

Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration

Ralph M. Hall
Chairman, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
November 30, 2011

Good Morning. Thank you for having me here today. We have had a great year on the Committee conducting careful oversight and advancing good pieces of legislation that will keep our country competitive into the future. Our country is facing major economic challenges, and we are mindful that we need to be prudent with our spending.

You asked for a review of committee funding. Like all committees, we had to shoulder a 5% cut this year. We were able to prudently use the funds that we were provided and we put off buying some major equipment, thereby keeping within our budget. Our total budget for the 112th Congress is \$13.3 million divided into \$6.6 million for 2011 and \$6.6 million for 2012. For 2011, we are currently projecting a surplus of approximately \$860,800 as a result of careful budgeting.

As is always the case, personnel costs make up most of our budget. In 2011, almost 95% of our budget was allocated to personnel costs. In the Majority, we did not staff all of our slots right away. With the money that was budgeted and the surplus accumulated from the unallocated slots we were able to manage a surplus in salary of approximately \$846,500. As in years past, we have been diligent about making sure the Minority receives one-third of the total staff slots as well as control over one-third of the personnel/salary budget. The Minority had a surplus of approximately \$154,200, giving us a total surplus in salary of approximately \$1,000,700.

Our other main budget categories are travel, supplies, and equipment, and this is where we shouldered most of the 5% cut earlier this year. Since our budgets are tighter in these

categories, we anticipate using the surplus salary fund to purchase some items, including an upgraded server for our leave tracking system, as well as remote application access, both of which the House does not provide at this time. This will give increased longevity to existing systems and defer the costs in the future. With the purchase of the remote application access, this is the first step for the Committee to move towards virtual desktops.

In 2012, should a possible 6.4% cut be put into place, we would continue to meet the needs of the Committee and stay within our means. However, unlike this year, the bulk of a further reduction would need come from our salary budget (89% of the cut) because we have already pared down spending in our operational budget. In order to ease the reduction on salaries, we will reduce our travel budget by nearly 35% and our supplies budget by almost 20%. With these cuts, staff and Members would be further capped on the amount they could travel to see the projects and programs that our Committee oversees. With the reduction in supplies, we would need to make additional cuts to publications we hold. In anticipation of a further cut, we will make use of the surplus we have this year to purchase supplies such as paper and toner for use next year.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.