

Chairman Dave Camp
Committee on Ways and Means
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration Regarding the Ways and Means
Committee Budget for the First and Second Sessions of the 112th Congress
November 30, 2011

Chairman Lungren, Ranking Member Brady and Members of the Committee, I am here today to discuss the budget for the Committee on Ways and Means for the 112th Congress and am joined by our Ranking Member and my friend from Michigan, Sandy Levin.

Today, I will give you an update on how the five percent reduction for Legislative Year 2011 has impacted our budget and operations to date and what it will mean for the remainder of the year, as well as a preview of the 6.4 percent budget reduction slated for Legislative Year 2012.

Before I do so, I want to assure you that this budget, in accordance with the long tradition at Ways and Means, has been divided between the minority and majority – the majority controlling two-thirds and the minority having full control over one-third.

In March, I reported that the Ways and Means budget reflected our nation's current financial problems and that just as families were cutting back so would we. And, that is what we have done in the face of the five percent reduction in our budget.

Because staff salaries represent a substantial portion of the Committee's budget, we have met the challenge of the reduced funding in part by holding flat the number of staff allotted to the Committee and, in fact, have left some staff slots open. I am pleased to report, however, that our staff – both the majority and minority staff – have shouldered this responsibility and performed well for the Congress and the American people. In the majority we have used greater technological resources, especially mobile computing devices, to garner greater efficiencies.

Additionally, in order to ensure we met our budget cuts, we also have carefully limited Committee-funded travel. Given the Committee's broad jurisdiction, especially with regard to international trade, the ability of our members and staff to attend critical negotiating sessions across the country and world is imperative to our mission, so we have tried to balance the need for fiscal prudence with important policy considerations.

We are confident based on this year's activity that we have planned prudently for next year's reductions. The bottom line: we have managed to meet our responsibilities within our allotted budget and will continue to do so.

I thank the Chairman and the Members of this Committee for the opportunity to update you, and I look forward to any questions you have.

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