

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**THE HONORABLE FRANK PALLONE, JR.
RANKING MEMBER
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE**

BEFORE

**THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION
February 15, 2017**

**Budget Request for the
House Committee on Energy and Commerce**

For the 115th Congress

**Written Testimony of the Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce**

115th Congress Budget Request

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today in support of the Committee on Energy and Commerce's budget request for the 115th Congress. I would like to thank Chairman Walden and his staff for working with me and my staff in assessing our collective capabilities as a committee, and to project out over the next two years what resources we will require to meet our future needs.

Much will be expected from the Energy and Commerce Committee in the 115th Congress. Coming out of the 2016 general elections and off the first 26 days of the Trump Administration, it isn't hard to foresee how extremely busy our committee will be if we are to engage and conclude on such a robust legislative and oversight agenda.

For starters, our majority has indicated that our Committee will be looked to as a primary actor in the debate surrounding the Affordable Care Act. The five percent funding increase is necessary to ensure that Americans will continue to have affordable healthcare coverage. To finish these complex tasks, it will take knowledgeable and skilled committee staff as well as new hires to work in various staff roles.

A funding increase will also greatly assist our Committee in reauthorizing vitally important FDA user fee programs, the indispensably important Children's Health Insurance Program, as well as to move on other important telecommunications,

technology, energy and environmental priorities and legislation that Chairman Walden alluded to in his testimony.

The modest funding increase that we request will greatly enhance our Committee's ability to retain critically important Committee staff. Many of our staff have considerable, specialized healthcare, telecommunications, technology, energy, environmental, antitrust, and oversight and investigations know-how and experience. As a result, some of them can command salaries that are double or triple what our Committee would be able to pay them. These attributes hold even greater value to private (and some public) sector firms and academic institutions when legislative action on national health care coverage and insurance matters appears to be so imminent as to make legislative inaction or incompetence unthinkable. It can therefore be expected, and thus needs to be planned for, that a good number of staff will be courted aggressively and potentially even recruited away from the Hill. And where that is not possible, the Committee will still need to have adequate budgetary resources to recruit new staff quickly to replace these individuals. Part of that contingency planning calls for us to submit this proposed request for an increase.

The total allocation for the Committee has been reduced by more than \$1.8 million from 2006 to 2016. And, as was the case in the last Congress, over 95 percent of our respective budgets are allocated to hire, pay, and support our staffs. All of the matters on our Committee's agenda and in its authorization and oversight plan will require considerable staff and talent, administrative, technical, information and travel resources. We sincerely appreciate what you have allocated to us in the past, and Chairman Walden and I will continue doing our utmost to exercise the fiscal discipline that is essential for us to make the most out of what we are allocated.

Again, I'd like to thank your Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. We are grateful for the support that the

House Administration Committee has shown to us and to our Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Brady.
With that, I yield back.