

**Statement before the Committee on House Administration
Funding for the Committee on Energy and Commerce
114th Congress
Rep. Fred Upton, Chairman
February 11, 2015**

Thank you Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee. We know you have a tough task allocating scarce resources among the committees, and I thank you for the opportunity to prepare and defend a budget submission that will allow us to do our best work for our constituents and all of the American people.

Every committee has felt the pinch of budget cuts these last four years, and at the Energy and Commerce Committee, we made a point to tighten our belts with a smile in spite of the fiscal squeeze we felt. We detailed in our questionnaire some of the ways we have cut costs – some creative, and some downright painful. Fewer supplies and subscriptions; major reductions in printing and copying; severely restricted travel; delays in technology upgrades; and most notably, staff positions left unfilled.

Looking to the 114th Congress, Ranking Member Pallone and I worked closely together to develop a budget based on our large and important workload. We requested a very small increase for 2015 – \$150,000 or 1.6% above 2014 – based on the specific and pressing items on the docket, and we are prepared to hold that funding level flat in 2016. Of course I should put in a plug that we could do a lot more work with even a little more than our request, but we were deliberately modest because we know resources are limited. We would be glad to detail how additional resources would be wisely invested if they happen to become available. This morning, we would like to share with you the expected workload for the Energy and Commerce Committee in the 114th Congress to provide context for our request.

Health care will be a major priority for the committee, requiring a substantial investment of member and staff time and resources. Some of this work will be driven by programmatic expirations, which is a specific workload issue for us in 2015. Medicare physician payment will again be at the forefront as the SGR patch expires. We think it's long past time that we develop a permanent solution to this problem, and Frank's work with our side in the last Congress has created a foundation to help get that done. Now it's crunch time, and we're ready to finish the job. Likewise, the Children's Health Insurance Program will see its funding expire this year. This is a program that serves millions of children all across the country. We need to put in the time to keep this program on a sound footing for the future.

You are also probably aware that the Supreme Court will be ruling on a major element of the Affordable Care Act this spring, and the outcome of that decision could affect millions of Americans. No matter how you feel about this law, you have to agree that Congress needs to be prepared to address the issue.

Finally, some of you know that we're working on something called the 21st Century Cures initiative. It's ambitious. We're talking about structural and operational issues at the FDA, the NIH, and HHS. It's also critically important. Just ask anyone suffering from a disease without a cure. We have to get this right. And we have to do it quickly. Patients can't wait.

Other issues on our agenda in which we intend to invest member and staff time and resources include the following:

- Energy infrastructure and development. With increased energy production, we need to look at how to safely and efficiently build the infrastructure to bring energy to consumers. If you look at the price spikes in places like New England, it's clear we need to take action.
- Cyber security and consumer protection. Whether it's Sony, Home Depot, Target, or Anthem health care, we have all seen the high-profile breaches of consumer data. This is a major threat in an era when more of our lives and our economy are moving online.
- Chemical regulation. We started work in the last Congress to update the Toxic Substances Control Act, and we plan to pick up that effort this year. It's an important law. It was written in 1976. It's time we take another look.
- Communications law. Whether it's the debate over network neutrality or changes to how consumers access their television programming and the type of telephone service they use, there is a lot happening in communications, and it impacts everyone. Again, we have a modern world operating under laws written a generation ago.

And that's not all. Medicare and Medicaid reform. Yucca Mountain. FCC process. EPA regulations. Trade. (Yes, we have a big role to play in trade.) Auto safety. Mental health. Public health. Health technology. The Internet of Things. Modern manufacturing. Safe drinking water. I could go on, but I think you get the picture. We have a lot to do. And we're excited to tackle all of it.

There are areas where Frank and I agree, and there are areas where we will disagree. But in order to do our jobs well, both sides need the resources and staff to give these issues the attention they deserve.

Since our longtime Ranking Member Mr. Waxman departed, Frank needs to build back up his staff after departures and retirements. From the majority perspective, we need to fill vacancies that we left open last year when the House was not in session. On both sides, we need to build up expertise on some very complex issue areas that the committee is delving into for perhaps the first time in a long time. We also mentioned in our request restoring field hearings and site visits as a way to better inform our work. This is purely a question of resources.

I want to thank you for the questions and ideas you offered in the questionnaire that accompanied the funding request. We know the House Administration Committee has worked to relieve some of the financial burden on committees with enterprise solutions, House-wide subscriptions, and other creative approaches. It is exciting for us to see that you're exploring even more of those solutions, and I hope you'll consider us partners in that effort. Whether it's focus groups or beta testing, our staff want to help make these solutions work.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to develop and explain our budget request. It's not a task we take lightly, and we look forward to answering any questions you may have about the exciting work that lies ahead.