

Statement of Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith
Committee on House Administration
Science Committee Funding Hearing for the 115th Congress
2:15 pm on Thursday, February 16, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's budget for the 115th Congress.

All Americans know how to tighten their belts and do more with less. This is something that the Science Committee has done for many years.

In the last Congress we made very efficient use of our authorized funding levels. Only 0.4% of our funding for the last Congress went unspent once all obligations for 2016 were satisfied.

We have done more with less, streamlined our administrative processes and procedures, and cut many IT and administrative support costs.

The Committee was very active in the last Congress both in our oversight efforts and promoting legislation that advances America's interests in science, space, and technology.

The Committee held 100 hearings and approved 26 bills in the last Congress. Of those 26 bills, 22 received bipartisan support. In total, we passed 40 bills on the House Floor and had 22 bills signed into law.

The Committee worked all the way until the final hours of the last Congress. In fact, the last bill signed into law by the previous administration was the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act, signed into law on January 6 of this year. This law incorporates provisions from 11 House-passed Science Committee bills.

A number that may make our budget request look small is \$42 billion. That is the amount of federal government agency budgets that the Committee will reconsider, reprioritize and reauthorize in the next two years.

Times are changing and the competition for who will lead the world is heating up. The purpose of the Science Committee is to encourage the research and development that leads to new innovations and job creation. So the work of the Science Committee focuses on America's future.

The Science Committee's jurisdiction has expanded over the past 60 years to become very broad and diverse.

The Committee has jurisdiction over programs at the following federal agencies: NASA, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate, the U.S. Fire Administration, and the United States Geological Survey, among others.

To carry out this task will require an increase in staff on our legislative teams. In addition, the job opportunities opening up for majority staff in the new administration will require pay increases in order to retain the valuable, experienced Committee staff vital to drafting this legislation.

To perform effective and efficient oversight and develop legislative policy, we must ensure that staffs on both sides of the aisle are equipped with the technical expertise necessary to handle this diverse jurisdiction.

The Science Committee ensures that taxpayers and the American people receive a strong return on their investment.

Our request before you for \$11 million in the 115th Congress will allow the Committee to unlock new knowledge, increase productivity, raise Americans' standard of living, and create more jobs.

It will enable us to ensure that our agencies spend taxpayers' dollars efficiently, that our policies will open the door to new scientific breakthroughs, and that America will remain on the forefront of new technologies and discoveries.

Thank you for your time and I welcome any questions you may have.

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