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**Statement of Ranking Member Louise M. Slaughter Before
the Committee on House Administration Regarding the
Committee on Rules' 2013 Budget Request**

March 5, 2013

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman and Ranking Member Brady. I am pleased to join with my new Chairman, Pete Sessions, in presenting the Rules Committee's budget request for legislative year 2013.

I would like to begin by saying that, although Chairman Sessions and I have worked together for many years on the Rules Committee, this is our first appearance before you since he became Chairman. I would like to express my appreciation to him for the warm collegiality he has shown to me and to all of the Minority Members of the Rules Committee since he became Chairman.

Although ours can be one of the most contentious Committees in the House, we have a long tradition of working in a bi-partisan fashion when it comes to the efficient operation and administration of our Committee. I am grateful Chairman Sessions has chosen to continue that tradition – and especially that he plans to continue the policy of dedicating one third of the Committee's overall budget to the Minority.

I fully support our Chairman's request to the House Administration Committee. As the Chairman said, we take very seriously our responsibility to tighten our belts and reduce costs in every way we can. We have done our share over the last two years. In fact, the Rules Committee achieved a 12.4 percent cut in the authorized level over the 112th Congress. We were able to make that cut in the last round, and we continue to be ready to do our share.

But as the Chairman stated, the Rules Committee is a unique institution in the House. We are small; we have a lean budget; and we are very efficient. But the most important distinction is the fact that we do not control our own workflow or our schedule. Our agenda is set by the Leadership, and we must be able to act in a moment's notice. We have markups almost every single week – sometimes more than one.

We do not have the option of using many of the traditional tools for reducing Committee costs – we cannot postpone our meetings to save money; we cannot combine our hearings to reduce duplication. When the agenda of the House calls for action, the Rules Committee must be available, no matter the hour.

Furthermore, delays at the Rules Committee have significant multiplier effects on the cost of operating the House. When we take longer to do our job, the House must remain in session. That means all of the personnel – police officers, chamber security, clerks, official reporters, and recording studio personnel – must remain on-duty and will often be earning overtime. Even short delays can cost the House tens of thousands of dollars.

Finally, I appreciate my Chairman's point that, since our budget is small, proposed cuts will have the largest effect on the minority – where a smaller cut can have a larger relative impact. If we must absorb the higher level of cuts under consideration, the Minority will have to choose between essential administrative services and adequate staffing.

Madame Chairwoman, we are very proud of our Committee. We provide an essential, cost-efficient service to the House, and we have a long tradition of accomplishing that task with bi-partisan comity, no matter the intensity of our disagreement on the underlying policy issues.

Therefore, I support the chairman's request that the committee be funded at a level that will allow us to continue to provide that same kind of service to the House.