



Chairman Tom Graves

*Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Legislative Branch Subcommittee
FY17 Subcommittee Markup
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Opening Statement As Prepared**

As a result of the hard work of everyone in this room, I believe we've been able to craft a bill – in an open and transparent way – that every member of this subcommittee can be proud of. 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, in a way that respects taxpayers. I believe we've accomplished that goal. By making tough choices and prioritizing, this bill demonstrates the great work Congress can do even during times of lean budgets.

The recommendation for FY 2017 provides \$3.48 billion, excluding Senate items, which historically are left to the Senate to determine. This is \$152 million below the requested level. Details of the bill and report have been shared with the Members. I will provide a quick summary of the highlights and the recommendations before us today.

I'm pleased to say the bill continues to require a zero-based budgeting approach, in which each Legislative Branch agency was required to justify its budget request from scratch. This practice helps ensure taxpayers are respected – something I believe we accomplished in this legislation.

This year, we prioritized family-friendly provisions, aimed at ensuring Capitol Hill is friendly to young families. 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 the appropriate facilities available to them. Additionally, with so many mothers-to-be working for the House of Representatives through their pregnancies, the Committee has sought 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 before we changed it last year.

For the operation of the House of Representatives, this bill includes \$1.2 billion. This is equivalent to last year's enacted level and \$6.6 million below the request. The level of funding for Member's Representational Allowances will allow for current authorized levels as approved by the Committee on House Administration. Language is included to continue the freeze on Member's pay.

The bill includes \$391.3 million for the Capitol Police, which is \$18.3 million below the requested level. This funding level will ensure the Capitol Police are able to maintain their current operations levels.

While security needs justify increased funds, in order to ensure that those funds are spent responsibly, the Capitol Police are expected to provide an obligation plan before \$7 million of their increase is released. I am looking forward to reviewing the short-, medium- and long-term security needs they prioritize as part of our obligation to ensuring taxpayer funds are spent responsibly.

For the Congressional Budget Office, the bill provides \$46.5 million, which is the same as last year's enacted level and \$1.1 million below the request. These funds are meant in part to allow CBO to continue to provide Congress with budget and economic information that is objective, insightful and timely.

For the Architect of the Capitol, the bill provides \$560 million, excluding Senate items. The Subcommittee recognizes the continuing challenge of preserving and maintaining our infrastructure and prioritizing critical projects in the current fiscal climate.

Accordingly, the bill includes \$62 million for the restoration and renovation of the Cannon House Office Building. This authorization will also provide \$30.8 million for Phase II of the Rayburn House Office Building Garage Rehabilitation project. Additionally, \$10 million is included for the Revitalization Fund to finance major repairs and renovations to facilities of the House.

It's also worth noting that Capitol Dome Restoration Project is on time and under budget. And my office has had fun posting pictures every day on social media of the progress of the scaffolding coming off the dome, using the hashtag "Free The Dome".

For the Library of Congress, the bill provides \$629 million, \$24 million of which is to move the Library's Primary Computing Facility to an alternate facility. An increase for the Copyright Office is provided to support their ongoing modernization efforts. The bill directs the Office to modify their modernization plan in collaboration with the Library's Chief Information Officer.

Finally, given our current fiscal environment, this bill includes \$1 million for the costs associated with the orderly shutdown of the Open World Leadership Center.

In closing, I know how much work Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz has put in through the years on the Historic Buildings Trust Fund. From its creation under her chairmanship of this Subcommittee to continuing bipartisan efforts to ensure it serves the important needs it was created for, I appreciate her efforts to protect the national treasures entrusted to this committee.

Like her, I believe the fund is an important tool for ensuring that we have the funds available in the future to respond to unforeseen needs that may arise, and I look forward to working with her between now and our full committee markup to ensure that the trust fund is adequately funded.

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

I would also like to thank all the staff on both sides of the aisle who have 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 this Committee. Their hard work and dedication has been extremely valuable and will be dearly missed.

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