

# **Opening Statement of the Honorable Maxine Waters**

**(CA-43)**

**Ranking Member, Committee on Financial Services**

**Committee on House Administration**

**February 16, 2017**

**10:15am**

Good afternoon, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady. I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss the budgetary needs of the Financial Services Committee. As Ranking Member of the Financial Services Committee, I believe that it's critical that the Committee receive an increase over its funding level for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The Minority receives one-third of the staff slots and total budget, with total control over both categories. At the beginning of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee sustained a 13 percent cut to its budget. We were able to weather the impact of that cut by limiting new hires and allowing for the natural attrition of staff. At the beginning of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee received a 1 percent increase in its funding.

While we appreciated the additional funds, a larger increase is needed given the mission of the Committee and the scope of issues that will be confronting it this Congress. Chairman Hensarling has made, what I believe to be, a very fair request for additional funding that will

put our Committee on par with other Committees of similar size and exclusivity. I fully support his request.

I must note that the Financial Services Committee is an exclusive committee. However, our funding is less than that of other exclusive Committees even though our issues are no less complicated and no less critical. In fact, I could argue that our issues are more complicated and touch the lives of all Americans.

Nevertheless, our Committee has been underfunded compared to Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce. We are also underfunded compared to and

Oversight and Government Reform and Transportation and Infrastructure, which are not exclusive committees. This simply isn't fair and I'm pleased to join with the Chairman to try to rectify this.

Our Committee is at the forefront of addressing the complicated derivatives market, critical consumer issues, monetary policy, banking rules and regulations, and the nation's housing policy. These are important issues.

My Chairman has indicated that, in addition to aggressive oversight over many laws and agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, he will also be moving

major legislation. Of note, he will soon be introducing legislation to replace the landmark Dodd-Frank Act with his Financial CHOICE Act.

While I disagree with the legislation that he is proposing, I agree that such a comprehensive rewriting of our nation's finance laws requires substantial resources in the form of experienced policy staff. We must also reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), whose authorization expires at the end of September. The Chairman has also expressed an interest in completely revamping the nation's housing finance system. All of these legislative endeavors are highly technical, extremely complicated and vitally important.

And they all require sufficient resources in order to best serve our respective Members, caucuses, and taxpayers.

Moreover, the Chairman has created a new Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance. This Subcommittee requires additional resources in order for Members on both sides of the aisle to be properly informed. The issues covered by this Subcommittee are highly complex and critical to our nation's fight against terror and require highly experienced staff with backgrounds in the Bank Secrecy Act and the PATRIOT Act.

We also require an expert researcher on staff so that we can delve deeply into the aforementioned issues and quickly provide Members with accurate facts and statistics.

At the beginning of the last Congress, our Committee rules were revised in order to grant our Chairman unilateral subpoena authority. The Majority has used this authority and has several ongoing investigations. I anticipate the continuation of these investigations and the initiation of new investigations by the Majority.

The House has also given our Committee the authority to conduct staff depositions. Given that it was the will of the House to give the Committee this new authority, it should be the will of the House to provide additional funding to help the Committee to properly use this authority. Again, the amount the Chairman has requested is a very fair increase but would result in a very significant positive impact on our Committee's operations, especially given the new powers that the Committee has been given.

The issues faced by the Financial Services Committee are highly complicated, technical, and can be, at times, controversial. The requested increase in funding



for the Committee will improve our ability to conduct the appropriate oversight of these issues and protect the American taxpayer.

I hope that you will give full consideration to our funding request.

Thank you.