms on the Capitol campus. And as you may have seen in the Rayburn Subway, we recently installed a new exhibition, *The Capitol and the Golden Age of Postcards*, that showcases twentieth-century postcards from the House Collection.

To that end, I brought several items of historical significance with me today. Each item represents the many hours of staff work necessary to find, catalog, and preserve the House's history.

I want to take a moment to thank the Clerk team, whose work, day in and day out, exemplifies our mission to provide the procedural support necessary for the orderly conduct of the House's official business.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Subcommittee Members, the Office of the Clerk is committed to ensuring faithful stewardship of taxpayer dollars as we serve this great institution. Thank you again for your continued support and for the opportunity to testify. I welcome your questions.



OFFICE OF THE CLERK, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mission

The U.S. House of Representatives established the Office of the Clerk in 1789. The duties of the Office are mandated by federal law and House Rules, policies, and traditions. The mission of the Office of the Clerk is to provide the procedural support necessary for the orderly conduct of the House's official business.

Over time, the duties of the Office have expanded to include disseminating organizational information, preserving House history, and supporting technological advancement. With an enduring legacy of service, transparency, and accessibility, the Office is dedicated to supporting House Leadership, Members, Committees, Officers, and staff and to providing legislative and historical information to governmental partners and to the public.

House Rules and federal law charge the Clerk with administering a range of record keeping, procedural, and other services on behalf of the House, including

- Certifying House passage of bills and joint resolutions
- Attesting to and affixing the House seal to all writs, warrants, subpoenas, and other formal documents the House issues
- Receiving messages for the House from the Senate and the President when the House is in recess or adjournment
- Preparing and delivering enrolled measures to the White House
- Publishing the *House Journal*, a record of the proceedings of each legislative day in the House
- Supervising vacant Member offices
- Serving as the custodian of noncurrent House records
- Maintaining a library of official legislative documents and House publications
- Managing lobbying disclosure filings and maintaining financial disclosure reports filed by House Members, Officers, candidates, and staff

OFFICE OF THE CLERK, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Budget Summary

Fiscal Year	Funding (\$)	Change (\$)	Change (%)	Funded Positions
2025	44,984,000	3,529,000	8.51	244
2024	41,455,000	628,000	1.54	244
2023	40,827,000	4,327,000	11.85	244
2022	36,500,000	4,525,000	14.15	239
2021	31,975,000	1,209,000	3.93	227
2020	30,766,000	2,461,000	8.69	220

FY 2025—96.6 percent of the increase will support anticipated Personnel expenses, which include two cost-of-living adjustments, longevities, and overtime. We will work with contractors to complete mission-critical projects such as Phase 5 of the Legislative Information Management System (LIMS) modernization project. Additionally, funds will support modernization initiatives, including data integration and user engagement requests for the Comparative Print Suite, the Member Information System (MIS), financial disclosure filings, Live.House.gov, eHopper, Committee votes database, and legislative drafting tools. We will continue business continuity disaster recovery (BCDR) activities, stenographic reporting services, and closed captioning contracts. We will conserve the House Collection and provide exhibitions in the Cannon basement rotunda and Capitol corridor.

FY 2024—We worked with contractors to enhance the Comparative Print Suite and eHopper, redevelop LIMS, and design tools that enable collaborative legislative drafting. We scoped potential projects, such as a Committee votes database. Funds fulfilled BCDR activities, stenographic reporting, and closed captioning contracts and absorbed increased storage fees. We conserved the House Collection, including the inkstand and Speaker's chair, and completed exhibition treatments and deferred conservations. We completed installations in Committee hearing rooms and in the *How the House Works* exhibition in the Cannon basement rotunda.

FY 2023—Funds addressed procurement (licenses, maintenance, and equipment) and contractor-related costs. We added technology and communications positions to address a growing technology portfolio and duties supporting House proceedings, Members, and Committees. We completed required maintenance of the Electronic Voting System (EVS). We continued managing the Comparative Print Suite rollout, developing the eHopper, modernizing LIMS, redesigning the lobbying disclosure system, and addressing other initiatives per the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

FY 2022—We added official reporters and technology staff. We supported the lifecycle replacement of EVS equipment and continued developing the Comparative Print Suite and modernizing LIMS. We worked with contractors to support legislative operations and disseminate information via the Office of the Clerk website, Financial Disclosure Online Reporting Application, and the eHopper. We conserved the House Collection and executed rotations of exhibitions on campus.

FY 2021—We applied a Personnel Base Adjustment to fully fund positions newly established during mid-FY 2020 execution that addressed issues arising with amendments to the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA). We planned BCDR activities and installed a new human resources management system. We worked with contractors to provide stenographic reporting services and to develop the Office of the Clerk website, Financial Disclosure Online Reporting Application, Comparative Print Suite, and LIMS.

FY 2020—We hired staff to facilitate House-wide compliance with CAA amendments. We continued developing the Comparative Print Suite and modernizing LIMS.

Budget summary to accompany FY 2025 budget request
Office of the Clerk - April 17, 2024

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. McCumber.

And I now recognize Mr. McFarland for a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM P. MCFARLAND, SERGEANT AT ARMS,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MCFARLAND. Good morning, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the committee.

I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today in support of the fiscal year 2025 budget request for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, which totals \$34,141,000 and 206 full-time equivalents, a decrease of \$4.6 million, or 11.99 percent, and an increase of 11 FTEs from the fiscal year 2024 enacted level.

It is an honor and privilege to serve this institution and to collaborate with the committee to provide the necessary resources to serve the congressional community and to help keep Members, staff, visitors, and facilities safe and open to the public.

This budget request expands upon the priorities and initiatives that I testified on last year and that the Sergeant at Arms has successfully launched and continues to implement today. These priorities and initiatives focus on: one, investing in the Sergeant at Arms employees; two, modernizing the Sergeant at Arms; and, three, continuing and building security and safety programs.

In my testimony last year, I emphasized the importance of the Sergeant at Arms workforce and detailed how they are the organization's most valuable resource. As part of the Sergeant at Arms Strategic Plan established last year, the Sergeant at Arms launched a people initiative to focus on and to invest in its workforce.

To date, investments in the Sergeant at Arms workforce include: the creation of a staff council—a forum to provide the workforce with a voice to express interest or concerns to upper management, improve transparency within the organization, and increase employee engagement; providing a detailed series of leadership workshops and online curricula to all Sergeant at Arms employees; and providing customer-service training from top-ranked hospitality trainers.

We have also implemented organization-wide cross-training opportunities for interested Sergeant at Arms staff to expand their knowledge base and increase the level of service we provide to the congressional community.

In partnership with a global human capital consulting company, the Sergeant at Arms continues to promote transparency amongst the workforce through two strategic initiatives: number one, a revised performance management program; and, two, developing transparent career paths.

In January, the Sergeant at Arms released two performance management guides containing best practices to support meaningful interactions around employee performance and career development. This initiative is intended to support staff career growth and development within not only an employee's respective division but the organization at large. The idea is to develop and keep great talent within the organization and encourage longevity within our team.

Last year, I spoke with the committee about our efforts to launch a new platform to support security requests from Member offices. I am happy to report that, in 2023, the Sergeant at Arms awarded a purchase order to develop a Secure Member Portal, which has since launched.

I am also happy to report that the vast majority of Member offices have enrolled in this new application. We have identified future capabilities and are actively looking to incorporate them.

This platform, which is accessible via computer or mobile device, includes custom process flows, notifications, and dashboards and uses a low-code platform to request and track the status of the various requests our office coordinates, to include travel security, district office security, threat reports, residential security, security trainings, law enforcement coordinators, law enforcement event support, and mail hoods.

Also included in the budget request is funding for the Sergeant at Arms Police Services Division to provide in-person security awareness briefings in Members' districts. In conjunction with the U.S. Capitol Police, security awareness briefings provide a security overview for Members and staff on how to respond to typical security issues that an office encounters, and it includes best practices for district office security, residential security, and for hosting and attending events in their districts.

In 2023, the Sergeant at Arms employees visited approximately 250 Member district offices to provide security awareness briefings and related outreach.

Recently, we have seen demonstrations and other security incidents targeting Members' homes. In order to provide guidance and best practices to Members' families, the Sergeant at Arms created and distributed a Spouse and Family Safety and Security Guide. The spouse book is a Sergeant at Arms publication produced to address safety and security concerns of spouses and families of Members, who are often overlooked.

The guide covers general security practices, protecting personal identifiable information, travel security, and emergency preparedness. It also provides emergency contact information and a fill-in template for family emergency contacts.

Furthermore, my Police Services Division has met individually with Member offices and committees regarding swatting and how Sergeant at Arms programs and law enforcement coordination can assist with mitigating the risk. The Sergeant at Arms has successfully assisted Members with having their personal addresses identified with local law enforcement to ensure communication and de-escalation.

Additionally, in partnership with Ms. Catherine Szpindor, the CAO, and her team, the Sergeant at Arms created a cybersecurity program to provide data and privacy protection and to assist with removing sensitive PII from the internet, making Member addresses more difficult to locate on the internet.

I want to thank this committee, as well as House leadership, for your support on the Sergeant at Arms' efforts to reinvigorate long-stalled security upgrade projects. As I spoke about last year, my team is committed to these vital projects around the campus.

I have worked closely with your committee, the Acting Architect's team, and my counterparts in the Capitol Police and Senate, and we have made some progress, but we have a lot more work to do in this institution. I look forward to continuing to work with the new project managers from the Architect of the Capitol to see these projects to completion.

In closing, the upcoming year will not only include building upon the initiatives my team has been working on in the past 12 months, but it will also demand rigorous planning and coordination for high-profile events with significant security and protocol requirements, including the nominating conventions, elections, election certification, and the inauguration.

Additionally, the House will continue to play host to pivotal events such as the joint meeting held just last week. As the chief protocol officer, we will continue to expand upon our protocol services to ensure the highest degree of professionalism is extended to all dignitaries during a congressional event and in coordination for their visits with the Members of the House of Representatives.

As chairman of the Capitol Police Board during this critical period, my foremost priority is ensuring the safety and security of these gatherings.

My office is fully committed to continue developing top-tier, non-partisan security services for our esteemed Members, their families, and staff. We recognize the immense responsibility entrusted to us and are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of professionalism and efficiency.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before the committee. I am deeply appreciative for the committee's support and partnership as we strive to maintain the challenging harmony between strong security measures and free and open access to the Capitol complex.

I look forward to working with this committee and my fellow House officers here today. I welcome any questions you may have, and I am happy to provide further insight into our strategies and preparations.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McFarland follows:]

**Office of the Sergeant at Arms
Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Submission**

**Statement of Mr. William P. McFarland
Sergeant at Arms
U.S. House of Representatives
Before
The Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations**

Good morning Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today in support of the fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget request for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms (SAA), which totals \$34,141,000 and 206 full-time equivalents (FTEs); a decrease of \$4.6 million, or 11.99% and an increase of 11 FTEs from the FY2024 enacted level.

This budget request expands upon the priorities and initiatives that I testified on last year and that the SAA has successfully launched and continues to implement today. These priorities and initiatives focus on 1.) investing in SAA employees; 2.) modernizing the SAA; and 3.) continuing and building security and safety programs.

In my testimony last year, I emphasized the importance of the SAA workforce and detailed how they are the organization's most valuable resource. As part of the SAA Strategic Plan established last year, the SAA launched a people initiative to focus on and invest in its workforce. To date, investments in the SAA workforce include: the creation of a staff council—a forum to provide the workforce with a voice to express interests or concerns to upper management, improve transparency within the organization, and increase employee engagement; providing a detailed series of leadership workshops and online curricula to **all** SAA employees; and providing customer service training from top-ranked hospitality trainers to employees within our Information Services, Protocol and Special Events, Chamber Operations, and Parking Security Divisions. We have also implemented organization-wide cross-training opportunities for interested SAA staff to expand their knowledge base and increase the level of service we provide to the Congressional community.

In partnership with a global human capital consulting company, the SAA continues to promote transparency amongst the workforce through two strategic initiatives 1.) a revised performance management program and 2.) developing transparent career paths. In January, the SAA released two performance management guides containing best practices to support meaningful interactions around employee performance and career development. This initiative is intended to support staff career growth and development within not only an employee's respective division, but the organization at large. The idea is to develop and keep great talent within the organization and encourage longevity with our team.

Since my last appearance before this Committee, two additional Strategic Plan initiatives have been introduced. In January, each SAA staff member received a skills survey to collect information regarding the most important skills and skill expectations across positions and

divisions. Also, a SAA Policy Repository Project was launched in March 2024, allowing all SAA staff to easily access organizational policies, thus increasing transparency and aligning expectations of staff.

Included in the FY2025 budget request, the SAA is requesting \$21.5 million in support of 206 FTEs. In addition to base salaries, this figure includes a projected cost of living adjustment (COLA), longevity increases, and \$200,000 for meritorious increases to be awarded as part of the SAA's new performance management program. Additionally, included as part of the non-personnel request, the SAA is requesting \$355,000 to continue providing training and professional development opportunities and investments in the workforce.

Last year, as part of our efforts to expand the ways in which we communicate and engage with the Congressional Community, we launched the SAA Service Center. The SAA Service Center serves as a one-stop shop for Congressional offices to ask questions, pick up tickets for special events, outreach and communications on SAA services, and for SAA staff to conduct briefings, trainings, and meetings. In 2023, the Service Center distributed tickets for the Joint Meetings of Congress for the visits of the President of the Republic of Korea, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and the President of the State of Israel. The Service Center distributed more than 26,000 Gallery Passes to Member offices.

In order to remain agile and adapt to the evolving needs of the House of Representatives and the greater Congressional community and to counter the growing threats that Members of Congress and their staffs face, the SAA continues to modernize its operations. In August 2023, the SAA finalized implementation of a new organizational structure to better support our Congressional stakeholders. I appreciate the Committee's support for this initiative. The SAA organization has grown over the years and our mission continues to expand; to support our expanding mission, we made these changes to our organizational structure to better align our teams, setting SAA employees up for success, while remaining agile and adapting to the needs of Congress. In the spirit of transparency, I was pleased to disseminate the SAA organizational chart to all SAA employees, something that had not been done throughout my tenure in the organization.

Last year, I spoke with the Committee about our efforts to launch a new platform to support security requests from Member offices. I am happy to report that in 2023, the SAA awarded a purchase order to develop a Secure Member Portal, which has since launched. I am also happy to report that the vast majority of Member offices have enrolled in this new application. We have identified future capabilities and are actively looking to incorporate them. This platform, which is accessible via computer or mobile device includes custom process flows, notifications, and dashboards and uses a low code platform to request and track the status of the various requests our office coordinates to include; travel security, district office security, threat reports, residential security, security trainings, law enforcement coordinators, law enforcement event support, and mail hoods. The FY2025 budget request includes \$300,000 for the recurring annual subscription to maintain this portal.

Also included in the budget request is funding for the SAA Police Services Division to provide in-person Security Awareness Briefings in Members' districts. In conjunction with the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP), Security Awareness Briefings provide a security overview for

Members and staff on how to respond to typical security issues that an office encounters, and includes best practices for district office security, residential security and for hosting and attending events in their district. In 2023, SAA employees provided 110 Security Awareness Briefings with Congressional and law enforcement partners. The FY2025 budget request includes \$100,000 for Security Awareness Briefings and \$60,000 for the District Security Service Center to conduct site visits to district offices to provide information on security systems, mail hoods, and other security functions.

Other security initiatives that the SAA has undertaken include purchasing twenty-five two drawer safes and twenty-five five drawer safes for use by Members and staff to safeguard classified and national security information.

Recently, we have seen demonstrations and other security incidents targeting Members' homes. In order to provide guidance and best practices to members' families the SAA created and distributed a "Spouse and Family Safety and Security Guide". This guide is a SAA publication produced to address safety and security concerns of spouses and families of Members. The guide covers general security best practices, protecting personal identifiable information (PII), travel security, and emergency preparedness. It also provides emergency contact information and a fill-in template for family emergency contacts.

Furthermore, my Police Services Division has met individually with Member offices and Committees regarding swatting, and how SAA programs and law enforcement coordination can assist with mitigating the risk. The SAA has successfully assisted Members with having their personal addresses identified with local law enforcement to ensure communication and de-escalation. Additionally, in partnership with Ms. Catherine Szpindor, the Chief Administrative Officer, and her team, the SAA created a cyber security program to provide data and privacy protection and to assist with removing sensitive PII from the internet, making Member addresses more difficult to locate on the internet. The FY2025 budget request includes \$441,000 to reimburse Members for this program.

The Emergency Management Division partnered with the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma (ACS) to provide bleeding control training to the House community. This training teaches multiple ways to control severe bleeding followed by hands-on training using tourniquets, wound packing gauze, and other equipment. Additionally, the SAA purchased bleeding control kits to place across the House wing of the Capitol and the House Office Buildings.

I want to thank this Committee, as well as House leadership for your support on SAA's efforts to re-invigorate long stalled security upgrade projects. As I spoke about last year, my team is committed to these vital projects around campus. I have worked closely with your Committee, the Acting Architect's team and my counterparts in the USCP and Senate, and we have made some progress, but we have a lot more work to do as an institution. I look forward to continuing to work with new project managers from the Architect of the Capitol to see these projects to completion.

With the State of the Union Address now behind us, the SAA is preparing for a busy year ahead. Planning for the Presidential nominating conventions is well underway. SAA staff from

both the Police Services and Emergency Management Divisions have been coordinating with the USCP and other state and federal law enforcement partners. In fact, my team and I made a trip to both sites last month. As we move from the nominating conventions in August and through the elections, our focus will turn to planning for the Presidential Inauguration. In my role as Chair of the Capitol Police Board, I have asked that USCP provide continual updates to the Board throughout the planning process.

As we move forward, I would like to highlight some initiatives included in our FY2025 budget request, and I look forward to updating the Committee on these efforts as we head into FY2025.

In the Division of House Garages and Parking Security, \$80,000 is being requested for the integration of a vehicle counting system. This effort aligns with my commitment to leverage technology into our workstreams. The system would allow for a real-time dashboard of garage and lot capacity and could be used dually as a traffic management system to assist with the entry and exit of vehicles. The system would give SAA visibility of vehicle surges on campus in a matter of minutes.

In the Police Service Division, \$100,000 is being requested for the continued development of a Digital Communications Tool. This tool, in the form of a smart phone app or physical device, will allow users to request emergency assistance using 911 or to communicate with USCP during emergencies.

In the Emergency Management Division, \$322,000 is being requested for critical maintenance and upgrades to the House Operations Center (HOC). The budget request provides funds to update and modernize HOC equipment, systems, and capabilities to provide reliable services and information to the House Officers and House Leadership during an emergency. Upgrades include the replacement of the video wall and the uninterrupted power supply.

This budget request includes \$60,000 for the annual license and maintenance support for the Joint Emergency Mass Notification System (JEMNS) Accountability Tool. This tool leverages the existing mass notification tool used by Congress, and allows Member offices, committees, and support offices to track the accountability of staff in the event of an emergency. Earlier this year, the SAA conducted system tests with targeted audiences. In May 2024, a House-wide test will occur with all DC-based House staff and barring any large issues, this new capability is expected to launch in Summer 2024.

This budget request continues moving the SAA along with modernization and adapting to the needs of the House of Representatives. To better serve Members and their staff, SAA is streamlining aspects of the transition between Congresses. The SAA intends to use the Service Center as a hub to enhance Member services the SAA provides. Additionally, in coordination with the Police Services Division, we will be creating new guides, trainings and other materials to highlight current services provided by the SAA, such as residential security, district security, cybersecurity, and travel security.

Additionally, the SAA continues to upgrade the Gallery Pass distribution system, including working with Member offices to explore offering passes directly to designated individuals and international visitors. Lastly, the SAA is finalizing upgrades to the software used

to process badging Official Business Visitors, with the goal of streamlining the process for both visitors and staff.

In our ongoing investment of the SAA staff, in the year ahead, we will continue to implement the initiatives of the consulting company in which we are in partnership. These initiatives include expansion of career development training with clearly defined career progressions.

The FY2025 SAA budget request has been prepared in the spirit of zero-based budgeting, remaining fiscally responsible without jeopardizing mission-critical services provided to the House community. For FY2025, the Office of the SAA requests a total of \$34,141,000. This includes \$21,513,000 for personnel expenses to fund the 195 current FTEs plus 11 new FTEs requested in FY25, as well as \$12,628,000 for non-personnel items. I am very pleased to sit in front of you today and report that we are able to decrease our funding needs in FY2025 by 11.99% overall.

In closing, the upcoming year will not only include building upon the initiatives my team has been working on the past 12 months, but it will also demand rigorous planning and coordination for high profile events with significant security and protocol requirements, including the nominating conventions, elections, election certification, and the Inauguration. Additionally, the House will continue to play host to pivotal events such as the joint meeting held just last week. As the Chief Protocol Officer, we will continue to expand upon our protocol services to ensure the highest degree of professionalism is extended to all dignitaries during Congressional events, and in coordination for their visits with Members of the House of Representatives. As Chairman of the Police Board during this critical period, my foremost priority is ensuring the safety and security of these gatherings.

My office is fully committed to continue delivering top-tier, non-partisan security services for our esteemed Members, their families, and staff. We recognize the immense responsibility entrusted to us and are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of professionalism and efficiency.

I look forward to working with this Committee and my fellow House Officers here today. I welcome any questions you may have, and I am happy to provide further insight into our strategies and preparations.

**OFFICE OF THE SERGEANT AT ARMS
FISCAL YEAR 2025
BUDGET SUMMARY**

Office of the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) Mission Statement: Exercise robust security oversight and maintain a safe environment for the U.S. House of Representatives that fosters order and decorum and enables open and accessible facilities for the American people. The following divisions comprise the SAA: Administration, House Garages & Parking Security, House Security, Information Services, Police Services, Emergency Management, Chamber Operations, and Protocol & Special Events.

The SAA Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget Request is \$34,141,000. This is a \$4,652,000 or a 11.99% *decrease* from Fiscal Year 2024 enacted budget.

FY25 personnel costs show an increase of \$4,955,000 or 29.93% over the FY24 enacted budget. This increase is due to a request for 11 new FTEs (\$1,068,000) requested in FY25, and projected costs associated with the COLA, longevity increases, and overtime.

The FY25 non-personnel costs show a *decrease* of \$9,607,000 or 43.21% below the FY24 enacted level which was flat with the FY23 enacted level. The decrease in FY25 is primarily due to non-recurring costs for the lifecycle replacement of escape hoods (\$6,545,000), victim rescue units (\$210,000), and establishing an offsite operations center (\$2,000,000) which were funded in FY23. Funding is not requested for these initiatives in FY25.

The FY25 budget request includes funding for the following security initiatives: the District Office Security Program, the Residential Security Program, the Residential Cybersecurity Program, travel to advance and support off-campus events involving Members of Congress; security items to be used in the 119th Congress, including Member and spouse identification pins. Non-personnel items also include funding to reimburse the United States Capitol Police travelling outside of the United States to protect House Leadership. Funding is also requested various emergency preparedness and planning programs to include the replacement and maintenance of annunciators throughout the House side of campus. Lastly, SAA is requesting funding for the Secure Member Portal that tracks and coordinates request for law enforcement support, travel security, district security, residential security, cyber security, trainings, threat reports and mail safety hoods.

Additionally, the FY25 budget includes funding to continue contracted services through subject matter experts that provide high-level advisory services to the House and for Sergeant at Arms staff development and training.

Office of the Sergeant at Arms
FY20 - FY24 Budgets and FY25 Budget Request

Program Type	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$ 13,258,000.00	\$ 14,163,000.00	\$ 905,000.00	6.83%
Non-personnel	\$ 6,967,000.00	\$ 9,097,000.00	\$ 2,130,000.00	30.57%
Total	\$ 20,225,000.00	\$ 23,260,000.00	\$ 3,035,000.00	15.01%
Total FTEs	163	166	3	1.84%

The increase from FY20 to FY21 enacted is primarily due to costs associated with reimbursement to the United States Capitol Police for protective services for House Leadership traveling outside of the United States, staff travel to Member district offices to provide security awareness briefings, and costs associated with the District Office Security Program.

Program Type	FY21 Enacted	FY22 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$ 14,163,000.00	\$ 14,690,000.00	\$ 527,000.00	3.72%
Non-personnel	\$ 9,097,000.00	\$ 13,005,000.00	\$ 3,908,000.00	42.96%
Total	\$ 23,260,000.00	\$ 27,695,000.00	\$ 4,435,000.00	19.07%
Total FTEs	166	168	2	1.20%

The increase from FY21 to FY22 enacted is primarily due to costs associated with staff development and associated training, Member and spouse identification pins and license plates, staff parking permits, costs associated with the District Office Security Program annunciator replacement project, Rapid Alert System Pilot Program, Digital Communications, and Gunshot Detection System.

Program Type	FY22 Enacted	FY23 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$ 14,690,000.00	\$ 16,558,000.00	\$ 1,868,000.00	12.72%
Non-personnel	\$ 13,005,000.00	\$ 22,235,000.00	\$ 9,230,000.00	70.97%
Total	\$ 27,695,000.00	\$ 38,793,000.00	\$ 11,098,000.00	40.07%
Total FTEs	168	182	14	8.33%

The increase from FY22 to FY23 enacted is primarily due to costs associated with 14 new FTE, staff development and associated training, security expert consultant services, costs associated with the District Office Security Program and the Member Residential Security Program, costs associated with an off-site House Operations Center, and the replacement of escape hoods.

Program Type	FY23 Enacted	FY24 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$ 16,558,000.00	\$ 16,558,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
Non-personnel	\$ 22,235,000.00	\$ 22,235,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
Total	\$ 38,793,000.00	\$ 38,793,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
Total FTEs	182	195	13	7.14%

FY23 enacted is flat with FY24 enacted.

Program Type	FY24 Enacted	FY25 Request	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$ 16,558,000.00	\$ 21,513,000.00	\$ 4,955,000.00	29.93%
Non-personnel	\$ 22,235,000.00	\$ 12,628,000.00	\$ (9,607,000.00)	-43.21%
Total	\$ 38,793,000.00	\$ 34,141,000.00	\$ (4,652,000.00)	-11.99%
Total FTEs	195	206	11	5.64%

The decrease from FY24 enacted to the FY25 request is primarily due to costs associated with the Member Residential Security Program, an off-site House Operations Center, and the replacement of escape hoods.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. McFarland.
And I now recognize Ms. Szpindor for a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. CATHERINE L. SZPINDOR, CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you.

Good morning, Chairman Valadao. Ranking Member Espallat and members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the CAO's fiscal year 2025 budget.

As dictated by the current financial environment, the CAO's fiscal year 2025 budget request is principally equal to its fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 levels. The fiscal year 2025 request totals \$213.1 million, which is \$1.5 million over the fiscal year 2023 enacted budget and flat with the fiscal year 2024 enacted budget.

The \$1.5 million increase is to cover the transfer of the House's Office of Diversity and Inclusion to the CAO.

The CAO's initial fiscal year 2025 budget formulation included a \$14.7 million increase to cover the growing cost of existing programs as well as the cost of new projects. To maintain costs consistent with the fiscal year 2024 budget, we prioritized and reallocated funds to cover high-priority, critical services and reduced funding for noncritical services.

Additionally, we are very grateful to receive funding from the House Modernization Initiatives Account to support some of our initiatives.

In fiscal year 2024, we achieved some major operational and technological wins. A few of these successes are:

Developed an approach to securely integrate GenAI technology. This has entailed conducting cyber and legal reviews of existing policies and establishing a House-wide AI advisory group of 150 Member, committee, and leadership offices.

We established the House Intern Resource Office, providing interns and intern coordinators with tools and resources to help them navigate the House and maximize their experiences.

Completed a 2-year renovation of the House recording and television studios to provide a modern, state-of-the-art studio for Members.

Also, the team supported 29 field hearings in 17 States and 1 U.S. territory, saving committees an average of \$3,500 to \$5,000 per hearing.

Deployed an electronic form application called eForms to enable House officials to electronically prepare, approve, and submit payroll authorizations.

Rolled out the My Expenses automated reimbursement application to 345 Member, committee, and leadership offices, with 87 percent of the offices indicating the reimbursement process was easier.

Created a new Deconflict calendar tool to help Committees schedule hearings and markups with fewer Member conflicts.

Enrolled 11 committees in a new automated eDiscovery program to assist with oversight and investigations.

Installed CAO-funded WiFi solutions in over 95 percent of the Members' designated district offices.

Improved the Technology Partner+ Program to provide sole-support, in-person, and remote technical services to 115 House offices at no cost to the offices.

Expanded popular in-person staff conferences tailored for specific DC and district office staff positions.

Enhanced the central HR Hub repository to provide more comprehensive support for Member and committee staff.

Established and staffed the new HR Talent and Development Office to continue many of the same recruitment and outreach programs as previously performed by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

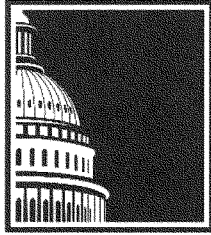
These new services and their associated costs are not one-time expenses. They become sustained programs with a recurring cost, which will require additional CAO budget dollars to prevent reducing current services.

The CAO remains committed to being an essential resource for Members and staff, providing needed critical services to House operations.

Our greatest resource is our talented and dedicated staff, who work every day to provide our many services and are constantly improving them. We work together as one CAO—Member-focused, service-driven.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Szpindor follows:]



Office of the
**CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER**

Statement Before the House Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch on the
Office of the Chief Administrative Officer Fiscal
Year 2025 Budget Request

The Honorable Catherine L. Szpindor
Chief Administrative Officer
April 17, 2024

The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the U.S. House of Representatives appreciates the opportunity to present its Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) budget to the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Legislative Branch led by Chairman Valadao and Ranking Member Espallat.

This overview of the CAO's FY25 request covers topline budget allocations, forecasted operational cost increases, CAO's project and program prioritization, new and expanded CAO service initiatives, and its commitment to stewardship.

CAO FY25 TOPLINE REQUEST

As dictated by the current fiscal environment, the CAO's FY25 budget request is principally equal to its FY23 and FY24 levels. The FY25 request totals \$213.1 million, which is \$1.5 million or .71% over the FY23 enacted budget and flat with the FY24 enacted budget. The \$1.5 million increase is to cover the transfer of the House's Office of Diversity and Inclusion to the CAO.

\$116.2 million or 55% of the requested FY25 budget is for programmatic costs, and \$96.9 million or 45% is for personnel costs.

\$119 million or 56% of the CAO's total FY25 budget is dedicated to its House Information Resources division responsible for building, maintaining, and protecting the House IT infrastructure and Member data. The remaining \$94 million or 44% covers the broad scope of additional critical functions and services performed by the CAO to support the House.

FORECASTED OPERATIONAL COST INCREASES

Initial formulation of the FY24 and FY25 operating budgets identified respectively \$14.8 and \$14.7 million increases over FY23's enacted budget. The forecasted increases were to cover the inflationary rise of existing program costs as well as costs associated with *new* CAO-led projects. For clarification, CAO programs are established and sustained services. Projects are temporary initiatives until tested and deemed sustained programs. Operating with consecutively flatlined budgets has required rigorous project and program prioritization and conservative budgeting.

FY25 PROJECT AND PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION

Since 2021, the CAO has relied upon its project portfolio prioritization process to formulate its annual budget. The process entails rigorous evaluation of existing, new, and requested projects. It contemplates each project's criticality, value add to the House community, and guidance provided by CAO oversight. With the information gathered, projects are designated as either high, medium, or low priority. For FY25, because of the flatlined budget, the CAO applied the same prioritization process to its existing programs with increasing costs.

FY25 projects and programs deemed high-priority include:

- Secure House data storage hardware and software maintenance
- House cloud and on-premises infrastructure upgrades
- Identity authentication software upgrades
- House Recording Studio equipment lifecycle replacement
- House telecommunications infrastructure migration and backup

- Cyber incident response, forensics, and threat intel capabilities
- House payroll system replacement assessment support
- CAO Tech Partner Program support

Once identified, the CAO determined how the high-priority FY25 projects and programs may proceed through existing funding sources. Certain initiatives that aligned with or derived from the Select Committee on Modernization's recommendations also received funding from the Modernization Fund.

FY25 projects and programs deemed medium and low priority include:

- House furniture replacement and refurbishing
- House office design and asset management service support
- CAO staff equipment lifecycle replacement
- House-wide news and media services subscriptions
- CAO IT subscriptions
- Process automation technology support
- CAO staff training and associated travel

FY25 projects and programs deemed medium or low impact will be either deferred, discontinued, or funded at lower levels. The CAO will also need to cover projected mandatory personnel cost of living adjustments by slowing down recruitment and hiring. Prioritizing competing CAO projects and programs ensures those critical to House operations are maintained. It also means select programs won't get the funding required to fully maintain current services levels and some CAO customers may experience slower service times.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS DESPITE FUNDING CHALLENGES

Despite the current fiscal environment, the CAO has achieved major operational and technological wins within the last fiscal year. Achievements include the integration of new services as well as the expansion of existing services and all are in addition to the thousands of day-to-day financial, acquisition, technical, logistical, training, coaching, personal and legal counseling, consulting, and wellness services the CAO successfully delivers every day.

NEW CAO SERVICE INITIATIVES

Integration of Generative AI technology: After the first Generative AI (GenAI) Large Language Model (LLM) came on the scene in late 2022, the CAO initiated a proactive, disciplined approach to ensure the House is prepared to securely integrate the technology. It conducted legal and cyber reviews of available LLM technologies, which prompted the June 2023 approval of ChatGPT Plus for limited House use. In fall of 2023, it conducted a NIST-based AI governance assessment and, more recently, drafted AI-specific House security policies currently under review. In June 2023, it also established a House-wide AI Advisory Group that engaged 150 Member, Committee, and Leadership offices to understand how the technology can be leveraged to achieve greater efficiencies. In addition to establishing AI governance, the CAO will ensure staff access to training (upskilling) opportunities. It will also work with its oversight to expand access to House-validated LLM technologies as they mature. With proper governance, GenAI LLM technologies will have a significant impact on Member

offices faced with an ever-increasing volume of constituent engagement and oversight responsibilities. The goal is to yield greater operational efficiencies for the business units that support House operations. To date, LLM integration efforts have been entirely supported by existing CAO resources. Full integration, however, will require additional resources or the redistribution of existing resources.

Intern Resource Office: As required by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, the CAO established the House Intern Resource Office to provide interns and intern coordinators with tools and resources needed to help interns navigate the House and maximize their experiences. The office hosts in-person and virtual learning and networking opportunities for interns and provides interns and intern coordinators with resources online through its new Human Resources (HR) Hub Intern Resources webpage. The website directs interns to professional development opportunities and helps them navigate the next steps in their career. It also provides intern coordinators with tools, templates, and materials needed for hiring, developing, and retaining interns.

House Recording Studio Renovation: In August 2023, the House Recording Studio completed a two-year renovation of its television studios to provide a modern state-of-the-art studio for Members to use at no cost to the Members' Representational Allowance. Since the renovation, the Recording Studio has supported nearly 800 in-studio recordings, including 117 holiday greeting messages that were broadcasted to American Service Members stationed overseas.

eForms: In August 2023, The CAO deployed an electronic form application, called eForms, that enables House offices to electronically prepare, approve, and submit payroll authorizations, annual health designations, and office financial point of contact designations. Within one month of its launch, almost 98% of offices had used eForms to complete the annual health designation of their staff for 2024. Additionally, over 7,935 electronic payroll authorizations, 515 health designations, and 260 financial point of contact designations have been submitted via the new electronic process since it launched. The CAO is actively working to implement the upgrade to additional House forms, including staff onboarding paperwork and student loan repayment agreements. The new upgrades are scheduled to go live this summer.

My Expenses: The CAO's Enterprise Applications and Financial Counseling offices continued the phased rollout of the travel and expense tool, My Expenses, introduced in 2021. Currently, 345 Member, Committee, and Leadership offices are using the tool and have submitted an estimated 125,000 expense reports. The tool has proven to be especially popular amongst district office staff with 87% saying it makes the reimbursement process easier according to a recent survey.

Deconflict Scheduling Tool: CAO's House Digital Service team enhanced Deconflict, a digital calendar tool initially piloted in early 2023 to help committees schedule hearings and markups with fewer Member conflicts. The tool gives committee Staff Directors and Clerks one-stop-shop access to all noticed and tentative House committee events to see which of their committee members have potential conflicts. Recent enhancements include improved user interface and conflict notifications. A new version with all noticed committee events is being piloted now and will be made available to all House staff and the public soon.

eDiscovery: In June 2023, the CAO enrolled the first House committee in its new eDiscovery program launched in coordination with Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Modernization. The eDiscovery program entails use of a secure electronic discovery software platform that supports committee oversight and investigations through its document identification, collection, and review capabilities. By the end of 2023, 11 committees were enrolled in the eDiscovery program. To date, feedback has been exceptionally positive.

HouseNet Redesign: This summer, the CAO plans to launch the redesigned House intranet site, HouseNet, that will deliver a more user-friendly experience to the House community seeking to navigate and access House resources. The overhaul includes a logical reorganization of content, new and improved search capabilities, and improved mobile access. The dynamic features of the new site, which will be housed on a secure cloud platform, will support future site enhancements like the personalization of individual user content.

Casework Aggregation: At the request of the Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Modernization, the CAO's Digital Service Team expects to complete a casework aggregation prototype capable of collecting, anonymizing, and analyzing Member office casework. The casework project, which recently launched a working group for interested Member offices, has potential to identify and inform the House of casework trends with and within Executive Branch agencies.

Flag Tracker: Again, at the request of the Subcommittee on Modernization, the CAO's Enterprise Applications and House Digital Service teams created a new House flag order tracking application that will enable Members offices to provide constituents with real-time status updates on flag orders. The tracking application requires the coordination of several House entities, including the Office Supply Store, CAO Mailing Services, and the AOC Flag Office. The application pilot indicates the new application will be highly utilized and well received when made available to all Member offices this summer.

EXPANDED CAO SERVICES INITIATIVES

Cybersecurity: The CAO's Office of Cybersecurity continues to strengthen the House's cybersecurity posture against active and emerging threats. In 2023, it enhanced the House mobile security platform, adding increased protection and visibility to the emerging threats across the digital (mobile) landscape. Additionally, Cybersecurity worked to cultivate a culture of heightened cybersecurity awareness by conducting monthly House-wide phishing exercises as well as a committee-focused phishing campaign. It conducted Member-only sessions on protecting home networks, personal devices and applications, and personal data. It regularly hosts pop-ups across campus to answer cyber questions and discuss security. Cybersecurity also continues to work with the Sergeant at Arms on cybersecurity services under the Residential Security Program.

Staff Conferences: Throughout 2023, the CAO's Coach and Customer Advocate programs expanded popular in-person staff conferences tailored for specific D.C. and district office staff positions, including Chiefs of Staff, Schedulers, Caseworkers, Communications staff, and Field Representatives. In early 2024, the CAO hosted its second District Director conference and its first ever conference for

committee staff. Conferences for Staff Assistants, Legislative Directors and Assistants, and Operations staff are also planned for 2024. Every conference is produced entirely in-house by and for House staff and includes position-specific lessons, resources, best practices, and network opportunities.

HR Hub Tools for Member and Committee Staff: Since the initial launch of the House HR Hub in 2021, the CAO has made significant enhancements to the central HR repository to provide more comprehensive support for Member and committee office staff. In July 2023, the CAO launched an interactive Career Paths tool for Member offices that covers the unique roles, responsibilities, skills, sample career options, and associated training opportunities for 16 positions within the Member office. In February 2024, the CAO added Committee resources to the Hub, including committee position profiles, sample job postings, and position descriptions. In addition, just this week, we expanded our committee content by launching an interactive career path tool for committee staff. Since its launch, the HR Hub's best practice tools, tips, and resources have been downloaded over 12,000 times.

Office of Talent and Development: Over the past several weeks, the CAO organization has worked diligently to onboard eight former employees from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Each employee has outstanding experiences and backgrounds that align with the positions they are serving in the CAO. From a Talent and Development perspective, this team is focusing on many of the same programs and projects that were covered by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. This includes, but is not limited to, attending recruitment and outreach events, providing resume review services, and conducting research and analysis on workforce trends. It is also important to note that the team will expand their service offerings by having direct access to and responsibility for promoting all of the resources on the House HR Hub. This expansion of duties and responsibilities presents an exciting opportunity to strengthen the use of HR Hub content, which is designed to create fair and equitable management practices within Member, Committee, and Leadership offices. Moving forward, the CAO is committed to providing regular and ongoing progress updates to the Committee on House Administration.

District Office Wi-Fi: Since the 118th Transition, the CAO's Wide Area Network team has installed CAO-funded Wi-Fi solutions in over 95% of Members' designated district offices. The new service delivers Wi-Fi service to an estimated 4,200 unique district office clients each week across the country, providing district office users enhanced network connectivity options and operational cost savings.

Field Hearing Support: In 2019, the CAO's House Recording Studio started testing the feasibility of supporting House committee field hearings. This initiative stalled during the pandemic, was reinstated in late 2021, and was in full swing in 2023 proving to be a valuable resource for committees. In 2023, the Recording Studio supported 29 field hearings in 17 states across the country and one U.S. territory. To ensure these hearings were successful, the House Recording Studio purchased and transported its own wireless audio systems, saving committees an average of \$3,500 to \$5,000 per hearing.

Tech Partner+ Program: The CAO's Technology Partner+ Program now includes 115 House offices. Program participants receive dedicated IT support from an assigned CAO Technology Partner,

including in-person and remote consultative and technical services as well as assistance with procuring new software and hardware solutions for the office. CAO Technology Partners also support unenrolled offices and their respective technology support vendors or system administrators with a wide range of IT support. All CAO Technology Partner support services are provided at no cost to House offices.

COMMITMENT TO STEWARDSHIP

The CAO aggressively works to ensure the House is always getting maximum value for the finite resources it manages. Over the past six months alone, CAO's Office of Acquisitions Management successfully negotiated over \$2 million in savings for CAO contracts associated with the House payroll system replacement assessment underway and cybersecurity services.

In addition to negotiating major House-wide service contracts and purchases like technology and food service contracts and bulk equipment purchases, CAO's Acquisition team is responsible for non-CAO House contracts and purchases like Member office equipment maintenance agreements and small purchases. In 2023, the Acquisitions team processed 5,400 contracts and small purchases for the entire House valued at approximately \$150 million.

CONCLUSION

Each year, the CAO strives to improve upon its extensive catalogue of services. New services are often developed at the direction of CAO's oversight committees and are necessary for the House to evolve. However, their associated costs are not a one-time expense. New projects become sustained programs with recurring annual costs for licenses, maintenance, contractor support, etc., and all programs – new and old – are subject to year-over-year inflationary cost increases.

For example, in 2019, in response to a 116th Congress recommendation from the former Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, the CAO began to make congressional websites compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Today, six years later, 447 of an estimated 579 House websites are compliant and the program has an annual sustainment cost between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

For FY25, the CAO has identified alternate funding sources for its high-priority projects and programs. Certain projects are being initially funded through the Modernization Fund. Funding for certain medium and low-priority projects and programs are being reduced or deferred, which will likely result in slower service times for select services.

Looking beyond FY25, as services continue to be added and expanded and operational costs continue to rise, the CAO could be forced to further reduce some of its services. Regardless of the budget environment, the CAO will continue to prioritize and maintain its high-priority projects and programs critical to House operations.

Again, the CAO appreciates the opportunity to present its FY25 budget and looks forward to its continued collaboration with the Subcommittee.

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
FY 2025 Budget Request & 5-Year Budget History

Fiscal Year	Budget	\$ Year over Year Increase	% Year over Year Increase	Funded Positions	Major Changes
FY 2025 Request	\$ 213,072,000	\$0	0.0%	769	To ensure the CAO could continue to maximize resources across the organization, to produce the highest strategic benefit to the House, the CAO used its portfolio prioritization process to conduct a rigorous evaluation of its existing programs and planned projects. Request supports funding for existing personnel, active recruitments, and projected COLA; sustainment of contractor support for the House-wide training programs, HouseNet redesign licensing and support, Phase II of the Digital Wayfinding project, and ongoing videography, photography, and design service requirements; sustainment and maturation of the Congressional Excellence Program and inflationary costs associated with the Capital Telephone Exchange operators; the sustainment of the Centralized Human Resources (HR) Program (e.g., HR Hub, House Resume Bank); and the House Recording Studio's Engineering Quality Control Station migration to the House Visitors Center (HVC) Room 337 project.
FY 2024 Enacted	\$ 213,072,000	\$1,500,000	0.7%	769	FY 2024 Request of \$227.9M was reduced at Markup by \$14.8M to \$213.1M. Supports funding for existing personnel, active recruitments, and the COLA; enhancement of the House cloud security posture and the modernization of House services; House enterprise licenses, and the House's deployment and expansion of a data storage environment to support robust data archival and retrieval services; Congressional Excellence Program consultants to develop content and provide personal and professional development courses/programs including distance learning opportunities for all congressional staff; sustainment of House Creative Services contractors that provide multimedia, design, and photography services for all Members, Committees, Leadership and House offices; the lifecycle replacement of House Recording Studio equipment and House-owned furniture; ongoing costs of the House mail contract, the Human Resources Hub, and the House Resume Bank; and the implementation of the Enterprise Risk Management program. Also includes funding for reorganization of the CAO to include the restructuring of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
FY 2023 Enacted	\$ 211,572,000	\$18,384,200	9.5%	769	Supports personnel funding for existing staff, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities; equipment and travel associated with providing Field Hearing support for Committees; renovation of the Rayburn Banquet Rooms; and additional contractors to support event rooms and provide audio support; continuation of technology costs associated with cloud migration, enterprise licensing, cybersecurity, lifecycle replacement and upgrades. Also supports increased services and improved delivery times to Members and Committees; additional contracts/services for the development of career and leadership programs for Member office staff; and the establishment of the CAO Emerging Project Investment Fund.
FY 2022 Enacted	\$ 193,187,800	\$15,987,800	9.0%	768	Supports personnel funding for existing staff, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities; costs associated with renovation of First Call and the Office Supply Store; contractor support to manage the Customer Relationship Management System, CAO survey program and Sharepoint development; replacement of the in-bound mail sorter; continuation of technology costs associated with cloud migration, enterprise licensing, cybersecurity, lifecycle replacement and upgrades.
FY 2021 Enacted	\$177,200,000	\$23,650,000	15.4%	768	Supports personnel funding for existing staff, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities; costs associated with new Digital and Traditional Mail contract; continuation of migration of applications to the cloud, cybersecurity, lifecycle replacement, hardware/software maintenance, and enterprise licenses and support contracts; and costs associated with upgrades to the House's enterprise human resource and financial systems.
FY 2020 Enacted	\$153,550,000	\$5,492,000	3.7%	707	Supports personnel funding for existing staff, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities; continuation of mandatory Workplace Rights Training; funding for migration of applications to the cloud, strengthening cybersecurity, technology recapitalization, hardware/software maintenance, and increased costs for enterprise licenses and support contracts.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ms. Szpindor.

Thank you to our witnesses for testifying before this committee today. As the new subcommittee chairman, I look forward to learning more about each of your agencies in greater detail.

For questions, I will call on Members based on seniority of those present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority, and then will call on Members in order of their arrival. Each will have 5 minutes.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Ms. Szpindor, recent AI advancements are going to be very impactful on legislative-branch operations. Where is the CAO in its efforts to integrate new AI technology into House operations?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you for that question.

The CAO has a pulse on AI and is working through establishing a sound foundation that will mature over time as the technology itself matures. We are just at the beginning of, I think, a long journey with AI.

We are developing an AI policy, exploring tools, and capturing use cases that align with the House mission. Specific CAO AI progress to date includes:

Conducting cyber and legal reviews of existing AI technologies. One platform which was approved back in June of 2023 by CHA for limited research and evaluation purposes. CAO review includes reported AI capabilities within existing House approved cloud technologies.

Evaluating AI tools being integrated into enterprise applications used by the House, such as Microsoft, AWS, and Oracle Cloud applications. This will require several months of testing before any roll-out of these.

Conducted a NIST-based AI governance assessment that includes policies and guardrails that are needed. These are in progress.

We drafted an AI-specific policy that dictates security vetting protocols and usage restrictions that is in progress. We are reviewing that policy now.

We established a House-wide AI advisory group that has included, as I mentioned earlier, 150 Member, committee and leadership offices, as well as institutional offices like the CAO and the Clerk.

Identifying upskilling opportunities that can be standalone or embedded in current position-specific training. Training is going to be absolutely necessary and is going to be required for my staff, particularly my technology staff.

We are establishing an AI Center of Excellence within the CAO to ensure that we are able to do the upskilling that is necessary for our staff.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

This question is for Mr. McCumber and then all officers.

What actions have you taken and what plans do you have to both recruit and retain highly skilled staff?

Mr. MCCUMBER. Thank you for the question. I will start with the recruiting side of things. As you know, I certainly agree with you that recruiting and retaining staff are vital to our continued success in supporting the House's operations.

We have a nationwide networking strategy that we have started to develop with the State legislatures. When they come to visit DC, we meet with them. When we attend a conference to talk about what we are doing, we pass out cards, we talk about all of our great work, and find ways that we can work together and see if there is any interest on their side to come work for us when we have openings.

The Official Reporters have a very close network of colleagues, both around here in DC, and they compete in competitions around the world. They are always using those opportunities to recruit the best and the brightest, because we have the best and the brightest official reporters here supporting you.

One of the things, too, for the retainment, we have really—or, for recruiting—we are mission-driven, and so that allows us to—I get overly excited sometimes talking about our mission and the work that we do in the Clerk's Office—find people that want to come be a part of that.

We have IT staff, which I know Catherine can speak to about recruiting. We can't pay what they can make in the private sector, but when they see the work that we are doing and the work that we have ahead, they come join us. They want to come be a part of what we are doing.

And for the retaining, we certainly meet with the staff, talk about their goals, professional development, cross-training, internally as well as providing professional growth opportunities outside.

We host events for staff. We had a fall gathering hosted by two of our offices last October. We have a Nats game scheduled in June. And we have a monthly "Clerk Chronicle" where we keep everybody apprised of what is going on in the organization.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Well, thank you.

Out of respect for everyone's time, I am going to go ahead and yield to the ranking member, Mr. Espaillet, for his 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLET. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for extending the courtesy.

First, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Ms. Wexton for pushing, really, the envelope on the issue of cybersecurity. Cybersecurity continues to be an important priority of mine. Obviously, it is so critical.

Mr. McFarland and Ms. Szpindor, I appreciate that both of you have worked to provide Members with cybersecurity support at home. How is this program coming along? How are we doing?

Ms. SZPINDOR. I will let Bill begin.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Thanks, Catherine. Appreciate that.

Mr. Espaillet, I can say that, since we instituted this program later in last year, we have taken an approach of basically making sure that everybody knows about the program, first. So we have actually sent out information to all law enforcement coordinators about the program.

After we have done that—we have had instances where Members were swatted, and when they were swatted, we actually had calls with not only chiefs of staff but we also had them with congressional spouses, and we let them know about the program.

I can say it has been a slow roll, but it is actually picking up steam. So we are very appreciative of the committee for providing the funding for it, but we expect to see higher numbers probably later this year.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

And, Ms. Szpindor, how has the recent integration of the former employees of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion into the CAO organization impacted the scope of duties and responsibilities within the Office of Talent and Development?

And would it be beneficial for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to remain independent from the Office of Talent and Development, given their distinct roles and responsibilities, to ensure focused attention on diversity initiatives?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you for that question.

We are extremely excited to have the ODI team join the newly created Office of Talent and Development in our organization.

This office will inject the resources needed to transform the House HR Hub into a more robust resource, one that includes valuable diversity and inclusion resources like diversity-focused recruitment and outreach events, resume review services, and research and analysis on workforce trends.

The office will have direct access to and responsibility for maintaining and promoting all of the resources on the HR Hub, which is being improved daily to include new tools and resources.

Over the coming weeks, we will be seeking opportunities to provide similar presentations on topics like career development and performance management to offices and staff associations.

Starting next month, we will provide monthly updates to the Committee on House Administration on the operations, activities, and progress of the new structure.

We brought them over, as you know, at the end of March, and they immediately went to work. They are working on upcoming recruiting activities and resume development services that can help us bring in individuals into the House.

So, we are very excited about the opportunity to work with these individuals—some extremely capable individuals. They all interviewed for the position that they are currently in. We hope to make them feel at home in the CAO, because as a larger human resources group, this is really a chance for them to be part of the professionals within the human-resources area.

I can keep you updated, as I said, on a monthly basis. We going to do everything possible to make this work, not only for us, but for them.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espailat.

Mr. Clyde, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here today, and I want to thank you for the excellent job that you have been doing in supporting the House.

Mr. McFarland, your role as Sergeant at Arms is critical in the everyday operations of the House. You help keep Members safe and the staff safe and our constituents safe, and I am extremely grate-

ful for the work that you do. And, as a result, I have never seen an issue of Member safety in the Capitol complex whatsoever in the 3 years I have been here that I can remember.

However, outside the Capitol complex, it is a completely different story. Crime in our Nation's capital is out of control. Between 2022 and 2023, there was a 35 percent increase in homicide, 82-percent increase in motor vehicle theft. There are startling increases in crime as a result of the policies created and enacted by the out-of-control DC City Council and the DC Mayor. And I am sorry to report that, actually.

So, in your role, have you seen outside the Capitol complex an increase in violence against Members of Congress and congressional staff from 2022 until now?

Mr. MCFARLAND. From what I know, yes, I have seen an increase.

And if I could just add on to that something that we have done recently. I think it was last week or the week before, I met with DC Chief Pamela Smith about maybe coming up and doing a safety program, with WMATA as well and our Capitol Police, to actually have a safety forum so that we can talk to Members, which—we are hoping that it will be done sometime in May so that we can get this important message out to—“Hey, we have to provide better safety and security.”

We have also looked at Capitol Police about providing more additional resources to where Members reside at night. So we want to make sure that the safety and security of the Members, not only here on the Hill, but off the Hill, are taken into account.

Mr. CLYDE. All right. Well, thank you.

You mentioned in your testimony about security training and that, you know, it encompasses a lot of things—our district offices as well.

You know, oftentimes, when you see violence against a person, there are not other folks, there is not police there, there is not—you know, you are not there. It is basically them by themselves. And that is very concerning.

I will tell you, there is an adage that says, you know, an armed society is a polite society, or the best way to deal with a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.

And so would you consider, in your security training, offering classes to Members on knowing how or when to use a firearm? Is that a possibility that you would consider?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Congressman, ultimately, it is up to the lawmakers to determine the best laws to govern themselves.

Mr. CLYDE. Right.

Mr. MCFARLAND. As the chief law enforcement officer, I have to be mindful of that I am not a lawmaker.

Mr. CLYDE. Right.

Mr. MCFARLAND. So I would leave it up to the Members, that if that was something that they wanted to do, we would try to come up with the best best situation for—

Mr. CLYDE. All right. That sounds fair. And I thank you for that.

Ms. Szpindor, you mentioned that the increase of \$1.5 million was to move the office of DEI within the CAO. Is that correct?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Correct.

Mr. CLYDE. How does it cost a million-and-a-half dollars to move an office?

Ms. SZPINDOR. It is not the moving of the office; it is the personnel cost and cost associated with training, travel and things that they might be doing.

I think that the original budget of the ODI was about 3.5

Mr. CLYDE. 3.5.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yes, 3.5

Mr. CLYDE. Yes, 3.5.

Ms. SZPINDOR. So that really just covers our personnel cost.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. So it is actually a savings of \$2 million?

Ms. SZPINDOR. To someone. Not to me.

Mr. CLYDE. Well, to the taxpayer, that sounds great. I like that. Well, I appreciate that very much then. Well, thank you for saving \$2 million.

All right. And my last question is going to be for you, Mr. McCumber.

Let's see, I think on page 86 and—page 85 and 86, it talks about the Clerk of the House mandated projects. It talks about the amount that you actually have.

And on page 91, it talks about the \$1.9 million in additional funding. And it says that you are reducing business continuity and disaster recovery by \$905,000; \$79,000 down on the Electronic Voting System; \$107,000 for the Legislative Information Management System.

And then \$3.04 million for House modernization initiatives, but I don't really see a breakdown of that. Could you provide a breakdown of that, please?

Mr. MCCUMBER. Yes, sir.

I don't have—I would be happy to provide that to you.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. Great. All right, if you will just provide that to us, I would like to see where all that money is going.

And I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Ms. Wexton, you are recognized for your 5 minutes.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Chairman Valadao. And congratulations on your new chairmanship. You have big shoes to fill, with Chairman Amodei's departure, but we are confident that you can handle it.

This is a great subcommittee. We may be small, but we are mighty.

Mr. McFarland, I have no questions for you, but I want to take a moment to express how impressed I am—and, I hope, everyone on the subcommittee is—that every year since you returned to the House of Representatives you have reduced the Sergeant at Arms' budget. It is always nice to have a Federal Government budget unicorn in our midst.

But don't worry, because I am sure that there are plenty of other legislative-branch agencies that will be happy to help spend whatever you no longer need.

Thank you.

Ms. Szpindor, thank you for being here. It is nice to see you again, and not just because you sign everyone's paychecks.

As we discussed in previous years, the CAO offers many services which are vital to Members of Congress and their staff, including to me and my team.

For instance, the CAO Coach program provides valuable support and expertise, including, as I understand it, very popular conferences that are tailored to share position-specific information and resources.

As you noted in your testimony, operating with flat funding levels has been impactful for the CAO. Can you elaborate on the long-term impacts of decreased funding levels on these programs and your ability to serve the House?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you. It is good to see you again.

Well, I would not be telling the truth if I said it is not going to have any impact, OK? The decreases that we have taken mean, staying flat, essentially, with the fiscal year 2023 budget.

I come from a long history of project management. One of the things that we have done is developed a very rigorous evaluation, prioritization, and selection process for all projects that are brought before us. We spend quite a bit of time reviewing and making sure that we are prioritizing projects are critical to the House as the top-priority things to invest in. Other things we do when we have funds to do them and improve as we are able to do improvements.

With all of the opportunities we have had to deliver new projects, though, I would not be telling the truth if I said we are not going to need more money in the future, because we are. All of our projects come with a recurring cost.

Usually we have to go in, as you know, in any technology project, particularly, and upgrade hardware/software on a recurring basis. New licenses, which is the predominant method by which software is provided anymore, always increase in cost every time there is an opportunity to get an updated product.

So, next year, the 2026 budget, we will be requesting an increase. How much? Right now, I don't know. But our budget office Director, Sarah Jackson, who is sitting right behind me here, is responsible for the entire House budget formulation and submission to the President's budget. She begins at—what time today?

Ms. JACKSON. 11 o'clock.

Ms. SZPINDOR. 11 o'clock today working on the fiscal year 2026 budget.

Ms. JACKSON. In an hour.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Did that answer your question?

Ms. WEXTON. Yes. Thank you.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you.

Ms. WEXTON. Mr. McCumber, as you noted in your testimony, your request includes further work on a number of modernization initiatives, including the House Comparative Suite, eHopper, and LIMS.

Can you explain how these projects help the House to operate more effectively and what the impact would be on these services if your funding is left at current levels or reduced?

Mr. MCCUMBER. Yes, ma'am. Thank you for that question.

Piggybacking off what Ms. Szpindor said about the budget reduction or if projects aren't fully funded, it will certainly have an impact on the additional work that we are able to do.

We were able to secure funding, thanks to Mrs. Bice and this subcommittee, for several of our projects using the Modernization Initiatives Account, one of those being the Collaborative Drafting Tool.

That may not be the shiniest and greatest piece of software out there for the greater good, but it will have an impact. XMetaL is the software tool. It is twenty-five years old. It is very clunky. It doesn't work great. And it is time to upgrade. And I would certainly defer to Wade, too, to chime in on that as well.

And so Mrs. Bice and this Subcommittee gave us some starting money to be able to do a study on looking at the House legislative ecosystem fully, seeing what works best, not only for the staff in Wade's office, but also on your staff, the ability to collaborate.

One of the first steps we took in February, with Wade's team, is—and with, certainly, the support of CHA—is locking down the PDF that is generated by XMetaL to further editing by staff so that the file generated on the PDF matches what is sent down to GPO and so there is no discrepancy in any of that work.

The funding that we are requesting will be used for the next steps in these projects and will certainly continue us on the path of modernizing these services so that you have the tools when you need them to be able to do your work and we can make sure that everything is completed down the line through GPO, on to Congress.gov, et cetera.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you.

I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ms. Wexton.

Mr. Franklin, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here. I appreciate learning more and more about all the functions you all cover every time we go through this.

And I tell people and I try to explain what Leg. Branch is, it is like the Swiss Army knife of Congress. And you all do a lot with relatively little compared to a lot of your peers out there, and I appreciate that, and particularly with the efforts you are making to try to control budget things, the top lines.

On that, Ms. Szpindor, it is remarkable to me, looking back over the last 5 years, you have held personnel flat, your budgets have been relatively, you know—

Ms. SZPINDOR. Reasonable.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Well, very reasonable.

And, you know, when we talk about, you know, human capital is our most important asset, it is also our most expensive asset.

How is your retention and turnover? You haven't really changed head count, but is there a lot of turn in there? And is there a time coming when—are there salary increases buried in here and you are able to maintain flat but you are gaining efficiencies elsewhere?

Ms. SZPINDOR. We have, of course, made salary increases, and we have a very good performance management program and evaluation program to determine when somebody warrants a salary increase, and we do promotions.

We do have some turnover. I don't know the exact percentage, but it is not high. We have had a number of people retire recently,

because some of our technicians, particularly in cybersecurity and operations have been here 35 years, which is a credit to them because they really love the House. For them, it is a way of showing that they are helping the American people, OK?

So, it really is touching, how the employees are dedicated to doing their very best here.

Mr. FRANKLIN. I appreciate that.

I appreciate also the efforts you are doing on AI. And I would love to learn more about that, being on the AI committee now.

Mr. McCumber, I also appreciate the efforts through the—particularly through the modernization recommendations.

Just as a plug for the electronic voting, I love that. It was transformational in Armed Services, and we have it now in Science, and I would really love to see that in every committee. Back to the thought of, you know, time is the most expensive thing we have around here, literally, when you put a price tag on it, and I don't know why we don't roll that out to every committee, but—

Mrs. BICE. We have. I will tell you about it later.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Is it?

Mr. FRANKLIN. OK. Excellent.

So, also, as far as the House-wide AI advisory committee, I would love to get our office added onto that as well. But I appreciate what you are doing there.

Mr. McFarland, I guess, a question—well, first of all, \$2 million last year for the offsite ops center. What is the status of that?

Mr. MCFARLAND. So we have actually put a hold on the operations center. We did not feel that it was a critical need that we needed to do right now. I think we have places that Members and leadership can go in case of an emergency situation.

So we were thinking about building an offsite center that will—something new, but we decided that this is not a good time right now to proceed with that.

Mr. FRANKLIN. OK.

I had a question, one I forgot there, Mr. McCumber. Just an urban legend that I would like you to set straight for me: What happens to unspent MRA funds? Where do those go back to?

Mr. MCCUMBER. Ms. Szpindor?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Sarah, do you want to talk to that?

Ms. JACKSON. Yes.

Unspent MRA appropriations are returned to Treasury.

Mr. FRANKLIN. They are?

Ms. JACKSON. Yes.

Mr. FRANKLIN. There is a widespread myth out there that that doesn't happen, so we will have to set that straight. I appreciate that.

Mrs. BICE. It doesn't go in your pocket?

Mr. FRANKLIN. No. Actually, what I hear most often is it goes to the Speaker's office and that somehow the Speaker uses it.

OK.

Ms. SZPINDOR. No.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Finally, and we don't have much time, so this will be more, Mr. McFarland, for a follow-up.

But I get a little confused on the functions outside of DC, or even DC to some extent, between your office and the Capitol Police and

where there may be overlap. I would love to unpack that sometime with you.

Just, it seems like—I know everybody is doing zero-based budgeting, but it seems like there are some areas where at least I as a Member would be confused, do I go to the Sergeant at Arms for that or Cap Police? Are there overlaps?

And, at the end of the day, when it hits the fan, who is ultimately responsible? I mean, where do we turn to? Is it your office or the Capitol Police? And particularly back in the districts.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sure.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Because I know there has been arguments for plussing up Capitol Police to have remote offices and all these things, and yet we reach out to your office when we are talking about direct Member security, so—

Mr. MCFARLAND. Correct. I don't think we can do it in 8 seconds, but I would—

Mr. FRANKLIN. No, we can't, so that's just a marker.

Mr. MCFARLAND [continuing]. definitely like to set up that time with you to discuss that.

Mr. FRANKLIN. OK. I appreciate that.

Mr. FRANKLIN. And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Franklin.

Mrs. BICE, 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the time.

And, first, let me start by saying thank you to Sergeant at Arms McFarland. You have been incredible in this role, and it is very evident by the engagement with your staff and the, I think, morale that has changed within the Sergeant at Arms Office. So kudos to you for that.

I do want to piggyback off of Mr. Clyde's comments. It has been noted in the press that there are a lot of Members that live in the Navy Yard. And we continue to see huge crime numbers. As a matter of fact, you probably saw last night that a CVS on the corner of a very busy intersection a couple of blocks from Nats Park was ransacked and raided by a bunch of young people.

This has to stop. And so I ask for MPD and certainly your office's help in trying to find a way to address this, because it is only getting, I think, more dire. And we cannot have our Nation's capital in, sort of, a Gotham scenario, and that is what it seems to be headed towards right now.

So I appreciate your help in that. I know it is not your purview, necessarily, but certainly want to bring that point up.

Ms. Szpindor, I want to first say thank you for your partnership in working with the Modernization Subcommittee—which, I think it was mentioned, I happen to be the chairwoman of that—as well as Leg. Branch Approps and the AOC for helping get the ADA pick-up and drop-off project off the ground.

That has been something I feel like has been pushed to the side for a very long time. And it is not a difficult or expensive project, but we have to make sure that we are focusing on individuals with disabilities that need access to the Capitol, coming for visits or coming to visit with Members, giving them an easy way to make that happen. So thank you for that cooperation.

Let me start by asking: Your staff has discussed how the House is nearing 100-percent compliance with section 508 to ensure that all congressional websites are accessible to the public. Can you talk a little bit about how much money that will cost and, you know, where we are with that?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yes.

Actually, we have been working on that now for about 4 or 5 years, and it has been a long process and much more complicated than what we thought it was going to be when we first started.

We have spent a lot of time working with different entities that are very up-to-date on how to implement the 508 accessibility requirements.

As of the end of April, we will have completed all of the websites that we have responsibility to make 508 accessible. I think there are 400-and-some websites that will be compliant. There are still a number of vendor websites that they are still working on.

Mrs. BICE. OK.

Ms. SZPINDOR. However, that has been a very expensive project over the years. We anticipate, to maintain it—and it would be a shame, after working so hard to get them accessible, if we did not continue ensuring that they were maintained—it is going to be anywhere between \$500,000 to \$1 million a year. A lot of that is ensuring that we have the right additional contractors in place that can help us to make sure they are compliant.

I am ecstatic that we finally have gotten to more of a finish point with this. My staff has worked very hard on that.

Mrs. BICE. Great.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Very hard.

Mrs. BICE. I just want to maybe wrap up by saying that I have appreciated working with the Clerk's Office and with CAO on modernization initiatives to try to make Congress function better—things like the deconfliction tool for scheduling, which evidently some of the committees haven't been using, because I had three at the same time yesterday. But that is a different story.

The eDiscovery tool, which allows us to upload documents and make them searchable, that is really important for committees like the Judiciary Committee.

The flag tracker, which we are now rolling out the second iteration of that so that Member offices can track flag requests easier.

Anonymized casework data; the Electronic Voting System, as was mentioned; the eHopper; collaborative legislative drafting tools—these are all things that make our offices function and work better.

So I want to say thank you for your cooperation in making this happen, and also thank you to the chairman and this committee for funding the Modernization Initiatives Account to make sure we have resources available to make these things work.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back 10 seconds.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mrs. Bice, for being so efficient.

Mr. LaTurner, 5 minutes.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What I would really like is for each of you to give me a name or two of the most obnoxious Members of Congress you have to deal with.

I don't—did we—were they sworn in or not? I don't know.

I am just kidding. I am just kidding.

Ms. SZPINDOR, how is CAO exploring opportunities for cost savings and improvement in efficiency by integrating technology into its operations? Is it the electronic payroll authorizations, digital scheduling tools, and things like that?

Ms. SZPINDOR. We are looking at those as priority items for us to work on. Many of the things that Congresswoman Bice mentioned are things that do that.

Mr. LATURNER. It was a good thing. It wasn't negative.

Mrs. BICE. You mentioned commenting on Members, so—

Ms. SZPINDOR. Through the modernization committee, through other means, many times, our own staff will say, we can make this more effective. So, we look at those, we prioritize those, and if we feel like there is going to be a huge return on investment that is what we really focus on with the dollars that we have.

So I will tell you that, eventually, maybe not next year, but maybe the next or the next, many of the quality and well-scrutinized AI tools that we could bring in will be able to make dramatic differences in how we acquire statistics and status on certain things across our data here at the House. That is what I get excited about, the potential for the future. So I don't know if I answered your question.

Mr. LATURNER. No, you did. I appreciate that.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you.

Mr. LATURNER. Mr. McFarland, since you launched the SAA Service Center, have you been able to quantify the value of that to employees and to congressional offices?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, to be honest, I think the Service Center was probably the best idea that we came up with. We are right in the same hallway with the rest of the services for the CAO; we have First Call right down the hall. Everything is right in that little town hall, we like to call it.

That said, the way that that Service Center has operated as far as helping us to get that message out of what the services are that are provided to Members and to the staff we have a mockup of our district office security software that, you know, you can purchase, you know, for the district office or residential.

So, you know, passing out Gallery passes, anytime we do a Member pick-up, as far as it relates to joint sessions, that Service Center has been the best thing that we can come up with.

Mr. LATURNER. That is great.

Mr. McCUMBER, how do you ensure that you are consistently recruiting qualified staff? Workforce is a big issue. How do you make sure you are recruiting qualified staff, you have the right training in place, et cetera?

Mr. MCCUMBER. So a lot of the openings that you see—staff on the floor, Clerk staff on the floor are the ones that you guys are most familiar with.

Mr. LATURNER. Yes.

Mr. McCUMBER. We typically bring them in in one of our other divisions, typically the Legislative Resource Center, which is a good foundation for them to learn the organization, learn what we do.

And if they show the right temperament to work on the floor and express the right interest, then we will bring them to the floor.

For the IT, we are competing against everybody in the private sector, against—you know, Catherine is recruiting IT folks. We look for all the proper qualifications and make sure that, again, they are mission-driven and that they have public-service interest.

We do not have a shortage of applications for most of our openings. And so it is a, I think, testament to the quality of work-life balance that we are able to provide folks and, you know, afford them with the opportunity to fulfill their mission for service, their desire for service.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you so much.

And I want to thank all three of you for what you do. It is invaluable to the House and its operations.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back 16 seconds.

Mr. VALADAO. So productive.

A second round of questioning. I am just going to have one question. I don't know if anyone else does. Feel free to stick around if they do.

Mine is quick. Mine is for Mr. McCumber. And this is one that I have actually run into quite a few—not personally quite a few times, but I have seen it a few times.

What checks are in place to ensure that the wrong Member isn't inadvertently added as a cosponsor?

Mr. MCCUMBER. We have a very thorough process on our side of things to ensure that we are accurately capturing what Members submit into the eHopper or the hopper on the floor.

We process everything as received. We do not question whether or not a Member was intended to be added to a bill. We process nearly 200,000 of them a Congress. It is not natural for us to think, "Well, this person, why are they signing up for that bill?" That is not something that even enters our thought.

And we only reach out to the submitting office when something is unclear. So take "Adam Smith" for example, right? We have two "A. Smiths." And if you have "Adam Smith" and it shows "Republican of Nebraska," that would flag for us this is something we need to reach out for, because Adrian Smith is from Nebraska, right? Then we would contact the office.

We do at least two proofreading checks on our side of things. If after the legislative day is over and we have made a mistake, it is something that we correct right away on Congress.gov, and it is as if it never happened.

There are a couple of things, I think, that Members and staff can do on their side to help be notified if they were inadvertently added as a cosponsor by another Member's office. Congress.gov has alerts that can be set up and you are automatically notified if you are signed up as a cosponsor or you have remarks in the record. That is something that is very, very easy to do.

And the way that cosponsors are gathered through the e-Dear Colleague process, you see a lot of Google forms, "Fill out this Google form to be added." A Google form can be sent off the Hill, updated, and submitted as if a Member's office did it, right? So there is no security associated with that.

Microsoft Forms, which is part of the Office 365 suite, is free. It is secure. You can check a box that says, yes, I want to track who is submitting this. You have to be on the House network in order to submit it. And so it is a much more secure process to gather those cosponsors.

We do everything from process the forms as they are dropped in the hopper to submitted through the eHopper online system. We do our very best to capture everything as it is intended, but there is a lot on the Member side to verify, because it has significant implications for some bills that—you know, maybe not a post office bill will get everyone's attention, but there are some bills that Members are accidentally added to that they had no intention to, and once you are on, you are forever linked to that bill, that bill's history.

It is a process that should be taken seriously, you know, and we will do our very best to ensure that that process is smooth and accurate.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Thank you.

I have no more questions.

So, with that, if there are no further questions, I would like to thank Mr. McCumber, Mr. McFarland, and Ms. Szpindor for being here.

And members may submit any additional questions for the record.

The subcommittee now does stand adjourned. Thank you.

[Information submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**STATEMENT OF MATTHEW BERRY, GENERAL COUNSEL
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**REGARDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST
OF THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL**

**BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

APRIL 17, 2024

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify about the fiscal year 2025 (“FY 2025”) budget request of the Office of General Counsel (“OGC”) of the U.S. House of Representatives (“House”). OGC requests \$2,048,000 for FY 25, a sum that includes \$1,825,000 for personnel costs and \$223,000 for non-personnel costs. This budget request represents an increase of approximately three percent over the appropriation OGC received for FY 2024. In this testimony, I will first discuss the important work carried out by OGC and then set forth the justification for OGC’s FY 2025 budget request.

Functions of the Office

Pursuant to Rule II.8(a) of the Rules of the House (118th Cong.), OGC provides legal advice and representation to the House, and as appropriate, to its Members, Committees, Officers, and employees, without regard to political affiliation, on matters related to their official duties. With respect to litigation matters involving the House, OGC consults with the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (consisting of the Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, and the Majority and Minority Whips). *See* House Rule II.8(a), (b). While it is difficult to furnish an exhaustive list of the types of advice and representation that OGC provides, OGC is involved in the following types of matters with some frequency:

- **Judicial Proceedings:** OGC represents the House in litigation, and also represents House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees, both as parties and as non-party witnesses, in litigation arising from or relating to the performance of their official duties, at the pre-trial, trial, and appellate levels. Among other responsibilities, OGC defends civil suits; moves to quash or limit subpoenas; represents the House and its Committees in suits for affirmative relief, such as enforcement of House subpoenas; represents the House in defending Acts of Congress that the Department of Justice declines to defend; files *amicus curiae* briefs on behalf of the House or one or more of its constituent entities in cases that raise issues of significant institutional interest to the House and its Members; and applies to district courts, on behalf of Committees, for immunity orders for witnesses.

- **Committee Subpoenas:** OGC provides advice to House Committees in connection with the preparation, issuance, and enforcement of subpoenas, including advice and assistance in dealing with recalcitrant witnesses.
- **Requests for Information:** OGC provides advice and representation to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees in connection with responses to informal and formal requests for information (e.g., grand jury subpoenas, trial and deposition subpoenas, and FOIA requests) from governmental agencies (including the Department of Justice), as well as from private parties.
- **Privileges:** OGC provides advice to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees regarding the applicability of various privileges including, most particularly, the Speech or Debate Clause privilege (U.S. Const., Art. I, § 6, cl. 1), but also executive, Fifth Amendment, attorney-client, attorney work product, and other privileges.
- **Social Media Guidance:** OGC advises House Members, Committees, Officers, and staff regarding best practices for the use of official social media accounts.
- **Tort Claims:** OGC reviews and evaluates tort claims for possible administrative resolution by the Committee on House Administration and, where appropriate, refers such claims to the Department of Justice for defense under the Federal Tort Claims Act, and then assists the Department with such defense.
- **Constituent Casework:** OGC provides advice to Members and their staffs regarding the legal issues related to the handling of constituent casework, including responding to questions that concern the confidentiality and discoverability of constituent communications and information.
- **Internal Policies:** In consultation with the Speaker's office and other leadership offices, OGC assists in drafting, amending, and evaluating internal House policies, rules, and regulations.
- **MPCECA Claims:** OGC reviews and evaluates claims for administrative resolution by the Committee on House Administration under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act, which provides an administrative remedy for House employees whose personal property was damaged incident to their federal service.
- **Tax Matters:** OGC advises House offices and vendors regarding applicable tax exemptions for official purchases.
- **Other Matters:** OGC provides a great deal of day-to-day advice on a wide variety of other legal matters including, but not limited to, immigration, intellectual property, debt collection, jury duty, landlord/tenant disputes, and miscellaneous constitutional and separation-of-powers issues.

Demand for OGC's services has been extensive in recent years, as has the number of complex and high-profile legal matters that the office has been asked to handle.

Justification for the FY 2025 Budget Request

At normal staffing levels, OGC is comprised of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, several senior attorneys with extensive legal experience, multiple law clerks, and an office administrator/member services director.

Based on the proposed funding level set forth in OGC's FY 2025 budget request, I expect OGC to be able to continue to deliver the same level of effective service we currently provide to the House. The vast majority of OGC's budget request, almost 90%, is for the personnel compensation needed to retain the highly qualified attorneys and staff who handle the bulk of OGC's workload.

As noted in our budget request, there exists a distinct probability that OGC will be required to undertake significant litigation during FY 2025. Such litigation may include cases in which the House authorizes OGC to initiate litigation, intervene or file amicus briefs in pending cases, or seek judicial enforcement of subpoenas issued by various House Committees. It is therefore critical that OGC have the resources necessary to maintain a staff of talented attorneys capable of skillfully handling such matters.

In past years, OGC has on occasion, before my tenure as General Counsel, utilized private attorneys to handle certain cases. Such legal services have been provided to OGC by private attorneys on a pro bono basis, and OGC has also entered into contracts with private attorneys for paid legal services. Previously, such contracts have required the reprogramming of funds to increase OGC's budget. In FY 2025, OGC will seek to utilize its own staff to litigate cases wherever possible. And if the need for private attorneys should arise, OGC always will first seek to have such legal services provided on a pro bono basis; during FY 2025, OGC will only enter into contracts for paid legal services with private attorneys as a last resort.

Non-personnel costs represent roughly 10% of the OGC budget request. The primary drivers of non-personnel costs include: servers, computers and technology, printing costs for submitted court documents, subscription access to research platforms, and standard office supplies and equipment. We anticipate increased travel-related expenses with OGC attorneys representing the interests of the House in-person outside of Washington, DC.

In conclusion, it is an honor to serve the House and to lead OGC's talented team of professionals. OGC's FY 2025 budget request will give us the resources necessary to continue to provide the House with high-quality legal advice and representation. Thank you for considering this request, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions the Subcommittee might have for me today.

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL (OGC)
Mission Statement

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- **Judicial Proceedings:** OGC represents the House in litigation, and also represents House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees, both as parties and as non-party witnesses, in litigation arising from or relating to the performance of their official duties, at the pre-trial, trial, and appellate levels. Among other responsibilities, OGC defends civil suits; moves to quash or limit subpoenas; represents the House and its Committees in suits for affirmative relief, such as enforcement of House subpoenas; represents the House in defending Acts of Congress that the Department of Justice declines to defend; files *amicus curiae* briefs on behalf of the House or one or more of its constituent entities in cases that raise issues of significant institutional interest to the House and its Members.
- **Committee Subpoenas:** OGC provides advice to House Committees in connection with the preparation, issuance, and enforcement of subpoenas, including advice and assistance in dealing with recalcitrant witnesses.
- **Requests for Information:** OGC provides advice and representation to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees in connection with responses to informal and formal requests for information
- **Privileges:** OGC provides advice to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees regarding the applicability of various privileges including, most particularly, the Speech or Debate Clause privilege (U.S. Const., Art. I, § 6, cl. 1).
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- **Tort Claims:** OGC reviews and evaluates tort claims for possible administrative resolution by the Committee on House Administration and, where appropriate, refers such claims to the Department of Justice for defense under the Federal Tort Claims Act, and then assists the Department with such defense.
- **Constituent Casework:** OGC provides advice to Members and their staffs regarding legal issues related to the handling of constituent casework.

Budget Summary, Office of General Counsel (OGC)

OGC represents Members, Committees, Officers, employees, and other Legislative Branch entities, both as parties and witnesses, in all manner of litigation arising from or relating to the performance of their official duties and responsibilities. OGC also represents the House itself in litigation, both as a party and as *amicus curiae*, in cases in which the House has an institutional interest.

The FY 2025 Budget Request for non-personnel expenditures, \$223K, is only \$4K more than the FY 2024 Budget Request of \$219K.

The largest expenditure for OGC is staff salaries. The additional funds in the FY 2025 Budget Request are due to the meritorious pay increases required to maintain salary levels sufficient to recruit and retain highly qualified senior attorneys (deputy, associate, and assistant general counsel) who play a significant role in handling the work of the office. Failure to fully fund the OGC request increases the likelihood of needing to outsource significant legal services to private attorneys at considerable cost. It is much more cost effective to utilize experienced in-house attorneys to handle as many litigation matters as possible, rather than outsourcing legal services to private lawyers and law firms. This is particularly true given the uniqueness, importance, and complexity of the legal services and litigation involving the House, as well as the high hourly rate charged by similarly experienced and competent private counsel.

Consistent with its recent budget request, OGC anticipates that it will continue to actively participate in litigation during the upcoming fiscal year. Such litigation may include cases in which the House directs OGC to sue to enforce House actions and interests, to intervene or file *amicus* briefs in pending cases, or to defend actions taken by the House and/or its various Members, Committees, Officers, and employees from legal challenge.

OGC proposes to handle this anticipated litigation, to the extent practicable, with OGC attorneys and law clerks. However, it is possible that some matters may require OGC to enter into contracts for paid legal services with private attorneys. OGC will, whenever possible, attempt to enlist *pro bono* legal services at no cost to the taxpayer. In the event it transpires that additional funds are needed for paying private counsel, OGC will request such funds as may be necessary at the appropriate time.

Furthermore, we continue to see a high volume of inquiries from House Members and staff for legal guidance on a daily basis, with a particular uptick in requests for guidance regarding the official use of social media platforms.

We anticipate the need for OGC legal guidance for Members and staff regarding social media platforms will only increase in the near future.

The overall FY 2025 request is only 3.1% higher than OGC's FY 2024 Budget Request. OGC strives to be efficient, economical, and a good steward of taxpayer funds.

**OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
TOTAL BUDGET AUTHORITY**

	FY 2020 Enacted	FY 2021 Enacted	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2025 Request
FTE	13	15	15	15	15	12
Total General Counsel	\$1,751,000	\$1,815,000	\$1,912,000	\$1,912,000	\$1,987,000	\$2,048,000
\$ Budget Increase (Decrease)	\$249,000	\$64,000	\$97,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$61,000
% Budget Increase (Decrease)	16.6%	3.7%	5.3%	0.0%	3.9%	3.1%

**OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
TOTAL BUDGET AUTHORITY**

Office of General Counsel	FY 2020 Enacted	FY 2021 Enacted	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2025 Request
FTE	13	15	15	15	15	12
Personnel Compensation	1,571,000	1,617,000	1,716,000	1,716,000	1,768,000	1,823,000
Travel	12,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	21,000	22,000
Transportation of Things	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rent, Communications, Utilities	11,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	16,000	16,000
Printing and Reproduction	6,000	8,000	9,000	9,000	12,000	12,000
Other Services	37,000	30,000	37,000	37,000	43,000	45,000
Supplies and Materials	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	74,000
Equipment	42,000	60,000	50,000	50,000	55,000	56,000
Insurance Claims/ Indemnities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total General Counsel	\$1,751,000	\$1,815,000	\$1,912,000	\$1,912,000	\$1,987,000	\$2,048,000
\$ Budget Increase (Decrease)	\$249,000	\$64,000	\$97,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$61,000
% Budget Increase (Decrease)	16.6%	3.7%	5.3%	0.0%	3.9%	3.1%



**Statement Before the House Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Appropriations**

– on the –

House Office of Inspector General, Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request

April 17, 2024

**Joseph C. Picolla
Inspector General**

**Funding
Request
Summary**

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to share with you the important work of the Office of Inspector General (OIG, Office) and our Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request. Our request seeks total funding of \$5,772,000, an overall increase of \$260,000 (4.7%) above our FY 2024 budget¹ and encompasses our Audit and Advisory, Administration, and Training programs.

The elements of the request for additional funds are:

- \$427,000 due to changes in mandatory spending (e.g., staff salaries, including the cost-of-living allowance (COLA), the projected COLA for FY 2025 and scheduled longevity step increases.)
- \$3,000 due to price level increases.
- \$170,000 *reduction* in costs within program budgets achieved via strategic purchasing and delaying certain hardware replacements.

**Organization
History and
Background**

House Resolution 423, the “*House Administrative Reform Resolution of 1992*,” established the Office of Inspector General for the House. Since the November 1993 appointment of the first Inspector General, John Lainhart IV, this Office has worked closely with House Leadership, the Committee on House Administration (CHA), House Officers and Officials, and this Subcommittee to 1) identify risks to the legislative process and

¹ Enacted March 23, 2024

to the House, 2) improve service to Members and Committees, 3) identify and deter fraud, and 4) improve the operational effectiveness of the House and reduce inefficiency and costs.

The Office today offers traditional audit services through its two audit divisions and forward-looking analysis and guidance through its Management Advisory Services division. Our work is performed by a staff of experienced, dedicated professionals who hold a bachelor's or more advanced degree, at least one relevant professional certification, and have extensive public and/or private sector experience.

**Highlights of
the First Session
of the 118th
Congress**

The OIG completed six reports during the first session. The reports addressed the general areas of Members/ House-wide Support, Back-office Operations Efficiencies, Information Technology Cybersecurity and Resiliency, and support for the House Financial Statement Audit.

In addition, the OIG also delivered other types of support and advice to House Officers and Officials. For instance, our Management Advisory Services (MAS) Division provided periodic input/ ideas on topics like the payroll cycle, per-diem miscellaneous and incidental expense reimbursement, and shared employees.

The House Officers have worked with the OIG to reduce organizational risk by addressing open recommendations included in past OIG reports. Information about outstanding recommendations is shared regularly with the Officers and monthly with the CHA to sustain focus and help ensure the risks identified in the audit reports are addressed timely and appropriately. Since the beginning of the 2nd session of the 117th Congress, the Officers closed 30 outstanding recommendations, five of which were closed during the first session of this Congress. Notably, 25 of those closed were deemed "high risk" and 5 were considered "medium risk."

**Focus for the
Second Session**

Every day, the House faces new and evolving challenges and opportunities. The House can expect cybersecurity threats that will continue to grow in volume and sophistication. We can expect threats to continue towards House facilities and people. We can expect the evolving sophistication and use of artificial intelligence for both positive and negative ends.

Strategically, our Office must and will continue to deliver relevant, accurate, and timely information that helps improve the operational

efficiency of the House and reduces the risk of financial losses; damage to the House's reputation; harm to its people and visitors; misuse of or damage to House assets and property; mishandling of and unintentional or malicious damage to its information; and delays and disruption to the legislative process.

Tactically, this Office will continue to engage stakeholders, process owners, and oversight to *work together to ensure that the OIG's work is on topics that matter to the House*. Our annual planning process is the cornerstone of this effort. The process iterates through various levels of management and oversight. The resulting plan is risk-based and aligned with the consolidated views of many to address the most critical aspects of House operations.

Overview of the Budget Formulation Approach

Our FY 2025 budget request funds the OIG's mission consistent with our record of value-added services and rigorous fiscal stewardship. Our request is based upon our work plan and is formulated to help ensure that the OIG can quickly respond to special projects as needed.

We are always mindful that our funding comes from the People. We take considered, deliberate steps to examine and, where possible, reduce costs without sacrificing fundamental office needs, quality, or our mission. We do this in part by using existing House-wide licenses and bulk purchase agreements, negotiating favorable pricing for contract purchases, educating our people, and streamlining internal processes through automation or simplification. The focus upon stewardship also enables us to proactively release funds for reprogramming when our funding exceeds our projected spending.

We are proud that we consistently minimize our requested increases while continuing to fulfill the OIG's important mission to the House. This achievement is underpinned by three key values. First, we highly value ongoing, open communication with stakeholders to understand their needs and challenges, especially through the annual work planning process.

Second, we invest in our staff through training and coaching. As part of our staff's professional development -- consistent with our core values of integrity, excellence, and innovation -- we provide training and performance feedback to help build each person's knowledge, skills, confidence, and teamwork. For example, during the first session, our staff attended 466 classes totaling 1,240 training hours at a cost of \$22,565. This tangible demonstration of our appreciation for the staff's

abilities, dedication, and contributions while concurrently reducing the need for costly outside experts is a “win-win” for the staff and the House.

Third, we always seek to improve the effectiveness of our work and streamline our processes to maximize our contributions to the House at closely scrutinized costs. For example, we have developed a robust SharePoint site that saves great time and effort and improves the accuracy of our internal administrative processing, all while providing our clients, our oversight, and leadership direct access to important information.

**Fiscal Year 2025
Budget Request
Details**

The OIG’s FY 2025 budget request seeks total funding of \$5,772,000. Our overall FY 2025 budget request is \$260,000 (4.72%) over the amount of our FY 2024 budget. Our FY 2025 request includes \$4,647,766 for mandatory items, \$3,000 in price level increases (inflation), and \$1,121,234 for program current services.

Notably, our requested increase of \$426,892 for mandatory items (e.g., salary COLA, merit increases) and \$3,000 for non-salary price level increases is partially offset by a \$169,892 *reduction* in the cost of providing our program services.

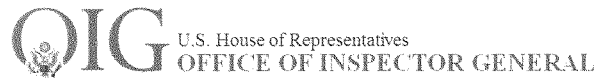
We use zero-based budgeting to identify recurring program needs and to make realistic estimates for each program’s execution. As noted, we negotiate beneficial pricing and achieve cost-savings through leveraging House-wide licenses and bulk purchase agreements, negotiating contract pricing through the Office of Acquisitions Management, making smart decisions about replacing equipment, and investing in staff to minimize the need for outside experts.

Our programs’ current and continuing services include funding for the annual audit of the House financial statements by an external certified public accountant firm; software licensing and support agreements; publications, resources, research services, guidance for audit, advisory, and investigative inquiry work; supplies and equipment; communications service plans; technical service support; staff training to increase in-house knowledge and to remain in compliance with government audit standards; and when necessary, external specialized subject matter experts to support the wide range of engagements performed by our office.

Conclusion

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and the Members of this Subcommittee, thank you all for this opportunity to highlight the work of the OIG and its FY 2025 budget request. Each year, this Office looks forward to working with this Subcommittee, the Committee on House Administration, Leadership, and the House Officers and Officials to continue to perform relevant, risk-based audits and advisories that include value-added recommendations. We will continue to direct our resources to issues of high importance to help the House conduct its operations efficiently and effectively, consider risks, comply with applicable laws and rules, and apply best practices.

In closing, please know that *every person in the Office of Inspector General believes in our mission and is honored to be of service to the House*. Thank you for considering my testimony. It is my honor to answer any questions you may have for me.



Mission and Values of the Office of Inspector General

Mission "Provide value-added recommendations for improving the performance, accountability, and integrity of House financial, administrative, and technology-based operations by performing independent audit, advisory, and investigative services in a non-partisan manner."

Values The OIG embraces three core values as we fulfill our service to the House and our duty to America. We demonstrate these core values individually and collectively in every facet of our organization, from high-level strategic decisions to individual interactions with clients and peers.

Integrity "Our cornerstone"

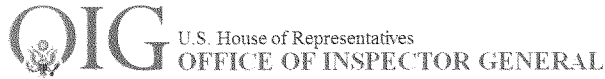
- We faithfully and honorably execute the duties of our office, without bias or prejudice.
- We build trust through sustained honest dealings and believe in treating others with dignity and respect.
- We value diversity and foster an inclusive workplace where each individual's talents and contributions are leveraged to achieve organizational objectives.
- We perform our work in the highest ethical manner.

Excellence "What drives us today"

- We apply a risk-based approach to detecting and preventing fraud, waste, abuse, and violations of law according to House Rules and the standards of our profession.
- We promote accountability and stewardship in safeguarding House assets and resources.
- We add strategic value for our customers and commit to delivering quality products and services through exemplary work practices.
- We strive for continuous improvement, both in ourselves and in our products and services.

Innovation "Ensures our continued success"

- We encourage creative and innovative approaches that meet the needs of our customers.
- We understand that both successes and failures can be drivers of growth and learning.
- We aim to understand emerging trends, practices, and technologies to identify their benefits and risks to our customers and their applicability within the House.
- We choose to be forward-thinking and embrace solutions and policies that promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness for the betterment of the House.



Before the House Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Inspector General
Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request

Budget Request History

Fiscal Year	Request (\$000s)	Change* (\$000)	Change* %	Auth. FTE	Comments
2025 Request	\$5,772	\$260	4.7%	25	1. \$427,000 due to changes in mandatory spending (e.g., staff salaries, including the cost-of-living allowance (COLA), the projected COLA for FY 2025 and scheduled longevity step increases) 2. \$3,000 due to price level increases, and 3. \$170,000 reduction in program budgets
2024 Enacted	\$5,512	\$374	7.3%	25	1. \$211,000 (4.11%) due to FY 2023 increases in the House Schedule and the cost-of-living allowance (COLA), and the projected COLA for FY 2024. 2. \$28,000 (0.54%) due to price level increases. 3. \$135,000 (2.63%) due to program changes.
2023 Enacted	\$5,138	\$119	2.3%	25	1. Changes in the Speaker's Pay Order (SPO) effective June 2022, which led to adjustments in the Personnel Base Adjustment-HEPCA and Personnel Base. 2. SPO changes to the House Schedule effective January 2023 increased salaries and simultaneously added unanticipated COLA to previously restricted salary levels, absorbed in the FY 2023 budget.
2022 Enacted	\$5,019	-0-	-0-	25	1. Operating on allotments of FY2021 Appropriation. Adjustments to Personnel Budgets due to SPO change. 2. Increases in the House Pay Schedule combined with decreases in salaries eligible for COLA.
2021 Enacted	\$5,019	-0-	-0-	25	1. Adjustments to Personnel Budgets due to several positions meeting SPO limit; ineligible for COLA. 2. Released \$650,000 of FY 2021 appropriation for reprogramming. 3. Released remaining \$151,000 of FY 2021 for reprogramming.
2020 Enacted	\$5,019	-0-	-0-	25	1. Released \$950,000 of FY 2020 for reprogramming.

* Year over Year changes.

TESTIMONY OF

RALPH V. SEEP

LAW REVISION COUNSEL OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

to the

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch

of the House Committee on Appropriations

Mister Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the budget request of the Office of the Law Revision Counsel (Office) for fiscal year 2025. The Office was "established in the House of Representatives" by section 205 of House Resolution No. 988, Ninety-third Congress, which was enacted into permanent law by Public Law 93-554. The Office continues to fulfill its mission and appreciates the continuing support given to us by the Subcommittee and Congress.

Budget Request

For fiscal year 2025, I am requesting a budget of \$5,048,000. Of that amount, \$4,048,000 is for the Office to sustain operations with respect to existing personnel and ongoing technology needs. The remaining \$1,000,000 of this request is for No-Year money to begin work on a new website for the Office.

Continuing Operations.--The amount of \$4,048,000 represents a 3.79 percent increase over the amount appropriated by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Public Law 118-47. This amount will allow for the continuation of current personnel, including salary adjustments, routine maintenance and replacement of equipment, and the continuation of service contracts for editorial work and technical support.

New Office Website.-- The budget request includes a request for \$1,000,000 of No-Year money to build a new website for the Office. The current website was designed in 2009. Upgrades to the search engine for the United States Code database and the user interface of the Office's website were released during fiscal year 2011 and fiscal year 2017. Additional critical updates for the software supporting the backend of the website were deployed during fiscal year 2021. The current website has served the Office well but is aging. Standards for accessibility, user expectations for performance, and the requirements for running a secure website have become significantly more complex over the last 15 years. A new version of the website is now needed to meet current standards.

House Modernization Project.--Work progresses on the House Modernization Project begun at the behest of House leadership. While no additional funding for the House Modernization Project is being requested in the Office's fiscal year 2025 budget, the replacement of the aging system currently used for publishing is a priority. A new editing system for the Office is projected to be completed and deployed in fiscal year 2025.

Functions of the Office

The principal functions of the Office are specified by chapter 9A of title 2 of the United States Code. They are: (1) to maintain and keep current the official version of the Code, and (2) to prepare legislation to enact individual titles of the Code into positive law.

Maintaining the United States Code

The United States Code contains the general and permanent laws of the United States, organized into titles by subject matter. The two primary tasks in maintaining the Code are classifying new laws and updating the text.

Classifying New Laws.—Every law enacted by Congress is read in its entirety by a number of attorneys to identify the general and permanent provisions and any amendments that should be classified to the Code and to decide where in the Code they should be placed. The Office gives the highest priority to this classification function, and the classification of a law is normally completed by the time it is signed by the President. While thoroughness and accuracy are the prime concerns, speed is also important so that classifications can be posted online and the required edits be executed in the Code online and made available to the public as quickly as possible.

Updating the Text.—Updating the text of the Code includes not only integrating new statutory provisions into existing text, but also preparing extensive editorial material enabling users to find, track, and understand the updates. This editorial material includes statutory citations and amendment notes to help track the legislative history, notes to explain such things as effective dates, cross references appearing in text, and a variety of other matters, tables to indicate the status of statutory provisions and their location in the Code, and an index. A number of Federal court rules and executive documents are also prepared and published as they are often closely connected to statutory material.

The Office publishes the Code, in both searchable and downloadable versions, on its public website and updates it continuously throughout the legislative year. The Office also publishes, in printed form, a completely new version of the Code, called the main edition, once every six years and annual cumulative supplements in the intervening years. The next main edition of the Code due to be printed will incorporate laws through 2024.

Timeliness of Publication; Improvements in Organization

Publication.—The timely update of a publication of the size and complexity of the Code is a challenging task and depends heavily on the training and expertise of the staff of the Office.

The Office places a high priority on retaining existing staff and also seeks to retain the services of retired employees by contracting with them for part-time work. As a result of the efforts of experienced staff, the Office has consistently published online updates in a timely manner without sacrificing the high level of accuracy that is expected and demanded of the official United States Code.

The Office maintains a current, easily accessible online Code in addition to producing the print Code. The Office continues to streamline its editorial practices to tailor them for an online publication that is continuously updated throughout a congressional session. The Office updated the Code online approximately 17 times during the First Session of the 118th Congress. Bulk data is currently made available for download in a variety of formats (XML, XHTML, PDF, and locator text files) with every update, although this may change when USLM version 2.0 becomes the new standard for Code data. Updates to the main table indicating the status of statutory provisions and their location in the Code, which have traditionally been published at the end of each congressional session, are now being made more frequently to correspond with publication of updates to the Code text. The Office continues to strive for timely updates of the Code through innovative editorial practices that take advantage of emerging technological possibilities.

Improvements in Organization.—As part of its ongoing mission to produce both a useful and a usable Code, the Office undertakes reclassification projects to identify areas of law that have become difficult to navigate or convert into XML and to improve their organization. Some past projects have improved the organization of laws within various existing titles of the Code, and others have even created new editorial titles containing material that had been scattered throughout the Code. More detailed information on these projects is available at <https://uscode.house.gov/editorialreclassification/reclassification.html>. In addition to carrying out the reclassification projects themselves, the Office drafts and submits bills that amend existing statutory references so that they reflect the newly reorganized provisions.

Positive Law Codification

The second principal function of the Office is to prepare legislation to enact individual titles of the United States Code into positive law as required by 2 U.S.C. 285b. The Code currently consists of twenty-seven positive law titles and twenty-six non-positive law titles (one title is reserved). A positive law title is a title that has been enacted into law by Congress in the form of a title of the Code. In contrast, a non-positive law title is an editorial compilation by the Code editors (the Office of the Law Revision Counsel or its predecessors) of various acts separately enacted into law by Congress.

Positive law codification is an intricate process. It may take a codification attorney a year or more to prepare a codification bill for introduction. There is an extensive period for comment and review as the draft bill is prepared and submitted to the House Committee on the Judiciary. Congressional committees, Government agencies, legal experts, and members of the public are invited to review and comment on the bill to ensure that the meaning and effect of the law as restated in the new title remains unchanged and to achieve the best possible organizational structure for the new title.

If revisions are required after the bill is introduced in the House, the codification attorneys prepare the necessary amendments. The codification attorneys may prepare a new version of the draft bill, which is then reported by the Committee on the Judiciary as an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Typically, the bill is passed by the House under suspension of the rules. In the Senate, the bill goes to the Committee on the Judiciary and the process continues until the bill is passed by the Senate, typically by unanimous consent. In most cases, a codification bill must be updated several times for new legislation and reintroduced in several Congresses before finally being enacted. The codification attorneys are involved throughout the process, working with the staffs of House and Senate committees, Government agencies, and others to perfect the bill and move it toward enactment.

In the 118th Congress, the Office submitted eleven bills to the House Committee on the Judiciary. Four of those bills, which update statutory references in the United States Code, have been passed in the House in the first session and await Senate action. Five of those bills, which incorporate recent enactments to positive law titles and make technical corrections because of recent enactments, have been reported out by the Committee on the Judiciary in the second session. The two remaining bills, which would enact title 6 “Domestic Security”, and title 48, “Territories and Insular Possessions”, as positive law titles, await Congressional action. The Office continues to work on several other projects to enact various titles of the Code as positive law titles.

House Modernization Project

No additional funding for the House Modernization Project is being requested in the Office's fiscal year 2025 budget. The House Modernization Project was originated in 2012 as a set of interrelated projects being undertaken by the House Office of the Law Revision Counsel and the House Office of the Legislative Counsel in consultation with representatives from the Committee on House Administration, the Legislative Computer Systems branch of the Office of the Clerk, and the Acquisitions Management branch of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

In the Office of the Law Revision Counsel, work on the House Modernization Project has proceeded in three stages. In the first stage, a conversion tool was designed and implemented to enable the Office to convert the United States Code into XML. Since July 2013, the Office has made the Code available for use and bulk download in XML through the Office's website.

In the second stage, a new system for codification bills was designed and implemented to enable the Office to produce codification bills and associated material in XML. The new production tools enable the Office to draft bills in XML. In the summer of 2015, the new system was delivered and was fully implemented in 2016. It is being used for live production work, and refinements are underway to continue to improve functionality.

In the third stage, a new XML-based system for editing and updating the United States Code is being designed and implemented. The bill classification component of the new system is substantially complete, and work continues on the editing and updating components. The goal is to transition to the new system for Code production later in 2024.

USLM is a state-of-the-art schema developed as part of the Office's work on the House Modernization Project. The USLM schema is designed to be extensible, and it is increasingly being considered as the emerging standard for maintaining congressional data. The Office continues to work with the Office of the Clerk and with GPO's Composition System Replacement Group, supporting their efforts to develop the ability to maintain congressional data in USLM and publish directly from USLM files, both online and in print.

Website for the United States Code

The United States Code website maintained by the Office at <https://uscode.house.gov> is the definitive and most current source of United States Code data. The website is used by the Office itself for its classification, Code updating, and bill drafting functions. It is also used by numerous other federal legislative offices and functions (e.g., House and Senate Legislative Counsel offices, the Comparative Print Suite); the Department of Defense and other federal agencies; commercial publishers of the Code; law schools and their legal research websites; and the public generally.

The present version of the website was developed in 2009. The website has had maintenance updates since then, but it has largely remained unchanged from the version initially placed online in 2011. Standards for accessibility, user expectations for performance, and the requirements for running a secure website have become significantly more complex over the last 15 years. A new version of the website is now needed to meet current standards.

The website enables the detailed and meticulous search of the United States Code required for drafting legislation and maintaining the Code itself, and it provides a host of unique features related to that work. In addition, the website hosts information on Code codification projects, downloadable titles of the Code in multiple formats, and products related to the Code's updating and dissemination process.

It is essential that this key website for access to federal statutory law is upgraded to be able to meet the expectations of its varied users now and in the future.

Conclusion

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the fiscal year 2025 budget request of the Office of the Law Revision Counsel and for the Subcommittee's support for the Office. This support has enabled the Office to maintain, update, and improve the United States Code. I will be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

MISSION STATEMENT

LAW REVISION COUNSEL OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

to the

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
of the House Committee on Appropriations

The Office of the Law Revision (Office) serves the House of Representatives, Congress as a whole, the legal community, and the general public by producing and maintaining the United States Code, which is the official codification of the general and permanent statutory law of the United States. The mission of the Office is to make the United States Code "the free Code of choice" for the Hill community and the general public by ensuring that the official Code is the most accurate version available, whose currency rivals or exceeds the versions produced by the private sector.

To carry out its mission, the Office makes the United States Code available online and in print. For the online version, the goal is to make the Code as current and user-friendly as technologically possible. For the print version, in accordance with 1 U.S.C. 202, a complete new edition is published every 6 years with annual cumulative supplements printed in each of the 5 intervening years. In the Office's pursuit of this mission, there are 4 principal drivers:

- Accuracy—This is a paramount concern. Every effort is made to ensure that the United States Code is as precise and error-free as is humanly possible.
- Timeliness— The United States Code online is usually updated within days of the date of enactment of the most recent Federal legislation. The size (53,000 pages) and complexity requires a concerted effort by a dedicated staff to make this a reality.
- Ready availability online and in print—The Hill community and the general public need the United States Code to be transparent. For the online version, that means a quality website presence downloadable in multiple formats, including XML in a USLM schema.
- Positive Law Codification—Ongoing title-by-title positive law codification, as required by 2 U.S.C. 285b, is essential to the improvement of the organizational structure of the United States Code as a whole, and to resolving inconsistencies and errors in existing law.

Office of the Law Revision Counsel
FY 2025 Budget Request & 5-Year Budget History

Fiscal Year	Budget	\$ Year over Year Increase	% Year over Year Increase	Funded Positions	Explanation of Major Changes
FY 2025 Budget Request	\$ 5,048,000	\$ 1,148,000	29.4%	21	The budget request consists of two parts: (1) \$4,048,000 for Continuing Operations; and (2) \$1,000,000 of No-Year money to replace an aging website.
FY 2024 Enacted	\$ 3,900,000	\$ 154,000	4.1%	21	
FY 2023 Enacted	\$ 3,746,000	\$ 146,000	4.1%	21	
FY 2022 Enacted	\$ 3,600,000	\$ 131,000	3.8%	21	
FY 2021 Enacted	\$ 3,469,000	\$ 50,000	1.5%	21	
FY 2020 Enacted	\$ 3,419,000	\$ 92,000	2.8%	21	

**Statement of E. Wade Ballou, Jr., Legislative Counsel
Office of the Legislative Counsel
U.S. House of Representatives**

Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the fiscal year 2025 appropriation request of \$15,300,000 for the Office of the Legislative Counsel (Office).

I am pleased and honored to appear before you today in my capacity as the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives. I thank you and your staff for your past support of the Office and I look forward to working closely with you in carrying out our mission of advising and assisting the House, and its committees and Members, in the achievement of clear, faithful, and coherent expressions of legislative policies.

Office Budget Request

For fiscal year 2025, I am requesting \$15,300,000 for the salaries and expenses of the Office. This reflects an increase of \$629,000, or 5.4 percent, over fiscal year 2024. Our personnel account (entitled "Draft") comprises 93 percent of our total expenses.

This request continues the implementation of our Strategy for Increasing Capacity, which was submitted to the Committee on Appropriations on April 1, 2022. Our strategy is a multi-faceted approach to address the needs of the House for legislative drafting services. It has 3 primary components: people, educational opportunities for our clients, and technology.

Meeting Legislative Service Needs

The following table depicts the relative numbers of legislative drafting requests. These numbers are for the first session of each of the specified Congresses.

	115th 1st Session	116th 1st Session	117th 1st Session	118th 1st Session	Percentage Increase: 115th 1st Session to 118th 1st Session
Emails to HOLC Front Office	11,853	13,478	13,854	12,839	8%
HOLC Prepared Discrete Drafts	24,524	26,931	29,821	33,321	36%
Average Number of Member Requests	33	38	45	58	76%

One noticeable area of increased legislative work is with amendments. Using proposed floor amendments to appropriations measures that are posted on the Rules Committee website, there were 2,728 proposed amendments for the first session of the 118th Congress compared to 1,986 proposed amendments for the entire 115th Congress. The total number of amendments prepared by the Office during these times is 12,914 during the 1st Session of the 118th Congress compared to 9,283 during the 1st Session of the 115th Congress. This is a 39% increase. Each of these posted amendments requires participation of Members and their staff, our Office, the Rules Committee staff, the Congressional Budget Office, the Budget Committee, the Appropriations Committee, the Parliamentarians, and as appropriate other committees of jurisdiction. The legislative process as it currently exists is not able to sustain this level of effort and it is not able to handle continued growth at these rates. For example, the 2023 NDAA process (National Defense Authorization Act) saw the bill (comprised of 1,236 pages) favorably reported from the Armed Services Committee with a 58-1 vote followed by more than 1,600 amendments filed at the Rules Committee. Ultimately the House-passed version of the bill contained 1,740 pages, and the version voted on for final passage was comprised of 3,093 pages. The 2023 appropriations process similarly had many amendments filed at the Rules Committee.

The Office has increased its personnel to meet this demand, as the following table depicts:

Staff	115th 1st Session	116th 1st Session	117th 1st Session	118th 1st Session	Percentage Change: 115th 1st Session to 118th 1st Session
Attorneys	49	49	57	61	24%
Average Attorney Experience Years	16.4	14.4	11.8	12.7	-23%
Support Staff	20	25	23	21	5%
Average Support Staff Experience Years	14.9	13.48	15.5	17.4	17%

The staff percentages reflect a net gain of 12 attorneys and 1 support staff. Together, the two tables show that the increase in legal services is being provided by Office staff with fewer years of service, with our seasoned attorneys bearing much of the work. The table also shows that even though there has been a 24% increase in the number of attorneys, the corresponding years of drafting experience and institutional knowledge have decreased by almost the same percentage. Expressed another way, for the 1st Session of the 115th Congress, 19% of the attorneys had 30 or more years of service while 40% had less than 10 years of service. By comparison, for the 1st Session of the 118th Congress, 11% of the attorneys had 30 or more years of service while 51% had less than 10 years of service.

People

The primary component of our Strategy is people. We strive to continue to attract and retain a qualified workforce.

Pay and Benefits.—Pay and benefits are the cornerstone for compensating and caring for our staff. The Speaker’s Pay Orders of the last two Congresses have been helpful to our retention efforts. The cost of living in the Washington, DC metro area, especially the cost of housing and childcare, continues to increase. These costs are a heavy burden and harm staff morale. It is important that staff pay continues to keep up with these costs and inflationary pressures.

Recruiting, Training, and Retention.—The Office continues to grow. During the 2023 recruiting season, we recruited nationwide and directly or indirectly contacted 68 law schools. We expect 6 new attorneys to begin in FY2024 and to recruit 6 new attorneys for FY2025. We filled our summer associate positions for 2024. However, we lost 4 attorneys during 2023, who collectively had 52 years of drafting experience.

Extensive training and mentoring are required to become a proficient legislative drafter. Our formal training is a rigorous 2-year apprenticeship designed for learning drafting fundamentals, legislative procedure, client management, and technology tools, all of which are required to serve our clients in the fast-paced legislative process of the House. Our more senior attorneys serve as the trainers, typically two trainers for each new attorney. Our training method is necessarily time and resource intensive. Training that is rushed or inadequate risks producing undertrained and overwhelmed attorneys, which leads to poor client service, departures from the Office, and reduced return on the time invested in recruiting, on-boarding, and training. Recognizing this training limitation, we continue to assess our training program for ways of improving it.

We are presently recruiting for a new position of Principal Recruitment and Retention Specialist. We anticipate that this position will provide valuable assistance to our recruiting and retention efforts.

Education

The second component of our Strategy focuses on education. Clients who are knowledgeable about the drafting process and our role are better able to provide the information we need to express their policies clearly, faithfully, and coherently. We educate in the law and legislative procedure as part of our drafting services. To reach the House legislative community, the Office has increased its offerings through the Congressional Staff Academy (CSA), including the very popular Leg Counsel 201 interactive in-person course (where over 400 House staffers have completed the course during this Congress), and the CAO Coach Program. In addition, the Office collaborates with the American Law Division of the Congressional Research Service to offer the well-received joint program entitled [Tips for Translating Policy Ideas into Effective Legislation](#). In addition and upon request, staff in our Office present to Member offices and various staff groups. We have a special focus on Member relations through a team led by our Deputy Legislative Counsel and continue to look for opportunities to connect with Members and staff. However, the time investment in our educational efforts is limited by our need to perform our main function, drafting. It is therefore important that the House continue to improve its retention of

knowledgeable staff. We are open to other ideas to meet with House staff to share questions, goals, ideas for improvement, and concerns.

We also want to expand educational opportunities for our own staff. We encourage them to take advantage of offerings through the CSA and the Library of Congress. These initiatives include improving our partnerships with other congressional service offices, such as the Congressional Budget Office and the American Law Division of the Congressional Research Service. Additionally, the Office would like to establish a reimbursement program for our staff to take courses to deepen their expertise in the subject matter areas in which they work to better equip them to meet client needs more effectively.

Technology

Generally.—The third component of our Strategy is technology. The major non-personnel expenditures of our Office are associated with acquiring, maintaining, and enhancing Office technology (hardware and software) to support our mission. As much as possible, we seek to work in collaboration with the Office of the Clerk, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House, and the Government Publishing Office to plan, test, and place into service tools that improve our processes and allow the wider House community to better interact with us and legislative text. HIR hosts our servers.

Drafting Tool (XMetal).—Our drafting tools (XMetal and the XML data format) are provided by the Clerk of the House, and the schema/data format is managed by the Legislative Branch XML Working group. We regularly participate in the Congressional Data Task Force meetings. During March of 2024, pursuant to House recommendations to improve the legislative process, we modified the written products produced by our Office. Each PDF we produce now incorporates an auto-generated Word version of the PDF. In addition, the PDF itself is now secured against text editing. We hope that these modest modifications help reduce the backlog in producing public prints of bills and enable a more efficient process for Members working with their proposals. The present configuration of XMetal, in service for 20 years, is at the end of its useful life. We are hoping the collaboration study described below guides the selection of the next tool.

Document Management (iManage).—Our document management system (iManage) is 20 years old. Although the server component of this system is current, the user interface continues to use a component that is no longer supported. We are updating this component and will go live with it as soon as we can. We then expect to examine other capabilities of the iManage system for possible improvements and efficiencies in workflow management and reporting.

Comparative Print Suite.—The Office continues to partner with the Clerk of the House to maintain and update the Comparative Print Suite released House-wide in October of 2022. Future development to this system will include a tool for creation and maintenance of the Statute Compilations.

Statute Compilations.—A key component of the Comparative Print Suite, and a product in its own right, is the Statute Compilations. The Statute Compilations are created and maintained by the Office. A Statute Compilation is a public law that—

- 1) either does not appear in the U.S. Code or has been classified to a title of the U.S. Code that has not been enacted into positive law, and

2) incorporates the amendments made to the underlying statute since it was originally enacted. There are 2,452 Statute Compilations posted at GPO as of March 26, 2024. This database is also used within the Office for drafting and preparing the comparative prints (known as Ramseyers) required by clause 3(e) of House Rule XIII. Our Ramseyer team creates and maintains the Statute Compilations and creates the required Ramseyers for bills ordered reported from committee, including for the Committee on Appropriations.

Artificial Intelligence.—The Office is participating with others in the House and across the Legislative Branch to better understand artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential uses, benefits, and risks in the legislative environment. In addition, the Office participates in discussions internationally with Parliaments and legislative drafters as we seek to learn from others.

Collaboration

In response to a request by the Committee on Appropriations, our Office, together with the Clerk of the House, submitted a report on collaborative legislative drafting on October 19, 2022. We requested funding from the House Modernization Initiative Account in March of 2023 to conduct a collaboration study to help us better plan for the adoption of tools and approaches for improving legislative drafting and the collaborative work required. This funding was approved in February 2024. Our next steps include advertising for and awarding a contract for this study, and we support the Clerk's office request for FY 2025 funding to continue the work implementing the expected recommendations of the study. As we undertake this work, we must ensure that the developed capability must do the following:

- 1) Complement the existing workflow and responsibilities of the Office, the Clerk, and GPO.
- 2) Preserve document integrity so that the only changes made to a document are those authorized by the Member or committee on whose behalf the document is prepared.
- 3) Maintain the quality of the legislative language submitted to the Hopper and at other points in the legislative process.
- 4) Ensure that the document reflects a clear, faithful, and coherent expression of the intended policy.

Conclusion

Thank you for the support this Subcommittee has given our Office. With it we have provided efficient and expert drafting assistance to the Members and committees of the House. With continued funding, we look forward to continuing to meet the increasing legislative drafting needs of the House.

I, and all of our staff, are extremely proud of our work to consistently meet the legislative needs of the House, particularly during the exceptional circumstances of recent years.

This completes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions that any Member of the Subcommittee may have.

E. Wade Ballou, Jr.
Legislative Counsel

Mission of the Office of the Legislative Counsel

The Office of the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives provides advice and assistance on a nonpartisan and confidential basis to the House of Representatives, and its committees and Members, in the achievement of a clear, faithful, and coherent expression of legislative policies. The Office was established on February 24, 1919, as the Legislative Drafting Service (section 1303 of the Revenue Act of 1918 (Ch. 18, 1141)) and currently operates under its charter, title V of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (2 U.S.C. 281 et seq.)

The Office achieves its purpose by applying its significant drafting, legal, and institutional expertise to the wide variety of requests for legislative drafting assistance throughout all stages of the legislative process. In doing so the Office partners with its clients and institutional legislative entities to support both its mission and the legislative purposes of the House.

The Office provides legal services through subject matter teams. These teams are supported by clerk-paralegals, Ramseyer specialists, technology specialists, front office communication specialists, and Office leadership. The Legislative Counsel of the House leads the Office, serves as a player coach, and seeks to align all teams with Office policies and best drafting practices. The Office partners with the Clerk of the House and GPO to provide and improve drafting tools that use XML data, including the customized authoring tool, XMetal, Microcomp and its successor, XPUB, and the Comparative Print Suite.

Personnel in the Office are highly trained. New attorneys must successfully complete a two-year training program which is provided through an apprentice-style tutorial and supplemented by class instruction. It begins with a six-month intensive training on drafting fundamentals, and is followed by an 18-month mentorship. During mentorship the attorney is assigned to a subject matter team and is mentored in that subject matter and in all phases of drafting throughout the legislative process, including drafting in complex legal matters, parliamentary procedure, and client management. The Office uses a similar approach for training new members of its support teams, with the duration and scope of training appropriate to the team involved.

The Office provides many opportunities for Members and staff to learn about working effectively with the Office as well as basic drafting matters. These opportunities include information on the Office member portal website and educational services through presentations, classes through the Congressional Staff Academy, podcasts with the CAO Coach Program, and partnering with the American Law Division of the Congressional Research Service.

In addition to matters inside the House of Representatives, the Office participates in meetings involving members and staff of parliaments around the world through the House Democracy Partnership, the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel, and others. These meetings are for mutual education on drafting and technology matters common to legislative systems of government.

Summary of Budget Request and Five-Year Snapshot for Legislative Counsel

	Total Budget Authority	Percent change	FTE	Actual FTE (start)	New Staff	Departing Staff	Actual FTE (end)
FY 2020 Enacted	\$11,937,000		87	75	7	2	80
FY 2021 Enacted	\$11,937,000		91	80	4	4	80
FY 2022 Enacted	\$12,625,000	5.80%	93	80	7	6	81
FY 2023 Enacted	\$13,457,000	6.60%	93	81	6	3	86
FY 2024 Enacted	\$14,671,000	9.00%	93	86	6 (est.)	1 (est.)	91 (est.)
FY 2025 Request	\$15,300,000	4.29%	97	91 (est.)	6 (est.)		97 (est.)

Explanation of Major Changes

The major change in total budget authority requested by the Office of the Legislative Counsel from FY2020 to FY2025 is for staff salaries, including merit pay increases and increases pursuant to Speaker's Pay Orders, and cost of living adjustments.

Personnel (Draft Account)

For fiscal year 2025, of the \$15,300,000 requested, \$14,200,000 is for personnel, which is a 5.4 percent increase from FY2024. Our personnel account (entitled "Draft") is approximately 93 percent of our total budget. This amount includes a planned addition of six attorneys during FY2025. For all staff, the Office expects to make merit pay increases and cost of living adjustments during FY2025.

Administrative Expenses (Admin Account)

For fiscal year 2025, of the \$15,300,000 requested, \$1,100,000 is for administrative expenses, which is approximately an 8 percent decrease from FY2024. During FY 2024, the Office completed the development of our internal Sharepoint site. The requested amount includes amounts for—

- 1) the continuation of the computer systems replacement program to provide for better software functionality, to prevent computer system obsolescence, and to reduce the risk and frequency of computer system failures,
- 2) the completion of updates to the Office document management system (iManage), and
- 3) the adaptation of the Comparative Print Suite tools to replace the outdated system used to build and maintain Statute Compilations and Ramseysers.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

MEMBERS' DAY

Mr. VALADAO. The subcommittee will come to order.

This is the fiscal year 2025 Legislative Branch Subcommittee Member Day hearing.

I would like to thank Acting Ranking Member Wexton today and committee members for being here; Representative Kilmer and Representative Crockett for being here as well today.

In addition to our two witnesses here this morning, Representative Mark Takano and Representative Sylvia Garcia submitted testimony for the record.

[The prepared statements follow:]

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

WITNESS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARK TAKANO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. I would like to take this moment and implore the Subcommittee to provide robust funding for congressional Science & Technology (S&T) resources. Expertise in S&T is necessary to assist Members of Congress make well-informed and evidence-based public policy decisions grounded in research. Specifically, I am requesting \$6 million to restore the already authorized Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), and, in the absence of restoring OTA, asking for language to request a follow-up report to the 2019 National Academies of Public Administration (NAPA) review of congressional S&T resources.

For more than two decades, OTA provided relevant, unbiased technical and scientific assessments for Members of Congress and staff. The office was unfortunately defunded in 1995, stripping Congress of a valuable resource that understood both emerging technologies as well as the intricacies of the legislative process and the needs of policy makers. OTA remains authorized and is unique in that its mission enables in-depth analysis with extensive input from external experts providing forward-looking and comprehensive assessment of new technologies.

In its absence, the need for the OTA has only grown. Nearly 30 years after OTA was defunded, Congress is grappling with questions surrounding how to encourage innovation while minimizing the potential harms of new technologies. A restored OTA could help Congress develop thoughtful, targeted policy around emerging technologies, including but not limited to artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and autonomous vehicles. As complex advances in science and technology continue to rapidly evolve, Congress should have access to OTA's thorough and nonpartisan analysis to help find the right path forward.

Funding the OTA is a wise investment for the future. In fiscal year 2020, the House Appropriations Legislative Branch Subcommittee included \$6 million in initial funding to reestablish the agency and passed out of committee by voice vote. Unfortunately, the funding was not included in the final appropriations package signed into law. I ask that you revive your efforts to restore funding for OTA to begin rebuilding the office with \$6 million in appropriated funding for fiscal year 2025. These funds will better prepare Congress to account for emerging technologies in the legislative process and allow us to make informed policy decisions.

If the subcommittee chooses not to restore funding, I ask that you request a follow-up study to the 2019 NAPA report: “Science and Technology Policy Assessment: A Congressional Directed Review.” This report examined the technology assessment services provided by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and identified remaining gaps in networking support, consultative support, short-to-medium term reports, and horizon scanning reports. The report recommended “enhancing existing entities and creating an advisory office” to solve these gaps.

Since the report’s release, only the enhancement of existing entities has been enacted, with the House Committee on Appropriations increasing funding to both CRS and GAO for S&T assistance. Additionally, in 2019, GAO established the Science, Technology, Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) mission team which generates assessments, primers, and training for staff on emerging technologies. Since its establishment, STAA has quickly increased its workforce and taken on additional responsibilities to help Congress with its S&T needs. I commend the work that both CRS and GAO have done to address some of the gaps left behind by OTA; however, more must be done to meet this moment of rapid technological development and solve the remaining gaps identified in the 2019 NAPA report.

I believe this follow-up report must include a reexamination of the gaps identified in the original report to account for the changes implemented by CRS and GAO in their S&T support. This report should also make recommendations on Congressional actions that can be taken to improve the coordination between CRS, GAO, and the National Academies to increase efficiency and avoid duplicative efforts. Lastly, I believe this follow-up report should also examine whether and how to authorize the STAA mission team to ensure the longevity of Congress’s S&T capacity.

To effectively respond to the latest advancements in S&T, I believe it is imperative for the Committee to invest in Congressional S&T support through restoring OTA or requesting a follow-up report. Restoring funding to OTA will provide Congress with the expertise to make well-informed and evidence-based public policy decisions. Should the Committee not fund OTA, a follow-up report will inform Congress on the steps necessary to address remaining gaps in S&T resources and expertise and ensure the longevity of relevant and unbiased S&T expertise.

Thank you for your time and leadership. I look forward to working with you all to ensure that Congress has the resources necessary to respond to the latest advancements in science and technology.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

WITNESS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member, and committee members for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee as part of today’s Member Day.

This is an important opportunity for Members of the House of Representatives to advocate for their constituents, share their priorities, and help shape the appropriations process for fiscal year 2025.

Over the last several years, Congress has taken decisive action to ensure that Congress and all levels of government better reflect our nation’s diversity—building pathways of opportunity for America’s next generation of leaders.

The subcommittee should build on this critical work by ensuring that the Legislative Branch appropriations bill for fiscal year 2025 expands Federal employment requirements to include recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

As you know, the DACA program was established in 2012 to protect eligible immigrants, who came to the United States when they were children, from deportation. The program also provides recipients with work authorizations, allowing them to be legally employed in the United States.

DACA recipients make immeasurable contributions to our communities—paying billions in Federal and State taxes each year.

DACA recipients are American in every way and influence all sectors of our society. These young men and women serve in uniform, teach our children, start businesses on Main Streets across the country, and contribute to the fabric of our communities in every conceivable way.

DACA recipients occupy roles and are pursuing degrees in critical industries that influence government policy and operations, including tech, finance, health care, education, environment, and law.

Dreamers support America and now America needs to support Dreamers.

Just as DACA recipients are already making a positive difference across the country, they are positioned to make significant contributions to the Federal workforce. Yet, despite having work authorizations, they are inexplicably and unfairly barred from serving in the Federal workforce.

DACA recipients have been serving as Federal interns and fellows through third party entities, contributing diverse experience and expertise to the work of the Federal Government, but have no avenue for permanent Federal employment.

Historically, appropriations legislation has routinely prohibited the Federal Government from hiring non-citizens.

It is time that Congress finally eliminated this unnecessary and unfair barrier that keeps DACA recipients from seeking Federal employment. This would give thousands of DACA recipients across the nation, including more than 95,000 in my home State of Texas, the opportunity to continue contributing to the United States, the only country they call home. Congress, and the Federal Government more broadly, would benefit greatly from the contributions of DACA recipients.

In addition to this critical priority, the subcommittee should provide adequate funding to support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in Congress.

Until recently, the House Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), a non-partisan and non-legislative support office, was responsible for addressing the state of underrepresentation in the congressional workforce.

Since its inception in the 116th Congress, the ODI assisted approximately 2,678 job seekers and conducted over 1,526 consultations with employing offices. The office referred over 6,441 resumes to hiring managers and helped approximately 730 job seekers land congressional careers.

Further, ODI's research initiatives and surveys shed critical light on the state of workforce representation, compensation, benefits, and demographic makeup of the U.S. House of Representatives workforce, which guided actions taken by Congress to make it a more representative, fair, and equitable place to work.

Despite ODI's strong record of service to members regardless of political affiliation, some Republicans eager to score cheap political points in their crusade against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives worked to eliminate ODI in its entirety as part of the Fiscal Year 2024 Legislative Branch appropriations bill.

While non-partisan staff and critical functions of ODI were ultimately protected and moved to be housed under the Chief Administrative Officer, it is clear that the ODI operated at its best when it was fully dedicated to advancing equity for our Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ+ communities, along with other underserved communities, including women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

I therefore request that the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee work on a bipartisan basis to restore the existence and robust funding of the House Office of Diversity and Inclusion in the 119th Congress and beyond. We must ensure that Congress better reflects the diversity and lived experiences of our constituents.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share these priorities for your consideration, and I encourage all members of the subcommittee committee to work with me to get this done.

Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. I would also like to make a note that this hearing also serves as a vehicle for public witnesses to submit testimony for the record, and nine testimonies were submitted and may be found online.

[The submitted testimony follows:]



Testimony of Joshua Bonet
Legislative Associate, Issue One
Before the House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch for Fiscal Year 2025

April 15, 2024

Chair Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on a matter that will help strengthen the legislative branch and ensure that Congress is fulfilling its Article I constitutional responsibilities.

My name is Joshua Bonet, and I lead the congressional modernization portfolio for Issue One, a leading crosspartisan organization working with Republicans, Democrats, and independents to advance pragmatic solutions to tackle the biggest challenges to our broken political system. Modernization efforts in Congress are crucial to strengthening democracy, as it enhances congressional capacity and preparedness to effectively represent the American people, while also fostering trust from the public towards the legislative branch.

Issue One's goal is to "fix Democracy first." In tune with that mission, we understand that building a representative, resilient and effective legislative branch is core to reaching our goal of fixing democracy. Keeping that in consideration, I request that the Modernization Initiatives Account (MIA) maintain level funding in FY2025 at \$10 million.

We commend the Subcommittee on Modernization for implementing a series of reforms that were first raised by the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. We also commend



your work within the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee for investing in a more robust and capable institution of Congress over the past few budget cycles. Moreover, we thank leadership on both sides of the aisle for establishing a permanent body focused on fixing Congress. This sort of collaborative spirit is the foundation of a healthy institution, and of a representative democracy.

Advancing bipartisan reforms to how Congress functions is necessary for rebuilding trust in Congress, and retaining the Modernization Initiatives Account is central to this mission of reform.

The MIA is the result of a recommendation from the bipartisan Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. It secures \$10 million to implement operational and technological improvements that make Congress more effective and efficient. As a result of this investment, many proposed reforms have been actualized, including the early iteration of Deconflict by the House Digital Service and a legislative staff directory — both solutions which help build more congressional capacity and efficiency. More recent initiatives supported by the MIA encompass the creation and testing of FlagTrack, a tool designed to streamline the processing of constituent flag requests.

The MIA has strong bipartisan support and cross-committee support. Throughout fiscal year 2022, the Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch supported modernization projects by funding the MIA. For fiscal year 2023, the Appropriations Committee



passed legislation that increased the MIA from \$2 million to \$10 million¹. Once more, this indicates the growing bipartisan momentum to make the institution better and a commitment to democracy during times of strong hyperpartisanship and distress because of bad actors inside and outside of Congress.

As time passes, these continued investments will help implement critical congressional reforms and projects already underway. The MIA sets aside resources to advance modernization efforts for meaningful and lasting change in Congress, including allowing offices to leverage and support a range of modernization related-activities.

Enthusiasm for representative democracy has declined in recent years – this extends to democratic institutions. Polling shows that many Americans lack faith in the legislative branch. Gallup’s annual update on trust in government institutions indicates Americans have the least faith in the legislative branch with only 44% responding they share a great deal or fair amount of confidence in Congress². Building institutional legitimacy is no easy task, but the project of democracy can only survive if there’s trust between social actors and the entities representing them on their behalf.

A 2024 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center found that respondents described *government reform* as a possible solution to build trust in democracy as “many believe

¹ U.S. House of Representatives. (2022). Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress: Final Report (117th Congress). Retrieved from https://www.webharvest.gov/congress/117th/2022/1224193203/https://modernizecongress.house.gov/imo/media/doc/modernization_committee_final_report_117th_congress.pdf

² Gallup. (2022, February 9). Americans' trust in local government, Congress least. Gallup. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/512651/americans-trust-local-government-congress-least.aspx>



improving democracy will require significant political reform in their country.”³ Similarly, respondents listed *improving political leadership* as another potential resolution to achieve better governance, bolster competency and responsiveness to the public needs.

Fixing Congress should be part of the agenda in each and every budget discussion to restore Congress’ Article I role, strengthen oversight, and better serve constituents. A robust, effective first branch relies on all of us, but those serving in Congress must lead the way. Members of Congress deserve credit for investing in the institution, but just appropriating funds won’t suffice. Members must actually use these funds to support and revitalize Congress, and that is why the ongoing work of the Subcommittee on Modernization is of the utmost importance.

We encourage members to continue investing in the legislative branch, as well as to identify additional pathways to make the institution more effective, efficient, transparent, and representative of all those who make up American plurality. Undoubtedly, the MIA is one of the best resources available to reach our collective goal for a healthier and more robust Congress. Congress must continue building from it and holding discussions to bolster its utility.

³ Pew Research Center. (2024, February 28). Representative democracy remains a popular ideal, but people around the world are critical of how it's working. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/02/28/representative-democracy-remains-a-popular-ideal-but-people-around-the-world-are-critical-of-how-its-working/>



Thank you again for this opportunity and for your time. As an organization committed to supporting a strong legislative branch, Issue One stands ready to provide information, counsel, and assistance to the Subcommittee.

April 15, 2024

Written Testimony of Zach Graves**United States House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on
the Legislative Branch****Re: Legislative Branch Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025**

Dear Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. For forty years, judicial precedent has directed courts to broadly defer to agencies in their interpretation of laws, even where the underlying statute is ambiguous or silent. Overturning this doctrine, known as “*Chevron* deference,”¹ has been a longstanding goal of conservatives, who see the unrestrained growth of the administrative state as increasingly unaccountable and undemocratic. Compounding the problem, Congress’s capacity for regulatory oversight has only declined. Today, it rarely leads to concrete action such as striking down rules or reforming flawed statutes.

In the next few months, the Supreme Court is set to decide two related cases, *Loper* *Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*² and *Relentless, Inc. v. Department of Commerce*,³ where legal scholars and court watchers widely expect *Chevron* to be discarded. If and when this happens, it could significantly reallocate constitutional power to a legislative branch that is woefully unprepared for this responsibility. These concerns were raised in briefings and oral arguments, and echoed by outside pundits who fear an incapacitation of the federal bureaucracy and breakdown in service delivery.⁴

¹ <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/467/837/>

² <https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/loper-bright-enterprises-v-raimondo/>

³ <https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/relentless-inc-v-department-of-commerce/>

⁴ <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2024/01/chevron-supreme-court-case/677220/>

Since the *Chevron* decision in 1984, the breadth and complexity of federal regulations have increased, while Congress's capacity for policy and oversight has atrophied. From 1984 to 2023, the number of pages in the Code of Federal Regulations increased from 50,998 to 90,402, or 77 percent, with the number of economically significant rules per year skyrocketing from 18 to 78.⁵ Over the same period, Congress lost its capacity to keep up. Staffing on House committees declined by 41 percent.⁶ And key legislative support agencies like the Congressional Research Service and the Government Accountability Office shrunk by 25 percent and 29 percent, respectively.

Next year, the 119th Congress could face urgent pressure to delve into the weeds on regulations. This could require restoring lost capacity, creating new capabilities for regulatory monitoring and oversight, and adjusting rules and processes to fast track fixes to broken regulations. A recent GAO report, "Options for Enhancing Congressional Oversight of Rulemaking and Establishing an Office of Legal Counsel," considers some of the challenges to strengthening regulatory oversight.⁷ One approach would be to create a new entity to serve as a legislative branch counterpart to the executive branch's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). One model for this would be to create a bicameral "Congressional Regulation Office," an idea proposed by American Enterprise Institute scholars Kevin Kosar and Philip Wallach.⁸ In an FAI paper, "Empowering Regulatory Oversight: How the Administrative State Accountable," my colleagues Dan Lips and Satya Thallam evaluate this and other options, including expanding GAO's existing regulatory functions through a new mission team, or

⁵ <https://regulatorystudies.columbian.gwu.edu/terminology>

⁶ https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/2023-11-28_R43947_fab8394eb2c558b92d9b0331a73e7803a9f65f1a.pdf

⁷ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/d24105870.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-case-for-a-congressional-regulation-office>

creating standalone unicameral offices.⁹ With any approach, duplicative support agency regulatory functions may also need to be consolidated. Beyond support agency capabilities, Congress could also take steps to strengthen its committees, including through increased staffing,¹⁰ expanded detailees from GAO, and the potential creation of a new committee on regulation. Other changes to House rules and organization could also be considered.

If Congress is to reclaim some of its constitutional role under Article I, it must show that it can develop the knowledge, expertise, and capabilities to govern. As we approach this pending shift, it is imperative for Congress to take steps to evaluate gaps in its existing capabilities, consider proposals for reform, and start to make a plan. As this is a multi-stakeholder problem, this could begin by establishing a Congressional Regulation Task Force, bringing together relevant committees, legislative agencies, and other internal stakeholders, as well as consulting with outside experts such as the Administrative Conference of the United States, and in civil society. In addition, following up to its report on strengthening regulatory oversight, GAO could be tasked with creating a plan to establish a new regulatory monitoring and oversight team to proactively keep Congress informed on regulatory matters and provide technical assistance to committees of jurisdiction.

Zach Graves

Executive Director,

Foundation for American Innovation

⁹ <https://cdn.sanity.io/files/d81rla4f/staging/6731d2e4c7fb69af52edc2c6b179b67ef50ae86e.pdf>

¹⁰ https://administrativestate.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/PB24_01-Kosar-.pdf



April 15, 2024

Dan Lips, Head of Policy, Foundation for American Innovation
Written Testimony for U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
U.S. Government Accountability Office FY2025 Appropriations

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Dan Lips. I am Head of Policy at the Foundation for American Innovation, a think tank focused on promoting innovation, strengthening governance, and advancing national security. I am writing to respectfully urge the Subcommittee to support the Comptroller General's FY2025 budget request for the Government Accountability Office (GAO), in light of GAO's history of providing significant taxpayer savings.¹ The congressional watchdog agency reported a return on investment in FY2023 of \$84 for every dollar provided to GAO from Congress, for a total return of roughly \$70.4 billion in financial benefits.²

In addition to supporting the overall budget request from GAO, I would also like to recommend several actions that the Subcommittee could take to improve GAO's return on investment.

First, the Subcommittee should include report language requiring GAO to set targeted completion dates for recommendations to encourage federal agencies to implement nonpartisan reform recommendations in a timely manner. GAO currently has more than 5,000 open recommendations, including more than 450 priority recommendations.³

Furthermore, GAO reports that agencies often take years to implement its nonpartisan recommendations, if they ever do. In its FY2023 Performance and Accountability report, GAO reported that its four-year implementation rate for its recommendations was 75

¹ GAO, GAO-24-107438 *Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request: U.S. Government Accountability Office* (2024), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-107438>.

² U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO-24-900483, *Performance and Accountability Report Fiscal Year 2023* (2022), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/d24900483.pdf>.

³ U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Recommendations Database," updated April 11, 2024, <https://www.gao.gov/reports-testimonies/recommendations-database>.

percent, below its target of 80 percent.⁴ This is important because GAO says that “recommendations remaining open after a 4-year period are less likely to be implemented in subsequent years,” meaning that a quarter of GAO’s recommendations never go anywhere. Savings from following GAO’s recommendations could therefore be even higher than they already are.

The FY2022 appropriations bill required GAO to issue “a report estimating the cost savings that could be achieved if agencies acted on GAO’s recommendations organized by agency.” However, GAO has not answered this reporting requirement in a detailed manner, instead providing a rough estimate based on a statistical simulation, finding that implementing all open recommendations “could produce \$92 billion to \$182 billion of measurable, future financial benefits.”⁵ The Subcommittee should ask GAO to provide an itemized list of recommendations that could achieve cost savings so that Congress can use its appropriations, legislative, and oversight powers to achieve taxpayer savings. Additionally, the Subcommittee should consider asking GAO to establish deadlines or targeted completion rates for open GAO recommendations, which could create more pressure for agencies to implement them.

Second, the Subcommittee should direct the Comptroller General to use additional resources to conduct oversight of improper federal payments. Federal agencies estimated making \$236 billion in proper payments last year, according to a GAO report issued last month.⁶ These improper payments include about \$175 billion in overpayments—roughly 75 percent of total improper payments.

In light of the federal government’s fiscal challenges, and GAO’s decades of experience in the oversight of federal improper payments, Congress and GAO should devote additional attention and resources on curbing improper payments. In 2023, Comptroller General Dodaro recommended 10 actions that Congress should take to prevent improper payments, including establishing “a permanent analytics center of excellence to aid the oversight community in identifying improper payments and fraud.”⁷ The Subcommittee

⁴ GAO, *Performance and Accountability Report Fiscal Year 2023*.

⁵ GAO, GAO-23-106598, *Potential Financial Benefits: Estimating the Value of Implementing Open GAO Recommendations* (2023), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-106598>.

⁶ GAO, GAO-24-106927, *Improper Payments: Information on Agencies’ Fiscal Year 2023 Estimates* (2024), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106927>.

⁷ GAO, GAO-23-106556, *Emergency Relief Funds: Significant Improvements Are Needed to Address Fraud and Improper Payments* (2023), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-106556>.

should add report language urging the Comptroller General to use resources already within GAO's budget to establish this center and continue its effort to counter government misspending.

Third, the Subcommittee should consider encouraging GAO to reduce its allowance of remote work and require employees to return to the office. Based on multiple visits to the GAO offices and conversations with GAO staff, it appears that much of GAO's workforce remains at home long after many workers have returned to the office. Remote work may have contributed to GAO's falling return on investment in recent years, as shown in the below chart.⁸

Table 4: Return on Investment Data

	Return on Investment						6-Year Average
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Financial benefits (dollars in billions)	\$75.1	\$214.7	\$77.6	\$66.2	\$55.6	\$70.4	\$93.3
Dollars invested (dollars in billions) ^a	\$0.60	\$0.64	\$0.66	\$0.71	\$0.75	\$0.84	\$0.7
Return on investment (per dollar invested)	\$124	\$337	\$118	\$93	\$74	\$84	\$133

Source: GAO. | GAO-24-900483

GAO just rolled out a "New Flexible Work Application," suggesting a continued and perhaps increased commitment to remote work on the agency's part, but this could further reduce GAO's return on investment.

In the past, GAO has recommended achieving savings by selling unused or unnecessary federal real property. The Subcommittee should either encourage GAO employees to return to the office, or should take GAO's own recommendation and consider reevaluating the amount of federal funds that are being directed to offices for GAO that may not be used. Additionally, the Committee should be skeptical of GAO's request to "increase leasable space in headquarters and decrease GAO's leased space footprint in the field."⁹ I encourage GAO to decrease its leased footprint across the board if it chooses to continue widespread remote work.

⁸ GAO, *Performance and Accountability Report Fiscal Year 2023*.

⁹ GAO-24-107438, *Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request, Testimony Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives* (2024), p. 5, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/d24107438.pdf>.

Fourth, the Subcommittee should direct the Comptroller General to establish a Regulatory Review mission team within GAO to enhance the legislative branch's ability to oversee federal regulations and the administrative state. The number of pages in the *Code of Federal Regulations* more than doubled between the 1970s and 2010s,¹⁰ and the Biden administration has continued to grow the administrative state and issue new regulations, such as restrictions on kinds of lightbulbs Americans can buy. Meanwhile, congressional Republicans' attempts to curb federal regulatory overreach (for example, through the REINS Act) have been blocked by Democrats.

Congress has a constitutional responsibility to oversee federal regulations and the regulatory process, but currently lacks sufficient expertise and capacity for regulatory analysis and oversight. If the Supreme Court issues a ruling narrowing the *Chevron* deference doctrine this summer, the executive branch's authority would narrow, and Congress could have more power to oversee federal regulations. It is therefore essential to ensure that congressional agencies are equipped to do so.

In particular, GAO has a statutory role in analyzing regulations under the Congressional Review Act.¹¹ In 2000, Congress passed a pilot program to authorize GAO to conduct independent regulatory analysis at Congress's request through the Truth in Regulating Act.¹² However, the pilot project was never funded, and the authority expired in 2004. As the size of the administrative state and the scope of federal regulations have only grown since then, Congress should reconsider how GAO can support congressional capacity for oversight of federal regulations.

Several scholars have recommended that Congress establish a Congressional Regulation Office within the legislative branch, modeled on the Congressional Budget Office.¹³ A Congressional Regulation Office could conduct cost-benefit analyses of agencies' proposed

¹⁰ Phillip Wallach and Kevin R. Kosar, "The Case for a Congressional Regulation Office," *National Affairs* (Fall 2016), <https://nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-case-for-a-congressional-regulation-office>.

¹¹ See "Congressional Review Act," U.S. Government Accountability Office, accessed April 11, 2024, <https://www.gao.gov/legal/other-legal-work/congressional-review-act>.

¹² Truth in Regulating Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-312; Comptroller General David M. Walker, Letter to the Honorable Tom Davis, June 7, 2006, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/b-302705.pdf>.

¹³ Wallach and Kosar, "The Case for a Congressional Regulation Office"; Susan E. Dudley, "Examining Practical Solutions to Improve the Federal Regulatory Office," statement for a roundtable discussion, U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, June 4, 2015, <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wncontent/uploads/imo/media/doc/DUDLEY%20Statement.pdf>.

significant rules and retrospectively assess the costs and benefits of existing rules. That being said, Congress and the Subcommittee could pursue similar reforms even in the absence of a full Congressional Regulation Office. Encouraging GAO to create a regulatory review mission team within GAO, modeled on the Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics team created several years ago, would help to strengthen congressional capacity and improve oversight of the regulatory state.

To summarize, the legislative branch funding bill for FY2025 should continue prioritizing resources for GAO to conduct oversight of the executive branch.

- Report language requiring the Comptroller General to set targeted completion dates for GAO recommendations and to identify and prevent improper payments and fraud could produce tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars in taxpayer savings over time.
- Requiring GAO's workforce to return to the office would likely improve GAO's performance; alternatively, selling now-unused office space would produce savings that could be better used elsewhere.
- Establishing a mission team within GAO to enhance congressional regulatory oversight capacity would help the legislative branch oversee federal regulations and administrative actions to ensure cost-effective regulations.

These actions would help Congress address the nation's fiscal challenges and leverage nonpartisan oversight to make the federal government work better for the American people.

Kel McClanahan, Executive Director
National Security Counselors
Testimony Before the House of Representatives
Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee
15 April 2024

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and members of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

The Government Accountability Office plays a critical role in Congressional oversight of the Executive Branch. Unfortunately, that role may be stymied when it comes to the Intelligence Community (“IC”). Despite the fact that, by statute, GAO already has the purview to conduct oversight of *all* federal agencies,¹ the IC has, with a few exceptions, insisted that it is not subject to such audits since its inception. **This effectively deprives Congress of one of the most effective tools in its arsenal, especially at a time when the activities of the IC present some of the most pressing needs for robust oversight in the Executive Branch.** I respectfully recommend that Congress take steps to conclusively validate GAO’s jurisdiction in such matters.

In response to the IC’s recalcitrance, some Members of Congress have periodically attempted to resolve the matter over the past few decades. For instance, then-Congressman Leon Panetta unsuccessfully introduced the CIA Accountability Act in 1987 to officially clarify GAO’s authority vis-à-vis CIA and the IC as a whole.² In 1988, in response to an attempted GAO investigation, the National Security Council requested an opinion from the DOJ Office of Legal Counsel which has been cited ever since:

We therefore conclude based on the nature of the GAO request that the subject of the GAO investigation is the Executive’s discharge of its constitutional foreign policy responsibilities, not its statutory responsibilities. The subject is thus not “a program or activity the Government carries out under existing law,” and it is beyond GAO’s authority under 31 U.S.C. § 717(b). . . .

¹ See 31 U.S.C. §§ 712, 717, 3523(a) (GAO has authority to investigate each “department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government.”).

² H.R. 3603, available at <https://fas.org/irp/eprint/panetta-1987.pdf>.

In addition to the infirmity in GAO's statutory authority to pursue this investigation, we believe that GAO is specifically precluded by statute from access to intelligence information. In establishing by law the oversight relationship between the intelligence committees and the executive branch, Congress indicated that such oversight would be the exclusive means for Congress to gain access to confidential intelligence information in the possession of the executive branch.³

Over two decades later, this fight was still underway. When an amendment to the FY2010 Intelligence Authorization Act ("IAA") sought to reaffirm GAO authority, it prompted a veto threat in the form of a letter from OMB Director Peter Orszag,⁴ which Acting Comptroller General Gene Dodaro thoroughly refuted, demonstrating that "[n]either the language of section 413 nor its legislative history provides support for this position" and that **the IC's resistance "has greatly impeded GAO's work for the intelligence committees and also jeopardizes some of GAO's work for other committees of jurisdiction, including Armed Services, Appropriations, Judiciary, and Foreign Relations, among others."**⁵

Despite Mr. Dodaro's testimony, the enacted law took a middle-of-the-road approach, stating that clarification was necessary but deferring to the Executive for that clarification, instructing the DNI to "issue a written directive governing the access of the Comptroller General to information in the possession of an element of the intelligence community."⁶ The DNI, for his part, issued ICD 114 the following year, which reluctantly admitted that GAO had *some* authority to investigate the IC, but adopted a severely restrictive interpretation of the scope of that authority:

Information that falls within the purview of the congressional intelligence oversight committees generally shall not be made available to GAO to support a GAO audit or review of core national intelligence capabilities and activities, which include

³ *Investigative Authority of the General Accounting Office*, 12 Op. Off. Legal Counsel 171 (1988).

⁴ Letter from Orszag to Feinstein of 3/15/10, available at <https://fas.org/irp/news/2010/03/omb031610.pdf>.

⁵ Letter from Dodaro to Feinstein of 3/18/10, available at <http://www.pogoarchives.org/m/co/dodaro-letter-to-intel-committees-20100318.pdf>. Mr. Dodaro concluded that reaffirming GAO's authority in this area "would prove beneficial both to the conduct of oversight by the intelligence committees and to the efficiency and effectiveness of IC operations."

⁶ 50 U.S.C. § 3308.

intelligence collection operations, intelligence analyses and analytical techniques, counterintelligence operations, and intelligence funding. IC elements may on a case-by-case basis provide information in response to any GAO requests not related to GAO audits or reviews of core national intelligence capabilities and activities.⁷

In other words, GAO can investigate anything involving the IC that the Intelligence

Committees cannot, which amounts to basically nothing. Moreover, this is not an academic

dispute: in response to a question about this matter from Congressman Yoder in 2018, Mr.

Dodaro explained that this remained an ongoing controversy, although the situation was

minimally better than it was before 2010:

Mr. YODER. Do you need additional support from Congress—

Mr. DODARO. Yes.

Mr. YODER [continuing]. Or direction to the intel agencies to make sure they are aware that this is an authority you have?

Mr. DODARO. Yes, that would be helpful.⁸

When Mr. Dodaro testified before this Subcommittee in 2019 regarding GAO's FY2020 budget, Chairman Ryan again asked him about this matter, and Mr. Dodaro again remarked that GAO needs "the cooperation of the Intelligence Community" because GAO "ha[s] more difficulties when the request comes from non-intelligence committees," concluding, **"I think we could do more, particularly in the management area, and in the investments that are made, in that area, whether there's good return on the investments in all cases."**⁹ And in his testimony before this Subcommittee in 2020, Mr. Dodaro testified, **"It's the same status as it was last year.** Congress could work with the Intelligence Committees to provide better direction to the intelligence agencies to cooperate with us."¹⁰

⁷ ICD 114(D)(4)(b), available at https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICD/ICD_114.pdf.

⁸ *Legislative Branch Appropriations for 2019: Part 2, Fiscal Year 2019 Legislative Branch Appropriations Requests, Hearings before the Subcomm. on the Legislative Branch of the House Comm. on Appropriations*, 115th Cong., 2d Sess. 310 (Apr. 25, 2018) (testimony of Comp. Gen. Gene Dodaro) (testifying that GAO has been able to investigate peripheral matters in the IC such as "a facilities area" and contract management in the last few years).

⁹ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3WU2uZMlyk>.

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaRnD62qun4>. Mr. Dodaro's testimony in 2023 reiterated the same point, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PQWaMSJG7Y>.

In fact, however, even the involvement of the Intelligence Committees is not sufficient to overcome the IC's reliance on ICD 114 to obstruct meaningful GAO access. In a meeting in 2019 with staffers from this Subcommittee and the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, a member of that Subcommittee's staff dismissed the need for reform, arguing that IC components do not refuse GAO requests for information if GAO was acting pursuant to an Intelligence Committee request. That presumption is unfortunately false. One need only consider the example of AR 13-5, the internal CIA regulation which implements ICD 114. This regulation directly addresses the question of how the Agency should respond to a GAO request for information when GAO is acting under the direction of an Intelligence Committee:

As a general rule, if GAO makes a request on behalf of or to obtain information responsive to a tasking by an intelligence oversight committee, the [Point of Contact ("POC")] will ensure that the CIA response to GAO does not contain information [about most intelligence activities]. The response to GAO shall indicate that information responsive to the tasking, but not authorized for release to GAO under the provisions of ICD 114, shall be made directly available to the requesting intelligence oversight committee. The POC shall prepare an additional response for the intelligence oversight committee that contains information responsive to the committee request, but not authorized for GAO access.¹¹

In other words, if GAO asks CIA for any information which would fall under the jurisdiction of an Intelligence Committee, CIA will simply refuse to cooperate, but if an Intelligence Committee tasks GAO to make the request, CIA will still refuse to provide the information to GAO, but instead will send the information directly to the relevant Intelligence Committee. In neither situation does GAO receive the requested information.¹²

GAO possesses significantly more resources and institutional expertise in certain kinds of Executive Branch investigations than even the most robust committee staff, and there is frankly

¹¹ CIA, *AR 13-5: Comptroller General Access to Information in the Possession of the CIA*, § (b)(3).

¹² In fact, the CIA is not even following the provision in its regulation that requires that the Office of the Inspector General be notified each time the CIA receives a request from GAO; in response to a FOIA request for such notices I filed in 2021, the CIA responded earlier this month saying that no responsive records existed.

no reason for this arbitrary restriction on its authority. Congress gave the Executive Branch a chance to establish reasonable limitations which balanced the Executive's legitimate interests with one of the most important functions of Congress—effective oversight. **Instead of crafting a reasonable policy, the DNI memorialized the IC's original hard-line position.**

I recommend this Subcommittee include language to remove any doubt concerning GAO's audit power over the IC by advancing a measure that restates Section 335 of the FY2010 IAA, as engrossed by the House of Representatives in February 2010.¹³

Not only would taking such a measure resolve a longstanding problem, but **it would be revenue neutral**, since it would not require GAO to take on any more responsibilities than it already has; it would only open the universe of matters it *may* investigate. When one considers the fact that the number of GAO employees with Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (“TS/SCI”) clearances is higher than the combined number of staffers employed by both Intelligence Committees, **it is clear that these artificial restrictions on GAO's authority are causing Congress to expend *more* financial and manpower resources to accomplish *less* oversight over a significant portion of the Executive Branch.** In a time of crisis, when agencies across the Government are spending vast amounts of time, money, and resources to address numerous national security concerns, it is more important than ever that GAO be able to investigate allegations of governmental waste, fraud, abuse, and violations of law wherever they may be found. **It is time for Congress to assert its prerogatives to protect its oversight capabilities over *all* agencies.**

¹³ Available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr2701eh/pdf/BILLS-111hr2701eh.pdf>.

Kel McClanahan Biography

Kel McClanahan is the Executive Director of National Security Counselors, a Washington-area non-profit public interest law firm which specializes in national security law and information and privacy law. He is an adjunct professor at the George Washington University Law School, where he teaches Law of Secrecy. He is a regular contributor to *Just Security* and *Lawfare* and has been featured in the *Washington Post*, the *Daily Beast*, and *Politico*.

He received his Master of Arts cum laude in Security Studies from the Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, his Juris Doctorate from the American University Washington College of Law, and his Master of Laws in National Security Law from the Georgetown University Law Center.

He belongs to the bars of New York, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Supreme Court, and several other federal courts.

Testimony Related to Strengthening Congressional Casework through requesting a GAO Study on Agency Responsiveness to Congressional Casework Requests, Expanding the CRS Directory of Casework Liaisons, and Initializing a CAO Study on the Potential Establishment of a House Casework Office.

Submitted by Anne Meeker of POPVOX Foundation for the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch Fiscal Year 2025

Dear Chair Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Anne Meeker, and I am a former House caseworker and Director of Constituent Services. Since leaving my previous position, I am proud to have been part of efforts at POPVOX Foundation to support Congressional modernization and operational innovation, including work to study and support Congressional casework and caseworkers as a critical part of Congress' ability to engage with constituents and carry out its Article One responsibilities of oversight.

I am honored to submit this testimony to emphasize my support for this subcommittee's work to strengthen Congress' ability to provide excellent constituent services to the American people, in particular three requests under the subcommittee's consideration:

- GAO Study on Agency Responsiveness to Congressional Casework Requests
- CRS.gov Expanded Directory of Casework Liaisons
- CAO Study on the Establishment of a House Casework Office

Casework is one of Congress' most underappreciated strengths. Contrary to public perception of Congress as hopelessly dysfunctional and partisan, casework is a universal activity shared by all Members of Congress that provides competent, effective service to constituents in need on a

nonpartisan basis. Casework is effective: end-of-year summaries of casework activities frequently show that casework efforts bring back millions of dollars in delayed and retroactive benefits to local economies and constituents in need. Beyond monetary benefits, casework is also a chance for Congress to demonstrate accountability that rebuilds the American people's trust in the first branch of government. Casework is inherently nonpartisan, and caseworkers from both sides of the aisle frequently collaborate to share information and hold agencies to account. Finally, Member statements from multiple hearings of committees with jurisdiction over public-facing agencies frequently show the value of learning from constituents through casework about problems in federal agencies. Casework is how Congress comes face to face with the human impact of policy decisions, and constituent stories surfaced through casework are often the fuel that moves the engines of legislation in the House.

In previous funding cycles, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch has taken concrete steps to strengthen casework and ensure that Members are able to fulfill this vital responsibility to constituents, in particular through supporting the House Chief Administrative Officer to develop casework-specific services and support. Additional work in this funding cycle can continue to create efficiencies for Member office casework teams by removing barriers to providing standout constituent services to the American people.

GAO Study on Agency Responsiveness to Congressional Casework Requests: a recent amicus curiae brief filed in the case *State Dept. v. Muñoz* by 35 Members of Congress notes that casework is a “core function” of Congress, and that casework effectiveness depends on Congress’ ability to obtain case-specific information from federal agencies.¹ However, Congress has never acted to set standards and guidelines for agencies in responding to constituent-related

¹ Greenfield et. al. “Brief for 35 Members of Congress as Amici Curiae,” US Supreme Court *State Department v. Muñoz* (April 2024). https://immigrantjustice.org/system/files/legal-resource-files/2024.03.28_-_congressional_amicus_brief.pdf

requests, leading to a patchwork of different practices, timelines, standards, and expectations: some agencies route inquiries through web forms that provide limited tracking (e.g., Consumer Financial Protection Bureau), others through DC-based Offices of Congressional/Legislative Affairs (e.g., most military branches), others through assigned Congressional liaisons at processing centers (e.g., Social Security, Veterans Benefits Administration), others through local leadership teams (e.g., regional Veterans Health Administration systems), others through customer service teams (e.g., Taxpayer Advocate Service), and more. Different agencies and programs — and even specific personnel within them — have vastly different standards for responsiveness, including both timeliness and quality of responses.

This complex and inconsistent landscape makes it harder for Members of Congress and their casework teams to be effective on behalf of constituents, and creates significant inefficiencies for casework teams in training and continuing education on a myriad of different agency practices. A GAO study on the current state of agency responsiveness to Congressional casework requests would provide Congress with a deeper understanding of the impact of this landscape on staff time and ability to serve constituents. It would also lay important groundwork for future efforts to develop minimum standards for agencies to respond that would create a more predictable and accountable relationship between casework teams and agency liaisons — and uphold Congress' Article One authority to conduct oversight over agency operations.

CRS.gov Expanded Directory of Agency Liaisons

A related problem for casework teams with the patchwork of agency liaison structures for casework is the challenge of finding the correct and most effective agency contact. Many offices have horror stories of sending agency inquiries in sensitive constituent cases by accident to

liaisons who left years ago. Sending to the wrong contact also poses challenges for agencies themselves: with many agency liaison offices overstretched responding to a record caseload, spending valuable time chasing down inquiries sent to the wrong place prevents liaison staff from responding efficiently to requests.

The Congressional Research Service provides an invaluable service to caseworkers in compiling its directory of agency liaisons; it is my understanding that this is one of CRS' most-utilized products. However, the current list is not complete for casework: it focuses only on the primary DC-based agency casework liaisons, which excludes the regional contacts, processing center contacts, and local contacts who are often the more appropriate recipients of casework-related inquiries. In the absence of a centrally created and maintained list, casework teams spend inordinate amounts of time soliciting, tracking, and managing contact lists themselves. New casework teams are especially disadvantaged by having to develop these expanded lists from scratch.

The expanded CRS directory was further included in Recommendation #150 by the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

CAO Study on the Establishment of a House Casework Office:

The House Chief Administrative Officer's team, especially the Coach Program, has done outstanding work to support caseworkers among other Congressional staff positions. Regular "fly-in" conferences for caseworkers create new opportunities for staff to meet and learn from each other, build relationships that can lead to better collaboration on holding agencies to account, and provide the professional development and mentorship that helps Congress retain talented caseworkers for the long term. Individualized coaching through the CAO also helps

casework teams navigate complex case-specific and agency-specific casework situations.

The consistently high demand for CAO coach support from caseworkers points to specific casework needs that may be properly addressed with a dedicated office within the CAO that can take on additional coordination responsibilities among other CAO teams and vendors and liaison roles between caseworkers and federal agencies. Potential duties of this office could complement existing resources while serving the unique and vital role of casework in Congress: for example, one potential role for this office could be serve as a central point of contact for agencies to distribute timely information to all caseworkers, including coordinating dates for agency caseworker trainings to allow offices to maximize the use of travel budgets to send caseworkers to DC. To this end, we support a CAO study that could evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of establishing a casework support office under the CAO.

In conclusion, the important work of the Subcommittee on the Legislative branch underscores the importance of modernizing Congressional operations to meet the evolving needs of constituents. Casework, in particular, stands out as a vital function of Congress, providing direct assistance to constituents and offering insights into the real-world impact of policy decisions. However, the current landscape of agency responsiveness and the challenges in accessing the appropriate contacts hinder the efficiency of casework teams. Addressing these issues through the initiatives outlined in this testimony can significantly improve the effectiveness of Congressional constituent services. These efforts not only enhance constituent satisfaction but also contribute to rebuilding trust in the Legislative branch. Therefore, I urge the Subcommittee to prioritize these initiatives in the fiscal year 2025 appropriations to support Congress' essential role in serving the public.

Testimony Concerning Disclosure of U.S. Capitol Police Inspector General Reports

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch

April 15, 2024

Debra Perlin, Policy Director, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

Gabriella Cantor, Senior Policy Associate, CREW

Dear Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of my organization, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW). CREW is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to transparency and accountability in government. We write to you today concerning the urgent need to enhance the transparency of the U.S. Capitol Police Inspector General by establishing a process for timely disclosure of Inspector General reports.

The United States Capitol Police (USCP) is charged with the critical task of ensuring the safety and security of the U.S. Capitol and those who work within it. On January 6, 2021, the vital importance of the USCP was brought into sharp focus as a violent mob attacked the Capitol in an effort to disrupt the democratic process. The assault on the Capitol also laid bare the vulnerabilities in the Capitol security system, highlighting the need for urgent reform.¹ With this

¹ US Gov't Accountability Off., GAO-22-105001, The Capitol Police Need Clearer Emergency Procedures and a Comprehensive Security Risk Assessment Process (2022), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/d22105001.pdf>.

in mind, effective oversight and robust transparency of the Capitol Police are essential to safeguarding members of Congress, their staff, and the infrastructure of our democracy.

The USCP Inspector General (IG) is tasked with providing independent oversight of the USCP, which it carries out mainly by conducting investigations and issuing reports. In recent appropriations cycles, the subcommittee has emphasized the need for these IG reports to be made public, provided they do not compromise law enforcement activities or national security. In the FY 2022 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill, the committee instructed “the Inspector General to institute procedures to make reports publicly available whenever practicable and to begin publishing reports on its website.”² The House report accompanying the FY 2023 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill, contained the following language:

USCP Office of the Inspector General Reports: The Committee is aware that the public does not have access to reports issued by the Capitol Police Office of Inspector General. While the Committee understands that these reports can be sensitive to law enforcement actions and Congressional security, the Committee is interested in what reports can be shared with the general public. The Committee believes that the Inspector General should try to make appropriate reports public if they do not compromise law enforcement activities, national security, or Congressional security and processes without redaction. The Committee instructs the Inspector General to institute procedures to make reports publicly available whenever practicable and to begin publishing reports on its website.³

² H.R. Rept. No. 117-80, at 26 (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/117th-congress/house-report/80/1>.

³ H.R. Rept. No. 117-389 at 25 (2022), <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/117th-congress/house-report/389/1>.

Despite the subcommittee's commendable efforts, the USCP IG has not sufficiently complied with directives to increase transparency. According to responses to questions for the record (QFR) accompanying a joint House and Senate hearing into the Capitol Police, the USCP IG has issued 650 reports since its inception.⁴ This number has likely grown since the July 2023 hearing as the USCP IG has issued new reports. As of April 15, 2024, only 16 of these reports have been made publicly available.⁵ Moreover, according to the same responses to those QFRs, the USCP IG has no timeline for the release of the remaining 600 plus reports.⁶

The subcommittee should include in its FY 2025 appropriations bill the below bill text to establish a process and timeline for the release of the IG reports. The proposed text instructs the USCP IG to clear the backlog of unreleased reports over the next 6 years by publishing at least 10 reports per month. Importantly, the bill also clarifies the process for making necessary redactions to the reports and instructs the USCP IG to adopt a presumption of disclosure.

Bill Text:

USCP Office of the Inspector General Report Disclosure.

Within 30 days of the issuance of this report, the USCP IG shall publish on its website a tabular chronological list of every final USCP IG report ever published and shall continue

⁴ S. Hrg. 118-62 at 877 (2023), <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CHRG-118jhr53099/CHRG-118jhr53099>.

⁵ United States Capitol Police, *OIG Reports* (April 15, 11:00 AM), <https://www.uscp.gov/oig-reports>.

⁶ S. Hrg. 118-62 (2023), <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CHRG-118jhr53099/CHRG-118jhr53099>.

to update that list in perpetuity contemporaneous with the issuance of each new final report. The table shall include the full title of the report, date issued, report number, and a link to the text of the report whenever possible.

The underlying USCP IG reports shall be available to any Member of Congress who serves on the Committee on House Administration or the House Appropriations Committee upon request to the USCP IG or the USCP Board.

Furthermore, upon the issuance of this report, the USCP IG shall publish the text of all newly issued reports on its website and on [oversight.gov](https://www.oversight.gov) no later than 14 calendar days after the final report is completed. A report is issued when any of these conditions are satisfied: the USCP IG determines that it is issued, it has been transmitted to the USCP/USCP Board, or it has been transmitted to a congressional office. The USCP/USCP Board may not edit or alter a USCP IG report in any way but may provide to the USCP IG within 10 calendar days a letter to accompany the report as an appendix.

Furthermore, upon the issuance of this report, starting with the most recent USCP IG reports, the USCP Inspector General is instructed to publish at least 10 USCP IG reports per month on its website and on [oversight.gov](https://www.oversight.gov) until the USCP has finished reviewing all 650 reports in its backlog. The USCP IG shall adopt a presumption of disclosure and publish as much of the text of the report as possible, only withholding information that is classified, constitutes a clear invasion of privacy that outweighs the public's interest in disclosure, or for which there is an articulable, specific harm to the security of the U.S.

Capitol and those who work there that outweighs the public's interest in disclosure. To the extent the USCP/USCP Board is informed of the release of these reports and conducts a review of the materials to make recommendations on what cannot be released, such reviews must be accomplished and provided to the USCP IG for evaluation within 10 calendar days of transmission of the report to the USCP/USCP Board. The USCP IG shall make the final determination for what information, if any, should be withheld.

We urge the subcommittee to include the above bill text in its FY 2025 report in order to bolster public trust, enhance oversight, and ensure the security of our Capitol, and in turn, our democracy.

Thank you for considering this testimony. We remain ready to provide any further information or assistance as needed.



**Written Testimony of John D. Rackey, Ph.D.
Senior Policy Analyst for Structural Democracy, Bipartisan Policy Center**

April 15, 2024

Chair Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the fiscal year 2025 (FY2025) legislative branch appropriations bill. My name is J.D. Rackey, and I am a Senior Policy Analyst for the Structural Democracy project at the Bipartisan Policy Center, a non-profit organization founded in 2007 by four former Senate majority leaders that combines the best ideas from both parties to promote health, security, and opportunity for all Americans. I have previously had the privilege of serving as an American Political Science Association Fellow and Professional Staff member with the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress during the 117th Congress. My background as a political scientist and experience as a staffer have taught me that Congress can best execute its Article I responsibilities when it adequately invests in its own capacity. With that in mind, I request that the House Modernization Initiatives Account (MIA) maintain level funding in FY2025 at \$10 million. Further, I recommend the inclusion of report language that would create reporting requirements for entities receiving funds from the account.

To have capacity means to have “the human and physical infrastructure needed to resolve public problems through legislating, budgeting, holding hearings, and conducting oversight.”¹ Investing in congressional capacity helps move Congress into the modern age and ensures that the institution can adequately meet the needs of an increasingly digital world. The complex nature of public policy problems means that Congress must have the appropriate tools and

¹ LaPira, Timothy M., Lee Drutman, and Kevin R. Kosar, eds. *Congress Overwhelmed: The Decline in Congressional Capacity and Prospects for Reform*. University of Chicago Press, 2020, page 1.



technology in place to intake, process, understand, and evaluate an enormous volume of information. Since its creation, the MIA has helped move the institution forward and put Congress in a better position to serve the American people by funding the development of tools that allow members and staff to work more effectively and efficiently.

Modernization Initiatives Account Success

As the subcommittee will recall, the MIA was created in FY2021 to help support the work of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. The MIA made possible numerous projects during the Select Committee's tenure, including the initial development of *Deconflict* by the House Digital Service² and the scoping of important updates to the lobbying disclosure portal maintained by the Office of the Clerk.

Under the leadership of Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-OK), the Committee on House Administration's Modernization Subcommittee has continued to use the MIA to implement recommendations and improve congressional capacity in the 118th Congress. This includes, but is not limited to, projects such as: the bulk purchasing of eDiscovery tools for committees, which allows for the better processing of oversight inquiry documents, ultimately making oversight efforts more substantive and policy oriented; the development and piloting of FlagTrack, a tool to make processing constituent flag requests more efficient; and a study on the current state of the legislative drafting ecosystem within the House, a first step toward improving drafting tools that facilitate greater collaboration between staff and the Office of the Legislative Counsel.

² Deconflict is a scheduling tool designed to assist committees reduce the number of member scheduling conflicts during hearings and markups. More information can be found here: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/house-digital-service_this-month-the-house-digital-service-at-activity-7052695348552593409-h16p?



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It is a credit to the work of this subcommittee and the Modernization Subcommittee that the administration of the MIA has been careful and deliberate. To date, the investments made possible by this account have been nothing but wins for the institution, all while maintaining the strictest level of fiscal responsibility and producing no known instances of waste or fraud—something that is often a rarity when it comes to federal spending.

The Need for Accountability

The members and staff of this subcommittee and the House Administration Committee have had relatively little turnover since the majority of the work funded by the MIA began. As such, they are aware of how the funds are being spent and the improvements that this spending has made for legislative branch operations. However, those currently working on modernization issues won't always be here, as turnover in the legislative branch is near an all-time high. Therefore, it is necessary to build an official record of what modernization funds are used for and the ongoing status of those projects.

One of the great privileges of my career has been to work with scores of individuals both inside and outside of this institution to make Congress work more effectively, efficiently, and transparently. Much of this work has been made possible by the expansive knowledge that these individuals have brought to the table; as people retire or choose new career paths, this institutional knowledge is at risk of being lost. By requiring recipients of modernization funds to provide status updates to this subcommittee and the House Administration Committee, we can ensure the long-term success of the MIA by creating the infrastructure needed for evidence-based oversight and accountability checks to ensure continued fiscal responsibility. Reporting



requirements will also contribute to the historical record of the current modernization effort so that future stewards of the institution are informed about the efforts we are currently engaged in.

The Beginning of Modernization—Not the End

The success of congressional modernization efforts since 2019 could not come at a more critical time and should be viewed as part of a process of continuous improvement. Recent achievements should be considered the beginning, not the culmination, of modernizing Congress.

The public has viewed Congress with skepticism and cynicism for most of its existence, as is the nature of legislative bodies in representative government. However, public opinion of Congress has recently dropped to considerable lows, coinciding with declining trust and confidence in government and institutions of all kinds. At the same time, we have experienced a nearly century-long trend of expansion of executive branch authority. The decline of legislative importance is troublesome for any representative government, but especially for a system of government premised on legislative primacy.³ Modernizing Congress is a step toward reversing these trends.

The upcoming Supreme Court decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* may have significant implications for the legislative branch. The case confronts longstanding debates about the degree of deference that should be accorded to the executive branch in carrying out statutes passed by Congress. As many scholars of Congress have written, a potential outcome of the case would require Congress to be much more prescriptive in its policymaking.⁴ However,

³ Cost, Jay. “How Congress Lost, Part I: The Defeated Congress.” *American Enterprise Institute*, February 5, 2024.

⁴ See, Kornberg, Maya and Martha Kinsella. “Whether the Supreme Court Rolls Back Agency Authority, Congress Needs More Expert Capabilities.” *Brennan Center*, May 30, 2023; Kosar, Kevin. “Congress should get ready for a post-Chevron America.” *The Hill*, April 9, 2024, among others.



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Congress currently lacks the necessary expertise and staff capacity to do so. Should this reality come to pass, the legislative branch will need to build on the modernization that has taken place since 2019. The Modernization Initiatives Account and the projects it has stood up are building blocks that will allow Congress to meet the moment.

Conclusion

Over the past five years, the modernization movement has made tremendous progress in making Congress more effective, efficient, and transparent on behalf of the American people. On a bipartisan basis, those inside and outside the institution have routinely praised House modernization efforts as a shining example of Congress functioning as it should—hearing from experts, debating and formulating policy solutions, and following through on implementation. This subcommittee’s continued investment in the implementation of modernization initiatives is part of what has led to such success. The House Modernization Initiatives Account should continue to be funded at a robust level so that the House can continue to execute on the promise of the Modernization Committee’s recommendations. BPC recognizes the fiscal constraints facing the federal government at a time of high deficits and rising debt, but stress that this request merely maintains existing funding levels for modernization initiatives rather than increasing spending from the current levels. This will help ensure taxpayer dollars are being spent responsibly and will help build a public record of the successes and advancements that the current modernization effort has brought to Congress, ultimately allowing it to better deliver for the American people.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

**Testimony of Daniel Schuman Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch, FY 2025, Concerning Agency Reports to Congress**

Dear Chair Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on improving Congress' management of reports submitted by agencies. This request concerns the operations of the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Library of Congress and would entail a \$350,000 appropriation. My name is Daniel Schuman and I am an advocate for improving Legislative Branch efficiency and effectiveness. Thank you for your work in FY24 and in prior Congresses to improve Legislative Branch effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency.

Congress routinely requires federal agencies to submit reports to Congress. These reports contain a wealth of knowledge essential to the legislative process. Over the years, agencies have submitted tens of thousands of reports. However, Congress did not have adequate systems to distribute and archive the reports, nor could it systematically identify all past-due submissions.

To address these issues, Congress enacted the *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act* (ACMRA) as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY23 (P.L. 117-263, §7241-7248). ACMRA requires the Government Publishing Office to maintain an online portal for many reports submitted to Congress as well as to generate "a list of all congressionally mandated reports" — reports due to Congress and its committees and subcommittees, with some exceptions. All reports published online are scrubbed for confidential and sensitive information.

GPO is working hard to publish these reports. In parallel, the Library of Congress publishes information on Congress.gov about executive communications to Congress, which include notices of when agency reports are submitted to Congress. The Library does not currently provide a hyperlink to the underlying reports themselves. Such a hyperlink would improve report findability. The Library indicated at a December 2023 meeting that it presently has no plans to generate a hyperlink. **I request the Library of Congress be directed to explore the feasibility and costs of generating hyperlinks to congressionally mandated reports.** It is my understanding that GPO will soon launch an API that would facilitate implementation. Accordingly, I request the inclusion of the following report language:

Congressionally Mandated Reports: As the Office of the Clerk of the House modernizes its LIMS platform and as the Government Publishing Office improves its Congressionally Mandated Reports portal, there should be a collaboration to provide more Executive Reports online, including on the Congress.gov platform. Within 180 days of the issuance of this report, the Library of Congress in collaboration with the Office of the Clerk and the Government Publishing Office shall submit to the House Appropriations Committee, the Committee on House Administration, and make available online a report that contains a plan for increasing online publication of Executive Reports that are findable on Congress.gov, including reports submitted by any officer or Department to Congress, its committees, and subcommittees.

In addition to improving the findability of agency reports, **I recommend Congress take steps to facilitate GPO verification of agency compliance with congressional direction to**

submit reports to Congress. This would entail the generation of a list of all reports the law requires to be submitted to Congress and a comparison of that list against actual submissions. Fortunately, there is an existing legal framework to build upon.

The first building block is House Rule II Clause 2(b), directing the House Clerk to generate a list of all reports any officer or Department is required to make to Congress. It states:

At the commencement of every regular session of Congress, the Clerk shall make and cause to be delivered to each Member, Delegate, and the Resident Commissioner a list of the reports that any officer or Department is required to make to Congress, citing the law or resolution in which the requirement may be contained and placing under the name of each officer the list of reports required to be made by such officer. (emphasis added)

The Clerk of the House interpreted Rule II to apply to reports required by law to be submitted to Congress *and not its committees and subcommittees*. It is our understanding this approach was taken because of resource scarcity. With additional resources and direction, the House Clerk is amenable to updating its list to include reports submitted to committees and subcommittees.

The second building block is the *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act*, which contemplates comparing a list of mandated reports against agency submissions. The legislation directed that a compilation of all congressionally mandated reports be created. It states:

(b) CONTENT AND FUNCTION.—The Director shall ensure that the reports online portal includes the following:

(5) In tabular form, a list of all congressionally mandated reports that can be searched, sorted, and downloaded by—

- (A) reports submitted within the required time;
- (B) reports submitted after the date on which such reports were required to be submitted; and
- (C) to the extent practicable, reports not submitted.

However, the final text of the *ACMRA* did not assign the task of generating a complete list of all congressionally mandated reports to any entity.

Not all agencies have complied with ACMRA's submission mandate, according to Government Publishing Office testimony before the House Legislative Branch Appropriations on April 10, 2024. At the hearing's close, the Subcommittee requested a list of missing reports. A compilation of all reports required by law would be helpful to identify missing reports. The report generated by the Clerk of the House of Representatives would serve this purpose *if* it is interpreted as applying to reports sent to committees and subcommittees.

Accordingly, **I request the Clerk be directed to interpret the House Rule II clause 2(b) requirement to publish a tabular list of the reports that any officer or Department is required to make to Congress as applying to all reports to Congress, including its committees and subcommittees**, which is its plain language meaning. In support of the increased workload for the Clerk, I recommend funding two Executive Communication Clerks in the amount of \$350,000. I request the following legislative language:

Furthermore, the Clerk is appropriated funding to hire two additional executive communications clerks for the purpose of expanding the list required under House Rule II clause 2(b) to include reports due to committees and subcommittee.

In addition, I request the following report language that connects the Clerk's report with GPO's implementation of ACMRA. This will facilitate identification of missing reports.

Congressionally Mandated Reports. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is tasked under House Rule II clause 2(b) to generate "a list of the reports that any officer or Department is required to make to Congress...." This list of reports is an invaluable oversight tool, but currently includes only reports due to Congress and not those due to its committees and subcommittees. In light of the recent enactment of the *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act* and the importance of a complete list of all reports required to be submitted by agencies to Congress, starting no later than the first session of the 119th Congress, the Clerk is directed to dedicate two additional Executive Communication Clerks to support generating a list of the reports that any officer or Department is required to make to Congress, which shall be understood as including reports due to Congress, its committees, and its subcommittees. Furthermore, that list shall be published online in its current format as well as in an electronic format capable of being used by the Government Publishing Office in support of its obligations under the *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act*.

Thank you again for working to improve the operations and transparency of Congress.

Testimony Related to the Establishment and Scope of the House Office of Talent Management, Formation of a Congressional Data Management Plan, and Creation of a Bicameral Memorandum of Understanding for the Co-Development of Legislative Branch Technology
Submitted by Aubrey Wilson and Taylor J. Swift of POPVOX Foundation for the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch Fiscal Year 2025

Dear Chair Amodei, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the House

Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Our names are Aubrey Wilson and Taylor J. Swift, and we are both former House staff who continue to support Congressional modernization and operational innovation through our work at POPVOX Foundation. Although our backgrounds are from opposing sides of the political aisle, we submit this testimony jointly to humbly emphasize our support and encouragement of the nonpartisan work this subcommittee champions to boost Congressional capacity and operations. In particular, we submit three requests under the subcommittee's consideration:

- Establishment and Scope of the House Office of Talent Management,
- Formation of Congressional Data Management Plan, and
- Creation of a Bicameral Memorandum of Understanding for Co-Development of Legislative Branch Technology

Establishment of the House Office of Talent Management

One of the most important resources Congress has is the dedicated staff that come from every state and territory to serve their country in the Legislative branch. Over the last several years, this subcommittee has helped to create a House

that is substantially more modern, efficient, and operationally effective through impactful human resources initiatives such as the Chief Administrative Office's (CAO) creation of the Coach Program, House HR Hub, and House Intern Resource Office. These investments boost Congressional staff effectiveness, which, in turn, increase Members' ability to serve their constituents. We support the proposed creation of a House Office of Talent Management (OTM) within the CAO as an important continuation and expansion of these efforts.

A new OTM should be empowered with sufficient resources and a mandate to keep pace with practices developed in the private sector for data-driven workforce management — including but not limited to analyzing data and trends related to employee recruitment, turnover, background, economic class, geographic origin, etc. This focus on data would build on the important work this subcommittee made possible in 2022 with the House HR Hub that now provides information on payroll ranges, professional development, and management best practices. Building on this momentum, the OTM can be crafted into the next tool to support the House's workforce continuity and operational health.

The subcommittee must ensure that the OTM's mission is centered on data collection and providing resources to address data-driven insights to improve staff capacity and workforce health within the House. This will require funding for full-time OTM personnel to ensure the expertise required for the office to carry out its mission and support all Member offices in recruiting and retaining a vibrant and

talented workforce. For example, as a central repository of workforce recruitment, pipeline, and data retention (building off of the data collection practices piloted by the prior Office of Diversity and Inclusion) the OTM can identify weak points throughout the seven stages of an employee's lifecycle (attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, development, offboarding, and exit), propose interventions, and provide data-informed progress analysis. As the House expands its data collection and analysis, it is essential that employees are aware of what personal data they contribute and how that data is used. Beyond what is publicly accessible (such as data within the Statements of Disbursements) employees should be allowed to opt-out of providing additional data.

Formation of a Congressional Data Management Plan

With the emergence of commercially available large language models (LLMs) and generative artificial intelligence, the House has acted proactively to establish user guidance and a staff working group, placing it among the world's leading legislatures in responding to this emerging technology.¹ All Legislative branch entities play an essential role in the life cycle of legislative data. However, a comprehensive data map wholistically examining the lifecycle of legislative data does not exist, nor does a comprehensive data management plan ensuring all entities manage data in a uniform, secure, and responsible approach.

¹ Harris, Marci, and Aubrey Wilson. "Representative Bodies in the AI Era: Insights for Legislatures." *POPVOX Foundation*. January 2024, <https://www.popvox.org/ai-vol1>

The ongoing need for the institution to better manage its data illustrates the importance that the House take swift action to develop and adopt an institution-wide data management plan (DMP), including the creation of a Legislative branch-wide data map. As such, the chief information officer, chief technology officer, or equivalent personnel in each entity within the House of Representatives and Senate, the Library of Congress, Government Publishing Office, Congressional Budget Office, and Government Accountability Office should be required to organize and participate in a working group to coordinate the creation of a DMP.

Creation of a Bicameral Memorandum of Understanding for Co-Development of Legislative Branch Technology

Standardizing Congressional data access takes two chambers to accomplish, as do many Congressional modernization goals. Over the last decade, both chambers have invested significant time and resources into the internal development of bespoke tools to modernize and streamline operations in response to both continuity challenges and Member demands.

Recent noteworthy examples of innovation and invention include the House Clerk's years-long development and launch of the Comparative Print Suite in October 2022, the Senate Sergeant at Arms's creation and continued refinement of the e-signature platform Quill in 2020, and both chambers' independent investment and development of next generation (but separate) lobbying disclosure portals. However, as these bespoke tools have been developed in one chamber or the other,

access and utilization of the technology for the other chamber has been a continual challenge, requiring negotiation to expand access or pursue customization.

Similar to efforts that should be undertaken to craft a Legislative branch DMP and data map, **the CAO, Clerk, and Senate Sergeant at Arms should develop a working group to explore the creation of a bicameral memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the two chambers to be able to work together on co-development of future bespoke tools** that aid Congressional capacity, continuity, and customer service to the American people.²

The attention of this subcommittee to the needs of the Congressional workforce, the investment in modern technology, and the institution's agility in responding to emerging technologies is worthy of recognition. The modernization progress made over recent years is creating a House that we are proud to have served in and continue to support. The creation of a data-empowered OTM, a House DMP, and an MOU to allow the utilization of technology across the chambers are echoes of a larger legacy this subcommittee is cementing. It is a legacy that will boost Congressional capacity and effectiveness for generations to come.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and stand ready to continue to support your work in the months ahead.

² We recommend the working group be formed within thirty days of the issuance of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Subcommittee bill report and shall provide bimonthly reports to Appropriators, the House Committee on Administration, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and to the public concerning the progress of the working group, including the creation of a pilot program.

Mr. VALADAO. Representative Kilmer, I appreciate the work and support you have provided to modernize Congress. Your work on the Select Committee on Modernization and more recently on the House Administration Committee's Modernization Subcommittee have driven the implementation of numerous recommendations that make the House and the Congress work more efficiently and effectively for our own benefit and that of our constituents.

And, then, for Representative Crockett, thank you for taking time to testify today. I look forward to hearing more about AbilityOne and how you believe Congress could benefit from procuring the flags that fly over the Capitol through this program.

I now recognize Ranking Member Wexton for her opening remarks.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Chairman Valadao.

As members of the committee already know, last year I was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy, or PSP. I describe it as "Parkinson's on steroids," and I don't recommend it. PSP makes it very difficult for me to speak, so I use an assistive app so that I can participate and you can understand me. I want to thank the chair for allowing me to do both today.

It is very important that the subcommittee hear the concerns of our fellow legislators and members of the public before we begin to work on marking up our fiscal year 2025 subcommittee bill.

Welcome back, Mr. Kilmer. I look forward to hearing your testimony and reading the other testimonies submitted by our fellow colleagues and members of the public who have shared with us their suggestions on the legislative-branch agencies within our bill and how to improve the operations of the Congress. We will do our best to incorporate them into our bill.

Mr. Kilmer has been a friend of this subcommittee for a long time and always comes with hope for a better tomorrow.

Mr. Kilmer, your contributions to modernizing our institution have been tremendous. Thank you and Mrs. Bice for your work on the Modernization Subcommittee and carrying the torch to ensure Congress has the tools necessary to serve our constituents effectively.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ms. Wexton.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

WITNESS

STATEMENT OF HON. DEREK KILMER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Mr. VALADAO. Representative Kilmer, your full testimony has been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Chairman Valadao, and thank you, Acting Ranking Member Wexton. I appreciate you both. I am sort of a Leg. Branch Subcommittee groupie, I suppose. But, Chairman, congratulations on your gavel and your new role leading this committee.

I am here to talk about modernizing Congress.

As you know, in the 116th and 117th Congresses, the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, also known as the “Fix Congress Committee,” was tasked with developing bipartisan recommendations designed to make Congress work better for the American people.

We looked at everything from congressional capacity to outdated technology to rising polarization to just figure out how to build a better institution that is more responsive to the needs of the American people.

In total, the Select Committee made 202 recommendations. At this point, about half have been partially or fully implemented. The House Administration Committee’s Modernization Subcommittee, where I serve as the ranking member alongside Chairwoman Stephanie Bice, has been tasked with driving implementation of the remaining open recommendations.

I am here to both thank you for your past and continued partnership on modernization issues and outline ways that the Leg. Branch Subcommittee can continue to help.

First, I want to call attention to the significant work of this subcommittee in driving the implementation of recommendations. In the fiscal year 2023 and 2024 Legislative Branch Appropriations bills, we were able to successfully advance over two dozen Select Committee recommendations.

That includes the establishment of the new Intern Resource Office that will officially open this summer to provide streamlined training to interns and intern coordinators alike. This one is especially meaningful to me, as—I won’t say how long ago—I was a congressional intern myself.

Past bills from this subcommittee also included language to ensure managers on Capitol Hill have access to supervisor training; funding and language to provide Members with a transition aid to help new Members hit the ground running at the start of their term; as well as language to create bipartisan staff collaboration spaces on campus where staff can now meet together to work on and negotiate policy.

Additionally, the Modernization Initiatives Account, somewhat frighteningly titled the “MIA,” was created in fiscal year 2021 to support the Select Committee’s work, and it has and will continue to fund the implementation of Select Committee recommendations.

So far, this funding has supported the introduction of new eDiscovery software for use in congressional oversight; a flag tracker portal to ease management of constituent flag orders; a tool to allow electronic voting in committees to save time and to reduce errors; the development of a legislative and support agency staff directory so offices don’t spend their limited MRA funds to get data Congress already owns; and the Deconflict tool, where committees can see when their members are slated to be somewhere else—or, in my case today, three other places all at the same time—to help improve scheduling and attendance at committee proceedings; and more.

Additional projects underway include completion of the lobbyist disclosure modernization project by the Clerk to make it easier to know who is lobbying Congress and on what; a tool to allow collaborative drafting of legislation between several Member offices,

the Senate, committee staff, and stakeholders; a tool to streamline and reduce errors when staff obtain and register bill cosponsors; a committee portal to serve as a one-stop shop for committee information; and a tool to allow Member offices to anonymize casework data to identify trends impacting constituents across different congressional districts that can inform subsequent congressional actions.

Simply put, the MIA, the Modernization Initiatives Account, helps fund Select Committee recommendations designed to solve problems and, over time, save this institution money by reducing turnover and allowing us to complete higher volumes of work better.

And I just want to urge you to continue funding this critical account. Through the Modernization Initiatives Account and a related report language request I will make to this subcommittee, I am hopeful we can fully implement additional open Select Committee recommendations in fiscal year 2025.

That includes recommendations for the Congressional Leadership Academy and Staff Academy to offer voluntary training to Members and staff to promote civility, collaboration, and leadership skills; for the House to start a formal mentorship program for matching more experienced staff with less experienced staff; the development of a tool to improve offices' management of constituent tour requests; getting our offices better industry-leading correspondence technology tools so we can respond to constituents in a more thorough and timely fashion; for the House to offer a voluntary seminar for new Members to build on new Member orientation and provide followup opportunities for new Members to ask questions and provide input after having served in Congress for several months; and, finally, for the House to have a public-facing, interactive platform for constituents to offer opinions and feedback on pending legislation.

I can't think of a better way to finish my final term in Congress than by bringing these recommendations home and, by extension, making this institution work better for all of our constituents and for all Americans.

I greatly appreciate your leadership, your partnership, and your consideration of these requests. I am happy to provide additional information as you review them. And thank you again for the opportunity to testify before your subcommittee today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kilmer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. REP. DEREK KILMER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Thank you, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today at Members' Day—and to you Mr. Chairman, congratulations on your gavel and new role leading the subcommittee.

As I am sure some of you may have guessed, I am here today to talk about modernizing Congress. In the 116th and 117th Congresses the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, also known as the "Fix Congress Committee", was tasked with developing bipartisan recommendations designed to make Congress more effective, efficient, and transparent. We looked at everything from Congressional capacity, to outdated technology, to rising polarization to figure out how to build a better institution that is more responsive to the needs of the American people. In total, the Select Committee made 202 recommendations. At this point, about half have been partially or fully implemented. The House Administration Commit-

tee's Modernization Subcommittee, where I serve as Ranking Member alongside Chair Stephanie Bice, has been tasked with driving implementation of the remaining open recommendations. I am here to both thank you for your past and continued partnership on modernization issues, and to outline ways the Legislative Branch Subcommittee can continue to help.

First, I want to call attention to the significant work of this subcommittee, in driving the implementation of recommendations. In the fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 Legislative Branch appropriations bills, we were able to successfully advance over two dozen Select Committee recommendations. This includes the establishment of the new Intern Resource Office that will officially open this summer, to provide streamlined training to interns and intern coordinators alike—this one is especially meaningful to me, as—I won't say how long ago—I was a former House intern myself. Past bills from this subcommittee also included language to ensure managers on Capitol Hill have access to supervisor training, funding and language to provide members with a transition aide to help new members hit the ground running at the start of their term; as well as language to create bipartisan staff collaboration spaces on campus, where staff can now meet together to work on and negotiate policy.

Additionally, the Modernization Initiatives Account (MIA) was created in fiscal year 2021 to support the Select Committee's work, and it has and will continue to fund implementation of Select Committee recommendations. So far, this funding has supported the introduction of new e-discovery software for use in congressional oversight, a flag tracker portal to ease management of constituent flag orders, a tool to allow electronic voting in committees to save time and reduce errors, the development of a legislative and support agency staff directory so offices don't spend their limited MRA funds to get data Congress already owns, and the "Deconflict" tool—where committees can see when their Members are slated to be somewhere else—or in my case today—three other places at once, to help improve scheduling and attendance at committee proceedings, and more. Additional projects underway, include completion of the lobbyist disclosure modernization project by the Clerk, to make it easier to know who is lobbying Congress and on what; a tool to allow collaborative drafting of legislation between several Member offices, the Senate, committee staff, and stakeholders; a tool to streamline and reduce errors when staff obtain and register bill cosponsors; a committee portal to serve as a one-stop shop for committee information; and a tool to allow Member offices to anonymize casework data to identify trends impacting constituents across different Congressional districts, that can inform subsequent Congressional action. Simply put, the Modernization Initiatives Account helps fund Select Committee recommendations designed to solve problems, and over time, save this institution money by reducing turnover and allowing us to complete higher volumes of work better. I urge you to continue funding this critical account.

Through the Modernization Initiatives Account and related report language requests I will make to this subcommittee, I am hopeful we can fully implement additional open Select Committee recommendations in FY 2025. This includes recommendations for the Congressional Leadership Academy and Congressional Staff Academy to offer voluntary training to members and staff to promote civility, collaboration, and leadership skills; for the House to start a formal mentorship program for matching more experienced staff with less experienced staff; the development of a tool to improve offices' management of constituent tour requests; getting our offices better industry-leading correspondence technology tools so we can respond to constituents in a more thorough and timely fashion; for the House to offer a voluntary seminar for new members to build on New Member Orientation and provide follow-up opportunity for new members to ask questions and provide input after having served in Congress for several months; and for the House to have a public-facing interactive platform for constituents to offer opinions and feedback on pending legislation.

I can't think of a better way to finish my final term in Congress than by bringing these recommendations home, and by extension, making this institution work better for my constituents and for all Americans. I greatly appreciate your leadership, partnership, and your consideration of these requests, and I am happy to provide additional information as you review them. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the subcommittee today.

Mr. VALADAO. While we are waiting on Ms. Crockett to appear, I guess I will just ask a question because she's not here yet, right?

As I mentioned in my opening statement, we appreciate the work you are doing and have already done to modernize the House. As

you look forward to your well-deserved retirement, your legacy remains.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. I want to congratulate you on that. I have enjoyed working with you over the years.

Mr. KILMER. Back at you.

Mr. VALADAO. Especially the text chain on the full Appropriations Committee. That is always fun.

As we continue to work, what priorities or recommendations do you have for us that you would say are the most important for us to really focus on?

Mr. KILMER. You know, I laid out a number of them.

I think, actually, implementation of the Staff and Member Academy really matters. Congress is the first place I have ever worked that, to the best of my knowledge, other than freshman orientation, has no professional development. And I think Members want to get better at their jobs. And I know our staff do as well. They want to actually work their way up and develop new skills. And the work that that Staff Academy and the Congressional Leadership Academy will do, I think, really matters.

There are other things that are currently being implemented that I think really matter. I mentioned the committee deconfliction tool. That will only be as successful as the degree to which committees actually use it. So that is something, you know, perhaps the Leg. Branch bill could—even though we have now funded the tool, if there are ways that we can encourage committees to actually participate in it.

The notion of this is, if you are a committee chair and you are looking to schedule a hearing, being able to look at, OK, you know, if I schedule it Wednesday at 10 o'clock, how many of my committee members have a conflict, versus if I schedule it at 11 o'clock or if I schedule it on Thursday, you know, with the hope that we can have a little less conflict in the schedule.

Ideally, Congress is a place where policymaking happens in committees, not in leadership offices. That only works if Members are able to show up at committees and we are actually able to have a discussion and dialogue. Right now, committees are largely a place, as I am demonstrating today, where you airdrop in for 5 minutes, read your speech, and then peace-out because you have to go to another committee. That is not best practice.

Mr. VALADAO. Well, and that is one of the things that I have always found frustrating. And I am just learning about this new tool to help schedule a little bit better. Can you elaborate a little bit more about it?

Mr. KILMER. Yeah. I mean, obviously, the—you know, I guess I just gave the context for how it works. Now, the problem is, that only works if committees are populating it when they put something on the schedule. And so that is one of the things I think we are hoping to do.

You asked about other areas. Chairwoman Bice and I have spent a fair amount of time talking about new Member orientation.

You know, both as you look at the culture of an institution and how people get better at their jobs—you know, one, when you and I came into Congress, you know, a lot of the orientation process

was an exercise in keeping Democrats and Republicans from talking to each other. One of the recommendations of the Modernization Committee was, let's try, insofar as is possible, to make that an entirely bipartisan experience.

But the other thing we learned through the work on the Modernization Committee is, best practice in terms of training up new employees is not to just pound them with information on the first week—or, not even the first week for us; it is before you even show up. You know, having a deep dive into the budget and appropriations process several months before you actually go through a budget and appropriations process is not actually super-helpful.

But if you could actually offer sort of just-in-time training to new Members and say, OK, now we are entering appropriations season, here is what you need to know, and offering that type of training, I think, would actually be very valuable. And it is one of the things that the Modernization Committee mentioned.

There are other things that I think would be worthy of funding through the—you know, the way this Leg. Branch committee has worked—and I commend you for it—is not to sort of micromanage, you know, we are going provide X amount for this project and X amount for Y, but rather to fund the Modernization Initiatives Account. And then the Modernization Committee and now the Modernization Subcommittee has worked, along with Leg. Branch Approps and the CAO, basically trying to prioritize projects and trying to get as much bang out of those limited dollars as possible. And I think it has worked really well. I think it is actually a really good approach, and I commend this subcommittee for taking that approach.

Mr. VALADAO. Well, I appreciate that.

Thank you again.

I am going to open it up and see if Ms. Wexton has any questions for you.

Mr. KILMER. I will say one other thing on the schedule, if that is all right, Chairman?

Mr. VALADAO. Yes.

Mr. KILMER. I don't know that it is going to be the purview of this committee—although everything is the purview of this committee. You know, I think there is going to be a push by the Fix Congress Caucus and by others: Focus on the schedule and calendar, probably in the fall, when we don't know which party is going to be in the majority, in an effort to express to the leadership of both parties that there is a better way to do the calendar.

We are not here enough. You know, I don't know the data for this year, but the last year of the Modernization Committee we were here 65 full days and 66 travel days. Ideally, we would be actually in D.C. more full days than travel days.

There is a way to build out the calendar where you are actually able to have more time in DC actually having full days where committees meet, more time in the district, and just less time with your flight attendant friends on your commute here. And I think that would be a smart thing for us to do, and I would love to invite your participation in that effort.

Mr. VALADAO. I would enjoy that. As a fellow west coaster who spends way too much time in the air, I can sympathize with that.

Ms. Wexton.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The chairman asked my question. But you will be glad to hear that Mrs. Bice brought up the same point about the schedule deconfliction tool—as she headed out to another committee. But changing the culture will take some time.

I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Kilmer, I know you have other committees to go to. You are more than welcome to stick around, but if you have things to do, I get it too.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Chairman.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

WITNESS

STATEMENT OF HON. JASMINE CROCKETT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. VALADAO. Ms. Crockett, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair and committee. And thanks for having this day. It is really important.

I am here to talk about something you don't see very often, in this Congress especially, and that is a bipartisan proposal. The letter that my office has provided the committee a copy of is led not only by myself but also by Representatives Molinaro, Mike Thompson, and Strong.

We are requesting the Legislative Branch Appropriations bill support the employment of Americans with disabilities by purchasing at least 25 percent of the flags the CAO procures in order to satisfy constituent flag requests from the AbilityOne program.

As a bit of background for those who don't know, when Congress passed the JWOD Act, it required the Federal Government—and that includes legislative entities—to procure products and services, whenever possible, from the AbilityOne program.

Now, why would they institute this requirement? Because, by procuring through the AbilityOne program, you certify that the product or service you are purchasing is provided by Americans with disabilities, including those living with blindness and a growing number of returning disabled veterans.

Thanks to these Federal dollars supporting employment for those with disabilities, tens of thousands of Americans are able to work at good-paying jobs. Through the AbilityOne program, we allow Americans with disabilities to achieve a level of financial independence that too often is out of reach.

Unfortunately, the number of Americans employed through AbilityOne has declined in recent years. While this has spurred a renewed commitment to the program in the executive branch, Congress has not only failed to increase our efforts to engage with AbilityOne but, in many cases, is in fact failing to make the basic required procurements under JWOD.

Each year, the Chief Administrative Officer purchases and flies over the Capitol over 100,000 flags, to be presented to our constituents. Currently, not a single flag is purchased through the AbilityOne program. This is despite the law being crystal-clear that

products on the procurement list should always be purchased unless they are demonstratively not fit for the purpose.

Right now, the AbilityOne Commission lists three vendors that, together, produce nearly a quarter of a million flags annually for other Federal entities. These flags are of such high quality that they are used to lay our fallen veterans to rest. If these flags are good enough for our veterans, they are certainly good enough to be presented to our constituents.

So, if these flags are fit for purpose, why isn't CAO purchasing them now? Because, despite being required to engage with AbilityOne under JWOD, legislative-branch entities are not subject to any enforcement or reporting mechanisms.

So, for now, we must ensure compliance one step at a time. If this procurement order goes as well as Representatives Molinaro, Mike Thompson, Strong, and I expect, we should continue to raise the percentage in future years.

And if you are interested in increasing legislative-branch procurement from the AbilityOne program more holistically, reach out to Congressman Molinaro and I. We are working with the Committee on House Administration on a larger fix that I would be happy to talk about.

But, for now, let's do the obvious thing, the thing that is required by law. Let's ensure, when our constituents purchase a flag that is flown over the Capitol, it is one made by a veteran who returned home after developing a disability in service to our country. Let's do the bipartisan thing. Let's procure at least 25 percent of our CAO flags from the AbilityOne program in fiscal year 2025.

With that, I thank the committee for its time, and I yield back.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Crockett follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JASMINE CROCKETT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member for having Members here to testify about our priorities. I am here to talk about something you don't see very often in this Congress, especially in this committee—a bipartisan proposal. The letter that my office has provided the committee a copy of is led not just by myself, but also by Representatives Molinaro, Mike Thompson, and Strong. We are requesting the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill support the employment of Americans with disabilities by purchasing at least 25 percent of the flags the CAO procures in order to satisfy constituent flag requests from the AbilityOne Program.

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This is despite the law being crystal clear that products on the Procurement List should always be purchased unless they are demonstrably not fit for purpose. Right

now, the AbilityOne Commission lists three Vendors that together produce nearly a quarter of a million flags annually for other Federal entities. These flags are of such high quality that they are used to lay our fallen veterans to rest. If these flags are good enough for our Veterans, they are certainly good enough to be presented to our constituents.

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Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ms. Crockett. Appreciate the time.

I am just going to yield myself a few minutes to ask a quick question.

And I just want to thank you for your efforts to support AbilityOne vendors and Americans with disabilities.

If the CAO were to begin purchasing flags from these vendors, are you aware of any savings or cost adjustments that would be passed on to our constituents from purchasing these flags through the websites?

Ms. CROCKETT. I am unaware as to whether or not—as far as the cost, I think that it is comparable to what we are already paying, so I don't think it will necessarily be less expensive. I don't have any information that would make me believe that it would be more expensive though.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Thank you.

I don't have a whole lot of questions. I don't know—Ms. Wexton, I think she is preparing a question, if you have a minute to hold on.

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. Thanks.

Ms. WEXTON. Do participants in AbilityOne risk losing their benefits due to the money they earn producing the flags?

Ms. CROCKETT. No, these are people that are already working for these companies. In fact, we know that there is, what, three—I believe that there are three specific AbilityOne companies, and one is in the chair's—anyway.

There may be one that you are very familiar with. We will get back to you on that, Mr. Chair.

But, long story short, these are people that are already in the workforce, and it is just a matter of making sure that those companies, these small businesses, are surviving and thriving. So they are already earning the earnings that they are already getting, but we are just trying to make sure that they still are staying employed and that these businesses continue to thrive.

It is not a matter of an individual that has a disability is now going to lose access to their benefits because now they, themselves, will experience a windfall of some sort. But, instead, it is a matter

of you have specific companies that have employed people with disabilities, and we want to make sure that those companies survive, those small businesses survive. And that is what this is about.

Ms. WEXTON. OK. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Well, if there are no further questions, I would like to thank Representatives Kilmer and Crockett for being here today.

And members may submit any additional questions for the record. This subcommittee stands adjourned. Thank you.