



Chairman Tom Graves

*Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
House Committee on Appropriations*

Full Committee Markup – FY 2017 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill May 17, 2016 Opening Statement As Prepared

The overarching goal of this bill is to ensure that we continue to preserve the beauty, enhance the security and improve the institutions of the United States Capitol complex. I'm glad to report that we've accomplished our mission, and we did it in a way that respects taxpayers. By making tough choices, this bill demonstrates the great work Congress can do even during a time of lean budgets.

The Committee will be proud to know that this bill continues to use a zero-based budgeting approach. That means each Legislative Branch agency was required to justify its budget request from scratch. This practice curbs wasteful spending and safeguards taxpayer dollars. Another part of our effort to respect taxpayers is the orderly shutdown of the Open World Leadership Center, which is an outdated, multimillion-dollar per year program. This has bipartisan support and I'll remind the Committee that the House approved the same measure last year.

Additionally, we continue the freeze on Member's pay. This was a simple decision for me: if our constituents aren't getting a raise in this economy, we shouldn't either. It's also worth noting that the Capitol Dome Restoration Project is on time and under budget. In fact, my office has had fun posting pictures every day on social media of the scaffolding coming down, using the hashtag "Free The Dome".

We also have a family-themed bill this year. We worked with members on both sides of the aisle to make certain that baby changing stations are available throughout the House office buildings and in the Capitol. Visiting the Capitol with a new baby can be difficult enough. Young mothers and fathers traveling with their children in tow should have necessary facilities available to them. Additionally, with so many mothers-to-be working for the House of Representatives through their pregnancies, the Committee wants to ensure these working moms have access to convenient parking. Finally, we've carried on the new tradition of sledding on Capitol Hill. Again this winter, children living in the area can sled on the West Front of the Capitol – something that, unfortunately, was banned until we changed it last year. Simply put, this bill makes the Capitol more inviting and accessible for young families.

I would like to thank the Ranking Member for her role throughout the process of writing this bill, and every member of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee for their hard work and valuable contributions. Together, we received and worked through more than 200 submissions.

I would also like to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle who worked on the bill this year. In particular, I am very appreciative of the work of Liz Dawson, Tim Monohan and Shalanda Young.

And of course, Jenny Panone, who really stepped up to the plate after we lost our good friend Chuck Turner.

As a longtime professional staff member on this subcommittee, Chuck has been missed this Appropriations season. The Appropriations family just isn't the same without him. I want to express my continued sympathies to his family, friends and those he worked so closely with for all those years.

I would also like to thank Jason Murphy in my personal office and Sarah Arkin from Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz's office.

Finally, I would like to note the important contributions that Congressman Sam Farr and Congressman Scott Rigell have both made to the Legislative Branch Subcommittee. Their hard work and dedication has been extremely valuable, and they will be missed.

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