

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ADAM SMITH
RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

November 30, 2011

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Brady, and the distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify here today with my Chairman and friend, Buck McKeon, on continuing funding needs of the Committee on Armed Services.

We appear before you now at a time when the country is faced with difficult fiscal challenges. As you are all well aware, the recent failure of the joint select committee on the deficit to produce savings has imposed sequestration on the DOD which will be very difficult to execute. This drastic cut comes after the DOD had already taken \$489 billion in cuts from the Budget Control Act and while we continue to have troops deployed to the fight in Afghanistan. Our military's challenges have not diminished, but the outlook for future funding is grim. Given these challenges I believe it is imperative that the Armed Services committee continue its oversight of the DOD to ensure that our nation's defense is assured both physically and fiscally.

The committee maintains a bipartisan staff with fifteen of the total seventy-one slots allocated to the minority. When we last appeared before you in March, the committee had submitted a budget for the 112th Congress that reflected a five percent reduction from the 111th budget. This cut of nearly 800,000 dollars has been manifest in reduced staffing for both the majority and minority below the authorized level. My current staff of fourteen includes one administrative professional and one part-time

staffer I share with my personal office. The remaining twelve professional staff are required to oversee the complex 642 billion dollar defense budget and support the members on the committee.

I understand that there is a proposed 6.4% reduction in funding for 2012 above the reductions already applied to the 112th committee budget. This 482,000 dollar decrease will be difficult to absorb and I fear it will force yet another reduction in committee staff. Any further reduction to the current minority staffing would make it much more difficult to prepare the annual National Defense Authorization act and to conduct oversight of DOD programs. I understand and strongly support the need for fiscal responsibility but I believe that reducing committee staff will impair the Congress' ability to conduct oversight and will most certainly cost money in the long run. Clearly, we must find efficiencies and I am committed to working with the Chairman to find savings in the committee operating budget. But we must be careful to not blindly cut operations to the point where the committee fails to accomplish its mission of providing effective oversight for the Congress.

I am proud to serve on the Armed Services committee with my friend the Chairman as we execute our duty to provide for our men and women in uniform and for the defense of the nation. We are both committed to ensuring responsible defense spending that secures our nation. I hope your committee will carefully weigh any committee budget recommendations before you and support us as we continue that vital mission.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.