

Ranking Member Gregory W. Meeks
Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Funding for the 119th Congress
Tuesday February 11, 2025

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee on House Administration, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee with Chairman Mast in support of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs budget request for the 119th Congress.

In the 118th Congress, the Foreign Affairs Committee conducted unprecedented oversight and pushed an ambitious legislative agenda, including several pieces of legislation supporting America's ability to win the competition with China, addressing crises in Haiti and Sudan, the war in Gaza, and Putin's illegal invasion of Russia.

Chairman Mast has expressed through the Committee oversight plan and the budget request an intention to pursue a State Department Authorization Bill this Congress, which I know from my own experience as Chair in the 117th Congress, is a difficult and time-consuming task. It is, however, an important undertaking that will require significant staff resources.

Chairman Mast has also put forward an oversight agenda that includes seven subcommittees and has indicated he will establish a task force to review the arms sales process, and potentially others. This work will require new technology resources as well as additional mid-career and senior staff. I look forward to this work and believe an increased budget would enable the staffing and supporting resources required to maximize the quality and output of our efforts.

America's national security interests are squarely at the center of the Committee's jurisdiction at a time when global challenges will continue to require our most skilled staff and innovative thinking. We know wars are far easier to start and much more difficult to stop. It is the work of this Committee that helps do the latter, and whether it's the war in Ukraine or in Gaza, strategic competition with China, addressing newfound global challenges in the race for AI dominance and deepening our diplomatic engagement in our hemisphere and on the continent of Africa, this Committee will be on the forefront of addressing these challenges.

The minority in the 118th Congress, and by past practice, controls one third of the Committee budget. I appreciate that Chairman Mast intends to honor that practice and allow me the autonomy to use the minority budget to best meet the unique needs that come with being in the minority. Unfortunately, because of a smaller budget and staff allotments in the minority, my staff have taken on more responsibilities without the increased compensation that they deserve. They are highly skilled policy staff and lawyers with the technical skills required to meet the demands that come with the work of the committee—people with both regional expertise, but also with experience in the agencies this Committee oversees. This budget increase would allow me to compensate the staff for their work, hire additional staff to cover the additional issues outlined in the Committee oversight plan, and, importantly, retain talented employees.

The work of this Committee is consequential to our national security. If we are to leverage diplomacy to avoid conflict, counter global threats, expand our soft power, and increase America's competitiveness and global standing, there is no committee of greater importance than HFAC. Having the resources to do the important work the American people expect us to do requires a budget that can support the high expectations we have set.

