

Statement of Chairman Kevin Brady
Committee on Ways and Means
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
Regarding the Ways and Means Committee Budget for the 115th Congress
Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, I am here today to present our proposed budget for the Ways and Means Committee in the 115th Congress. I'm joined today by our Ranking Member, Congressman Neal. Thank you for having us.

I would like to start today by offering my congratulations to Chairman Harper on being selected to lead the Committee on House Administration. Your Committee serves an essential role in ensuring that the House functions in the efficient, accountable, and transparent manner that the American people deserve. Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, thank you both for your leadership in fulfilling that vital responsibility.

As the Committee considers our budget request, I ask that you please keep a few important things in mind. First, the vast jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee. Secondly, our ambitious agenda for the 115th Congress, which is focused on addressing several major challenges facing our nation. Finally, our strong track record of legislative accomplishment and efficient use of taxpayer resources.

In my opinion, the staff of the Ways and Means Committee are among the brightest and hardest working on Capitol Hill. They are tasked with handling an incredibly large workload at an incredibly fast pace. They do it day in and day out with remarkable effectiveness.

Our Committee's jurisdiction includes tax, international trade, health care, Social Security, Medicare, and welfare. We also have a constitutional responsibility to conduct oversight of the administration of our nation's tax laws. In total, our jurisdiction covers more than half of all mandatory spending, all revenues, and the debt limit.

The efforts of our Committee will be front and center during the 115th Congress as we work with the President and our Senate colleagues to advance a pro-growth agenda that helps Americans of all walks of life. It is essential that our Members and staff have the resources needed to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. This is especially true as it relates to two critical agenda items –pro-growth tax reform, and repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act.

These are historic opportunities, but they are also massive undertakings. We are committed to delivering the results Americans deserve on tax reform and health care. To do this, we are requesting resources for a handful of additional staff dedicated specifically to these historic efforts.

Along with our work on tax and health care, our Committee will be pursuing a pro-growth trade agenda that helps our businesses and workers compete and win around the world. Additionally, we will continue taking action on solutions to help more families permanently escape poverty.

Many of our agenda items for this year and next will build off the legislative progress and accomplishments of the 114th Congress, during which our Committee was highly productive.

Last Congress, we held a combined total of 69 full Committee and Subcommittee hearings. We held 8 organizational meetings and 22 markups. During those 22 markups, we passed and sent 92 bills to the House floor.

If the numbers alone are not enough to show the kind of record we have in the Ways and Means Committee, consider how historic some of these bills were.

The “PATH Act” provided American families and job creators with more than \$600 billion in permanent tax relief. It also brought an end to the chaotic, counterproductive, and retroactive tax extenders process.

The “Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act,” provided our nation with its strongest trade enforcement powers in modern history.

And, the “American Manufacturing and Competitiveness Act” provided critical tariff relief for our manufacturers so they can grow their businesses and create jobs.

These bills – which all passed with bipartisan support – were just 3 of 35 Ways and Means bills that became law during the 114th Congress.

Finally, it’s important to note that all of these legislative successes were achieved while using our Committee’s taxpayer-provided resources in the most efficient and effective way possible. One example is how we have continued to modernize the Committee printing process by making more of our publications available electronically but not in print. This has eliminated waste, reduced costs, and helped us make Committee publications as transparent and accessible to the public as possible.

As for the Committee Democrats’ budget, we propose to continue our tradition of allocating one third of the Committee’s budget and staff to the minority. These resources can be deployed as they see fit, with no interference from the majority. That has long been our practice on the Ways and Means Committee. We will continue it during the 115th Congress.

In closing, I again want to thank Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and all Members of the Committee for your time and consideration.

I look forward to answering your questions.