

**Statement before the Committee on House Administration
Funding for the Committee on Energy and Commerce
114th Congress
Rep. Frank Pallone, Ranking Member
February 11, 2015**

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed budget for the Committee on Energy and Commerce in the 114th Congress. I am pleased to join Committee Chairman, Fred Upton, as we both appear before you today. I would like to thank Chairman Upton for working with me and my staff in seeking our input in connection with preparing this proposed budget submission request.

The jurisdiction of the Energy and Commerce Committee is extremely broad. Our committee's jurisdiction covers consumer products and industrial sectors accounting for more than 45 percent of our country's gross domestic product. These sectors employ more than 60 percent of our work force. Our proposed budget, which requests a 1.6 percent increase in funding above 2014 levels, will greatly assist us in fulfilling our legislative, oversight and investigatory duties over these expansive areas.

Fred and I will be working together to control and reduce our costs wherever possible and as proactively as we can. As we look for ways to operate more efficiently, there are things we must never sacrifice: an insistence on doing high quality work backed by thorough due diligence, research and investigation; promoting a committee culture of accountability to and respect for the American taxpayer; and fairness for the minority in procedure and budgetary resources.

A glance at our budget proposal reveals that our committee's priority need, for the majority and minority respectively, is to find and retain capable, productive and experienced staff. More than 95 percent of our respective budgets are allocated to hire, pay and support our staffs. Our staffs are our key priority. Finding and retaining experienced, industrious and competent staff is how we are able to stretch our very limited budgeted expenses and still produce authoritative and high quality legislative, research and other written and spoken work products.

The proposed funding increase we request will also enable us to afford vital technical support and subscriptions that give our staff daily and breaking news, analyses of current affairs, policy, legal, economic, technology, technical and other informational resources to support our Committee's important work for the American public.

Despite our being currently in the minority, the Democrats on this committee will make and draw important findings and conclusions that will bear considerably on the output of the 114th Congress and on our committee. The Members in the minority, just as those who are in the majority, will want to share and present our valuable perspectives to our colleagues about policy and legislation. That is why it pleases me that our proposal continues a budget allocation split of 2/3 for the majority and 1/3 for the minority.

The proposed budget split will certainly not give us, in the minority the same opportunities and resources to put forward and communicate our views and arguments, as the majority. The allocation, however, affords us sufficient staff and resources to advance and advocate for the positions and interests of our constituents and communities. The track record for this arrangement shows it to have worked reasonably well. Though it is not equal, it is equitable and I am pleased that Chairman Upton has committed to retaining it throughout this Congress.

A tall order lies ahead of us in the 114th Congress. Health care will be a major priority for the committee. The Energy and Commerce Committee will oversee what is and what is not advancing health care and the wider development of safe, effective and affordable drugs and consumer products. I would especially point out that the *Children's Health Insurance Program* will see its funding expire this year. This is a program that makes it possible for millions of children all over our country to have access to quality and affordable health care. Finally, with respect to health care, our committee has been working on an initiative known as *21st Century Cures*. I concur with Chairman Upton and want to reiterate that *Cures* is an ambitious and critically important undertaking. It will be important for us to legislate and implement reforms that are sensible and responsible.

In addition, the committee will continue to work to ensure our growing national energy security and independence. As we do that, we must also address the variety of health and environmental challenges posed by global warming and climate change. In the 114th Congress, our committee will also be forging telecommunications, manufacturing and information technology policies and legislation. In furtherance of these legislative bills, we will search for bipartisan and other legislative, policy and programmatic vehicles to encourage innovation, employ and train more Americans for working opportunities, promote energy efficiency and environmental protection, and better protect our millions of consumers and motorists.

All of these matters that are on our committee's agenda and plan for action in the 114th Congress will require considerable staff and talent, administrative, technical, information and travel resources. We look ahead to working on and completing the job that is ahead. We are very grateful for the support that the House Administration Committee has shown to our committee.

Thank you.