



UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Herrera Beutler, and Members of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am writing to express my support for increasing intern funds and raising the monthly pay cap for Congressional interns.

Every Member I know and every Committee room I have sat in share one common feature: we use interns to help us keep track of a thousand moving pieces within Congress and ensure that we are providing our constituents the resources and information they need. These undergrads, graduates, and recent graduates are determined to serve in their government, performing thankless work over long hours, often for little to no pay. It is remarkable that the U.S. government relies so heavily on low-pay or unpaid interns to keep itself running. Interns are the face of our office to many, and they consistently step up to tackle work that would otherwise slip through the cracks. Whether it be answering the phones, taking notes in hearings, or helping staff review legislation, interns play an integral role in keeping all of our offices running smoothly.

Last year, Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith and I led our annual appropriations letter to augment intern pay funds. I was pleased that your subcommittee adhered to our request and raised the annual appropriated funds in FY2023 to \$35,000 per office, up from \$25,000 in FY2022. That 40 percent increase demonstrated that the Appropriations Committee appreciates the tremendous role interns play here in Congress. This year, Chairman Smith and I are yet again asking for additional funds, this time at \$46,800 per office, which would be the equivalent of 1.5 interns per year, working full time for \$15 per hour. Our letter garnered over 100 cosigners and I sincerely hope that the committee will seek to yet again augment funds.

But whether or not this request is granted, another issue requires scrutiny from both the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee and the Committee on House Administration. While funds to pay interns increased, the monthly cap of what our offices are able to pay them, given such funds, didn't see accompanying changes. As a result, it is still impossible for any office to use these appropriated funds to properly compensate an intern working 40 hours per week at a minimum wage of \$15 per hour. The current monthly ceiling for intern compensation, \$1,800, impairs our ability to make good on our promise of fairer pay.

By breaking down barriers to entry for prospective interns, we can build out a more diverse set of future leaders more representative of our districts. Every aspirational policy maker in America

ought to have the opportunity to become a Congressional intern, regardless of his or her economic background. In its current state, our internship program caters to those who can afford to forego pay and still afford all the necessities the position requires: paying rent in an expensive city, affording business attire to wear to work, and putting food on the table. Those costs add up quickly.

I understand that this issue does not fall squarely in the jurisdiction of appropriators and thus my request extends to the Committee on House Administration. In particular, I believe the cap should be raised from \$1,800 per month per intern to \$5,000 per month per intern.

I am proud of the work each class of interns provides my office and my constituents, and I know you all are as well. I see these eager, bright minds tackling challenging problems every day, and they give me great hope as we look to give the reins of power to the next generation of leaders. Without interns, Congress would cease to function. For their sake and our own, I hope that we can find a way to properly compensate them for their work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Seth Moulton", with a horizontal line extending to the right.