

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2026

HEARINGS BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

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LORI GROVES ROWLEY and APRIL LYMAN

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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2026

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025.

CAPITOL COMPLEX PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

WITNESS

MR. J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF, UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. VALADAO. The subcommittee will come to order.

I would like to thank Ranking Member Espaillat and the ranking member of our full committee, Ms. DeLauro, for joining us today. I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to the new members of our subcommittee—Representative Nick LaLota, Representative Dale Strong, Representative Celeste Maloy, and our new vice chair, Representative Riley Moore, and Representative Steny Hoyer.

I look forward to working together in a bipartisan fashion as we begin the fiscal year 2026 process. The purpose of today's oversight hearing is to review the status of public safety and security of the Capitol complex, learn about recent breaches to the campus, and hear about the new actions that the United States Capitol Police chief of police and his leadership team are taking to address these lapses. I want to begin by welcoming Chief Manger and congratulating him on his upcoming retirement.

Thank you, Chief, for your years of leadership and service to the Capitol community. We appreciate your dedication and the work you have done to enhance the safety and security of each Member, our families and staff, and especially our constituents while visiting the Nation's Capitol. I also want to thank each and every officer in the United States Capitol Police. Each Member of Congress is keenly aware of your diligent efforts and that many of your heroic actions are never made public, but please know that you are seen and appreciated. We appreciate your recent successes in multiple back-to-back National Special Security Events, such as the 60th inaugural ceremonies and the most recent Presidential joint address. While we certainly appreciate and have come to expect these successes, we also recognize that continued success in your mission requires some change, some refocusing and retraining, and especially increased consistency and vigilance. We will learn in more detail from Chief Manger in his testimony over the past months the Capitol complex has experienced several security lapses in which members of the public and even staff members have entered our buildings with items that are prohibited but have gone undetected by our officers. These breaches are unacceptable and cannot be permitted to continue. That being said, we do not want the few human

errors to wipe out your record of success in keeping our community safe. Additionally, I want to note that the safety and security of the Capitol complex does not solely rest on the shoulders of our Capitol Police officers. As Members, staff, and visitors, we have an obligation to understand the safety protocols of the Capitol complex and to follow them. Recently, the House Sergeant at Arms shared a communication reminding all of us of our responsibility to cooperate with law enforcement by ensuring that we do not attempt to bring prohibited items onto the premises and follow other security practices.

We have copies of this document at the hearing today, and I encourage Members and their staff to reinforce these expectations with your colleagues as well as your constituents. It is when we all work together that we can have and ensure the greatest level of safety for us. Chief Manger, we appreciate your partnership as we have worked to ensure the Capitol campus remain secure and safe for Congress' essential legislative operations and for the millions of visitors who come to see democracy in action in the United States Capitol. I look forward to your testimony. I now yield to the ranking member, Mr. Espallat, for his opening remarks.

Mr. ESPALLAT. Thank you, Chairman Valadao. Thank you for your work and your desire to continue to work in a bipartisan manner.

I also want to thank our ranking member, Rosa DeLauro, for joining us today, and extend my gratitude to the officers of the Capitol Police for their service.

And of course, you, Chief. You have been tremendous. You have been someone that has never said no, always came when we asked you to come, always transparent with your answers, a leader among the men and women of the Capitol Police, someone that I acknowledge implemented 103 IG recommendations and 6 GAO recommendations, an achievement that reflects your commitment to the institution and the security of the campus.

Congratulations on your retirement. Well deserved.

And whereas my chairman acknowledged the work that you have done in the inaugural and other ceremonies, I also want to acknowledge perhaps the one moment where the men and women of your Department showed the leadership and the patriotism that we are all very proud of, and that was January 6, when you defended our lives, you defended the lives of visitors and staff working in our offices, but most importantly, irregardless of what party we are with, you defended all of us.

The other day I was walking through Longworth, just outside of the Ways and Means Committee, where Members of Congress, of the House of Representatives, huddled—both Republicans and Democrats, I might add. They were kept safe there. And I saw one of the aggressors there that was arrested and released having a major press conference. I felt appalled about that.

But I wanted to distinguish your service today. And I want to express also my disappointment that a plaque honoring the officers who protected us in the Capitol has not yet been installed. This is really inexcusable.

Today we are here to discuss Capitol safety. Chief, since 2022, we have increased your budget to enhance the safety of the Capitol complex.

Recent security breaches, particularly in building entrances, have been unacceptable. I am sure that both of us are working here to improve on that. We cannot allow weapons or ammunition to enter campus, and we cannot tolerate lapses in security protocols or everybody's life will be in danger—again, visitors, people that work for us and for the country, as well as Members. And the Capitol campus, although better secured under your leadership, still has many challenges. Security requires partnership, and I am confident that the chairman, Chairman Valadao, and I will work together to try to accomplish that security. Yet, when you requested fewer entry points for better control, pressure was put upon to reopen them.

Officers risk their lives daily, yet honoring their sacrifice remains something important. Millions were spent repairing damage from January 6, yet those responsible were pardoned and welcomed back.

And, unfortunately, due to the recent partisan CR, funding will be frozen for the next year.

Leadership is about accountability. This hearing, Ranking Member, should be a forum for solutions. Let's give the Department the support it needs to correct course and secure the people's House.

Chief, we look forward to hearing from you in the future and your plans. You are always welcome back here. Thank you so much for your service.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espallat.

And now I would like to recognize ranking member of the full committee, Ms. DeLauro for her opening remarks.

Ms. DELAURO. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Espallat. Thank you for holding this hearing. There are so many accolades that we can and will bestow upon you, Chief. For my purposes, you reassure, all of you, and you reassure my family, that I am safe here, and you take care of that. And you have made it your life's work here. And we are all grateful and we are indebted to you and to the Capitol Police.

Every single day you are there for us, and I can't tell you what that means. And we don't say thank you enough to people for their commitment, their courage. They leave their homes, their families, every day to come here and to protect all of us. And it is not unnoticed. It is not unnoticed. Please understand that. And we do thank you for your service.

Sometimes that phrase doesn't mean as much as we would like it to mean. But you know we wish you well in retirement, and we hope that you will continue to be an adviser to what our direction should be here. It is about the dedicated men and women of the Capitol Police protecting Members of Congress, protecting our staff, all the workers in this complex, as my colleague mentioned, official business visitors, millions of tourists who visit Washington, D.C., annually. You keep us safe within and around the Capitol grounds.

Keeping Capitol complex buildings secure and the people within them safe, it is a matter of national security, and thus a matter

of utmost consequence to the American people. The Department, to you, to the officers, to the support staff, thanks for protecting all the people and this complex from all sorts of threats. And you probably know so much more than we do about what those threats are, but you guys handle it and you women handle it every single day.

And you know Capitol safety and security is a bipartisan priority. I look forward to discussing how this subcommittee can ensure we are making the proper investment in the Department to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are wisely and efficiently used to fulfill the Capitol Police's mission. However, there have been a number of challenges and some serious breaches of our security that must be addressed. I applaud the Department for its actions in the wake of January 6, 2021, that breach of the Capitol. And like so many others, I was one of the Members that was evacuated and again protected by the Capitol Police. And thank you for implementing many of the recommendations made to prevent such an event from occurring in the future.

Meanwhile, though there have been lapses in complex security that give us all great concern, the tolerable number of firearms entering the complex that are carried by anyone, but those explicitly authorized to do, should be zero. Should be zero.

We need to understand in explicit detail, without divulging sensitive information, why that has not been the case and what the Department has done and will do—and what the Department needs from us—to ensure these security lapses are not just minimized but completely eliminated.

If there is daylight between what you believe needs to take place to keep the Capitol complex safe and what you and your Department are being asked and required to do, we need to illuminate that, and we need to understand the potential ramifications and consequences. Finally, I would like to know how working under a continuing resolution, rather than a full-year funding bill that addresses current and near-future needs and issues, affects your operations and the safety and the security of the Capitol complex. It is regrettable that this committee failed to finish its job, instead threw in the towel, in my view, on fiscal year 2025 funding bills.

We were—and I can say that with some knowledge—we were on the brink of a bipartisan agreement between the four corners of the Appropriations Committee when the House majority decided to upend the process and pursue a partisan bill that does not meet the needs of any department or agency across the government and that instead handed a blank check to Elon Musk and to President Trump.

I implore this committee, let us get back on track to work towards bipartisan consensus for this subcommittee's bill and the rest of the appropriations bills for 2026.

I thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ranking Member DeLauro.

Chief Manger, again, I apologize for the delay and keeping you waiting, but I appreciate you being here. Your full testimony has been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF J. THOMAS MANGER

Chief MANGER. Thank you.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, Ranking Member DeLauro, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the comprehensive steps the Department has taken in light of recent security incidents. Any security failure is of grave concern to both me and my officers. These failures will not be tolerated.

Each year our Department safely and effectively screens over 8 million staff and visitors who enter our office buildings, the libraries, the Capitol, and the CVC.

However, in light of the recent security incidents, the Department is implementing new measures to ensure security screening is as effective as possible, addressing human interactions, technology, and the careful use of artificial intelligence. The efforts that the Department is undertaking are being made to ensure that the security failings that we have experienced do not happen again. After the first security screening incident, all officers assigned to our Uniformed Services Bureau received mandatory training briefings related to security screening, to reinforce the importance of always complying with training and policy.

In addition, sergeants are now responsible for checking all of the posts under their supervision three times per shift and documenting these checks. This ensures that our officials are getting out to directly observe the officers performing their screening functions.

These same supervisors have already completed a post-by-post review of all of the screening sites to remove any potential distractions from each post.

We are also implementing a new security screening virtual audit via our USCP cameras. The goal of this program is to have officials randomly select a security screening post that would be monitored virtually during random times each day for a period of 1 week.

In addition, the Department has assigned a lieutenant as the security screening program manager, and this person is dedicated to ensuring the success of all of our security screening program initiatives. Starting this summer, all of our USB officers will have to take an updated security screening refresher training with an associated test. All USB officers will have to pass the test twice a year to maintain their certification to do security screening. The Department is also in the process of restructuring some of the USB post rotations to ensure that officers are moving around and not standing at the same machine for a long period of time, leading to complacency. And the Department has a team that is working on a best practices review of similar mission agencies, such as U.S. Secret Service, TSA, and the Federal Protective Service, so that we can benchmark our training, equipment, testing procedures, and other items as a baseline to identify any additional opportunities to improve. We anticipate the completion of that assessment by April 4.

In addition to all of these efforts, the Department is revamping its pre-screener officer training. This training is centered around detecting abnormal behaviors in people as they approach our screening points. This will be a mandatory 2-hour class, and that

began yesterday. The Department's Security Services Bureau is responsible for the security equipment and infrastructure. It is important to note that none of these screening failures that occurred this year were as a result of technology or equipment failures. They were human error. In each case, our technology correctly identified the prohibited item that was being brought through the screening process.

Starting in 2024, the Department installed artificial intelligence, or AI, software on all of our X-ray machines. This AI software assists officers with identifying prohibited items and weapons. This effort was completed in 2024 as a proactive measure to identify another way of assisting our officers who are visually looking at the X-ray machines.

We continue working with the AI software vendor to incorporate functionality that will provide a more dramatic visual alert and automatically stop the X-ray belt when a prohibited item is identified.

The development of an additional enhancement called "Image Projection" is also being planned. This will add a nonthreatening image onto the X-ray screen that officers will have to observe and acknowledge.

This will allow the Department to collect data on how many times these images are detected so that the Department can assess how well the officers are paying attention to the X-ray screens.

The Department anticipates completion and implementation of these enhancements to the AI technology in May of this year.

The Security Services Bureau is conducting an overall assessment on the use of all of our screening equipment, including enhanced screening portals at the CVC screening entrances.

At the end of the day, these security lapses were not an equipment failure, not a training failure or a policy failure. They were, in fact, the hardest kind of failure to address—the human failure. In this threat environment, we don't get to have a bad day or make a mistake at our screening. I can assure you that I believe the efforts that I have described will address both human and technological errors that can cause these failures in the first place.

With the continued support and the assistance of Congress we will continue to meet our mission.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

[The information follows:]



UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

J. Thomas Manger, Chief of Police



Chief J. Thomas Manger was appointed as the Chief of the United States Capitol Police in July 2021. Chief Manger has served 45 years in the policing profession, including more than two decades as chief of police for three of the largest police agencies in the National Capital Region. He was chief of police in Montgomery County, Maryland from 2004 to 2019 and previously served as the police chief in Fairfax County, Virginia from 1998 to 2004. His leadership in regional law enforcement initiatives is extensive.

After graduating from the University of Maryland, Manger began his law enforcement career in January 1977, when he was sworn in as a Fairfax County police officer. He rose through the ranks to become chief of police. He received numerous awards in Fairfax County, including the Silver Medal of Valor in 1993.

During his time as a police chief, Manger received several national awards, including the 2007 Law Enforcement Award from the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, the 2016 Gorowitz Institute Service Award from the Anti-Defamation League, the 2018 FBI National Executive Institute Associates Penrith Award, the 2019 Major Cities Chiefs Leadership Award, and the 2022 William H. Webster Profiles in Leadership Award for Federal Law Enforcement. Manger was also inducted into the Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame in 2012.

In 2018, Washingtonian magazine recognized Manger as one of the Washingtonians of the Year. He also serves on the Cardinal's Child Safety Advisory Board for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

Elected by his peers to national leadership positions, Manger served from 2014 to 2018 as President of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), and from 2013 to 2017 as Vice President of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).

Chief Manger and his wife, Jacqueline, have two children.

**Testimony of J. Thomas Manger,
Chief, U.S. Capitol Police
before the
Committee On Appropriations
of the
United States House of Representatives
March 25, 2025
HEARING:
*Capitol Complex Public Safety and Security***

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the comprehensive steps the Department has taken in the light of some recent security incidents. The security of the U.S. Capitol, the Capitol campus, Members of Congress and their staff and our visitors are the highest priority of the United States Capitol Police. Any security failure, even when it does not lead to anyone or anything being harmed, is of grave concern to both me and my officers. The recent incidents involving failures of security screening are particularly troubling to me given that performing security screening at our entrances is one the most essential features of our security plan for the buildings and the campus. These failures will not be tolerated and any officer found to have violated our Rules of Conduct during their duties will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

That said, it is important to remember that the vast majority of our officers do an outstanding job every day. Each year our Department safely and effectively screens over 8 million staff and visitors who wish to enter any of our buildings including the Capitol and the CVC. In addition, to the Department handles other security situations every year including demonstrations, and National Special Security Events, of which we have had four this year. Even with all these activities, the Capitol Campus is and remains one of the safest places in the United States, and our officers are to be commended for that.

In light of the recent security incidents, the Department is implementing new measures to ensure security screening is as effective as possible, employing both human interactions and technology and the careful use of artificial intelligence. The efforts that the Department is undertaking are being made to ensure that security failings that we have experienced this year do not happen again.

Training and Procedures

After the first security screening incident all officers assigned to our Uniformed Services Bureau (known as USB), the main section that conducts security screenings at the entrances, have had mandatory briefings related to security screening, and all officers have viewed the video of the CVC screening failure to reinforce the importance of and emphasis on always complying with training and policy, related to security screening. Additionally, our Training Services Bureau (known as TSB) completed on-site Security Screening Refresher Training for all officers assigned to USB. All of these measures were completed by February 7th.

Also, the Department began a new effort in February of this year. Sergeants from USB now have new Post Certification Sheets. Sergeants are now responsible for checking all the posts under their supervision three times per shift and documenting these checks on the certification sheet. This ensures that our officials are getting out from behind their desks to observe their officers performing their screening functions. These same officials completed their post-by-post review of all the screening sites to remove any potential distractions from each post. The Department has removed all distractions from posts.

It is our plan to implement a new Security Screening Virtual Audit via our USCP cameras. The goal of this program is to have officials randomly select a security screening post that would be monitored virtually during certain random times each day for one week. Officials will maintain

a log of what post and what officers were assigned for the selected audit. In the beginning, corrective actions will take place via counseling, documentation, and training but as time goes on, officers may be subject to discipline for security screening failures noted during the audit. We are currently in discussions with the Union regarding this quality control strategy.

To further enhance Department discipline, we are also implementing uniform line inspections to ensure officers have on the approved uniform and look sharp. The first round of uniform inspections took place the week of March 17th.

Finally, of our completed enhancements, the Department has assigned a lieutenant as the Security Screening Program Manager and they are dedicated to ensuring the success of our Security Screening Program initiatives.

The Department is also in the process of taking further steps to improve its security screening process. These are efforts we are moving forward on now. Starting in the summer, all our USB officers will have to take an updated Security Screening Refresher Training with an associated test that all officers will take every six months. All USB Officers will have to pass the test twice per year to be certified to do security screening.

The Department is in the process of restructuring some of our USB post rotations so that the maximum amount of time an officer is assigned to a post task between 30 to 45 minutes before they will rotate. This will ensure that officers are moving and not stagnant at the same machines for long periods of time leading to complacency. We expect to complete this effort by March 28th.

Additionally, an updated Security Screening Directive is in the final stages of approval and incorporates a new prohibited items list. Additional training on this new list will take place upon the final approval of this directive. We estimate approval of the directive by April 30th with the new training immediately to follow.

Lastly, the Department has a team that is working on a best practices review of similar mission agencies, such as the U.S. Secret Service, TSA and the Federal Protective Service, that conduct security screening so that we can benchmark our training, equipment, testing procedures and other items as a baseline to identify any additional opportunities to improve. We anticipate the completion of this assessment by April 4th.

In addition to all of the above efforts focused on the officers performing screening functions, the Department is revamping its pre-screener officer training. At most entrances to the buildings, the Department has an assigned Pre-Screener Officer who is outside of the building doing open visual surveillance of everyone who enters the buildings. Our Training Services Bureau has developed a new training program for our Pre-Screener Officers. This training is centered around detecting abnormal behaviors and will include challenge/validate items as well as an attempt to reduce complacency. This will be a mandatory 2-hour class that began yesterday.

Technology

The Department's Security Services Bureau (SSB) is responsible for security equipment and infrastructure. It is important to note that none of the screening failures that occurred this year were the result of technological failures but were from human error. In each case, our technology correctly identified the prohibited item that was being brought through the screening process.

Starting in 2024, the Department installed artificial intelligence or AI software on all our x-ray machines. The Department implemented this initiative as part of its comprehensive security strategy on the Capitol Complex. This AI software assists officers with identifying prohibited items and weapons. This effort was completed in 2024 as a proactive measure to identify another way of assisting the officers who, of course, are visually looking at the x-ray machines. This was installed and went live campus wide on August 20, 2024. However, it is still the officers' responsibility to properly identify and mitigate potential threats.

SSB is working with the AI software vendor to incorporate functionality that will provide a more dramatic visual alert and automatically stop the x-ray belt when a prohibited item is identified. The development of an additional enhancement called "Image Projection" is also being planned. This will add non-threatening images onto the x-ray screen that Officers will have to acknowledge. This will allow the Department to collect data on how many times these images are detected so that the Department can assess how well Officers are paying attention to the x-ray screens. This enhancement may be incorporated for use in future training initiatives. The Department anticipates completion and implementation of these enhancements to the AI technology by May 2025.

SSB is conducting an overall assessment on the use of all of our screening equipment including enhanced screening portals at the CVC screening entrances. This assessment will be incorporated into a larger review of additional technologies which could be adopted to further enhance the Department's security screening capabilities.

As you know, I have announced my resignation from the Department. It was a difficult decision to make but I am confident the Department will remain on a steady path upwards even after I am gone. Before concluding my testimony then, I wanted to briefly highlight some of the major changes the Department has undergone since that awful day in January of 2021. I highlight these improvements not because I am leaving but to demonstrate the work of the entire Department, all the sworn and civilian staff that have gotten us to where we are today, as well as to thank the Committee for all of its support.

Over the last four years we have:

- Coordinated one of the largest civil disturbance exercises, with 1,000 participants from 16 agencies;
- Started conducting dozens of active shooter drills on Capitol Grounds, virtual training simulators, and established a new agent training program;

- Implemented an aggressive recruitment and retention strategy to get ahead of attrition. We now have an additional 350 more officers than we had four years ago;
- Built a new Intelligence Bureau to properly collect, analyze, share, operationalize, and disseminate intelligence;
- Started a Protective Intelligence Operations Center – a command center focused on protective operations, as threat assessment cases continue to reach historic levels;
- Enhanced our civil disturbance capabilities, created a new Rapid Response Team, expanded the medical program, and made one of the biggest Bicycle Response Units in the country. All are highly trained & well equipped;
- Since the Congress gave the USCP Chief of Police the authority to request the National Guard without pre-approval, the Department has strengthened its partnership and coordination with the National Guard, and
- Established ironclad relationships with partner agencies to ensure trained and equipped civil disturbance support is already on site for major events.

The mission of the Capitol Police has been expanding and will continue to expand. While addressing the failings of the past is necessary and has been addressed, the job does not end there. The Department needs to evolve and think outside of the box to be prepared for future mission requirements. The Department is actively implementing initiatives that advance our operational mission through strategic workforce planning, investment in our workforce, and the modernization of our technology and tools. At the end of the day the security lapses were not an equipment failure, a training failure or a policy failure but of the hardest failure to address, the human failure. In this threat environment we do not get to have a bad day or a mistake at our screening. I can assure you that I believe these efforts will substantially reduce both human and technological errors that can cause these failures in the first place. With the continued support and assistance of Congress, we will meet our mission as we have worked to prevent a repeat of the past.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Chief Manger, for testifying before this committee today.

I will now call on members based on seniority of those present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between the majority and minority, and then we will call on members in order of their arrival. Each member will have 5 minutes.

I now recognize myself for my 5 minutes. Given the recent human errors that led to the breaches in security that you mentioned in your testimony, what is the level of confidence that such failures will not happen again in the future?

Chief MANGER. On the part of, I think, the Capitol Police, I think there is a fair amount of confidence that we are addressing these failures. Any time you look at—when we looked at the three different failures—and they were all different—we analyzed how did this occur. You look at through the lens of training, through policy, through equipment, and through supervision.

And as you look through you say: Where was the single point of failure? Where did it occur? And what can we do to eliminate that single point of failure?

So the training that we are doing, the technological enhancements that we are incorporating into the screening process, we are confident that this will eliminate those single points of failure.

Mr. VALADAO. As you noted both in your testimony and your response to my prior question, you have taken a number of actions both for immediate change and near-term actions to improve the focus of the frontline officers at screening locations to address complacency and lack of attention.

However, these issues seem to be systematic within the Department. In a November 2023 U.S. Capitol Police Office of Inspector General report titled “Top Management Challenges Facing the United States Capitol Police Fiscal Year 2024” it was noted that strong, integrated internal control systems are still needed.

Further, the report noted that the U.S. Capitol Police has historically tended to resolve individual issues rather than strengthening the underlying systemically weak controls causing the issues.

With this observation in mind, what supervisory controls are you implementing to ensure that security breach issues do not reappear in the next 2 or even 6 months?

Chief MANGER. So all of these actions that we have taken have either already occurred or will be in place in the next month or two. So we are not—this is not something that we are going to implement a year from now. I think what the Inspector General’s report talked about was looking at the issues more globally rather than, well, in this case, it was the officer was distracted; in this case, the officer was on their phone; or the officer missed this or that.

So we are trying to, again, look at how we can use equipment, the equipment to help us. When the artificial intelligence alerts on a prohibited item, it is still up to the officer—I mean, it is doing its job by alerting on that image. The officer still has to notice it.

Even when—if a prohibited item comes through and the belt on the X-ray machine stops, the officer still has to take—it still requires an officer to take some action. So we think that all of this is trying to assist in that sort of single point of failure where one

person could miss something and then you have a breach. Whether it is getting equipment where you have more than one set of eyes on a monitor or just having backups where the equipment is helping you, all of this, in our view, addresses the IG's recommendation that look at this as a bigger issue, not just, well, what was wrong in this case or that case.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. As you know, this committee has met the request for some of the newer security technology with X-rays and magnetometers. Is there anything else out there that can improve screening efforts? We have seen that not all the enhanced screening portals are in use.

Chief MANGER. Yes, there is always improving technology, and I think that long-term, I think that that is something that we need to take a serious look at. But we also—one of the problems we have is that many of the screening locations throughout the campus are not ideal. They are too small really for doing an adequate screening.

When you look at the way things are laid out in the CVC, that is as close to ideal as we can get. You have enough room and you are able to place officers in the positions where they need to be. You don't have people congregating at an elevator that are mingling nonscreened people with screened people.

There are a lot of locations that it is not ideal. So even if we had better equipment, the equipment is either too heavy or too big or it just won't work.

So long term, I think we do need to look at all of the screening locations and see how we can improve them so that they are laid out better for a better result.

Mr. VALADAO. Well, thank you.

My time is expired, and I now recognize Ranking Member Espallat for his questions.

Mr. ESPALLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chief, as you mentioned in the statement, the recent security breaches, particularly at building entrances, have been unacceptable.

During your testimony you discussed the use of artificial intelligence to ensure security screening is as effective as possible. As you may know, I support the use of advanced technology, particularly artificial intelligence, to secure the campus. And so it is somewhat mind-boggling that as we move forward with artificial intelligence and other technologies, that we cannot really adopt them and be more secure. Can you update us on how advanced threat detection over open areas can help further secure our campus in this season of increased threats from lone actors?

And if there is anything that you can shed on the artificial intelligence component, we appreciate it.

Chief MANGER. So as I mentioned, we installed the artificial intelligence in our X-ray machines last year.

That artificial intelligence, there are advances every single day. In fact, yesterday I met with the vendor who provides us with the artificial intelligence, and he talked about the testing that they are doing and the improvements that we will, in fact, incorporate into our—make sure that we incorporate them into our machines. There is also the ability to use artificial intelligence in other venues

where not just at screening places, but if you have demonstrations or you have some sort of crowd that is creating some sort of disruption, that there is technology that we should explore that would allow us to have some idea whether the folks in that crowd have a prohibited item or a weapon on them. So all this is technology, I think, that we need to continue to explore, and my hope is that we could get the support of this committee—and, frankly, of Congress—using some of this technology. I know that there has been some hesitancy. For instance, one of the things I would love to see us get to is that as someone puts their bag on the X-ray machine, that there is a photo of the person that put the bag on the machine and a photo of the bag so you can link the two.

Right now we have people—you have got people in line, people are throwing their stuff on the bag. Half the time you don't know whose bag belongs to who. And things like that, that we can, I think, be more precise and use the advancements in artificial intelligence to help us.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And I am sure the chairman remembers that one of my pet peeves is the fact that the cars are swept in the entrance to the Capitol, but, yes, as the guards are sweeping the cars, you have dozens of people, runners and cyclists with backpacks, going right in unimpeded.

And so I am hopeful that this artificial intelligence model that we are looking to implement could have like a full body scan of these folks, and the campus itself will be better protected so that we are not wide open, if you may.

Chief MANGER. It is just a matter of having enough room to put that kind of technology at our screening locations.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Thank you, Chief, again for your service.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espailat.

Mr. LaLota, you are recognized for your 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you, Chairman.

Chief, thanks so much for being with us.

Congratulations on your 45 years of service and your pending retirement. And we appreciate what you do for us here at the Capitol and all your leadership over the years.

I want to get into some numbers, Chief. Data provided to my office shows there are just under 2,200 sworn officers in the Capitol Police. Does that sound about right?

Chief MANGER. That is correct, yes.

Mr. LALOTA. And of those 2,200 sworn officers, approximately 1,600 are rank-and-file police officers? Does that sound about right?

Chief MANGER. That is correct.

Mr. LALOTA. And of the 2,200 sworn officers, approximately 210 are either sergeants or lieutenants. Is that about right?

Chief MANGER. I think that number is about right, yes.

Mr. LALOTA. I think I have it at about 160 and 50 with respect to sergeants and lieutenants.

Chief, can you describe some of the interactions between the sergeants and lieutenants and the police officers they supervise, what leadership they demonstrate, just generally speaking, the roles and

responsibilities of the sergeants and lieutenants as they interact with the POs?

Chief MANGER. So, first of all, sergeants, I think, are probably the best barometer of a culture of an organization. You look at the first-line supervisors, you can tell a lot about an organization.

And sergeants and lieutenants have both operational and administrative responsibilities. They are responsible for scheduling and time sheets and all those kinds of things that will keep them in the office busy with paperwork. But they are also responsible for the day-to-day operations of the officers under their supervision.

And so what we expect is for those supervisors—and what we have—certainly one of the things we have put into place after these breaches, is the officers—the officials have to get out of the office and spend more time at the screening locations, making sure that the process and the officers are doing exactly what they are supposed to do. Too often you find first-line supervisors get caught up in all the paperwork and are not out doing as much supervision out in the field as they should. But they have the responsibility of both.

Mr. LALOTA. I wasn't a cop, but I was a military officer for a little while. My dad and both my grandfathers were cops. So I have an appreciation for that first-line supervisor concept.

Can you describe a little more in detail about, with specificity, how often do the sergeants go visit the watch stations, what are they looking for, what standards are they looking to uphold and enforce at the specific watch stations throughout the Capitol, Chief?

Chief MANGER. So right now in the Uniformed Services Division—and this is where all the uniformed officers, which include all of the screening points, they have been directed to—they have a certification sheet that they have got to fill out three times a day at every post where they have folks under their supervision working. So we have mandated that this happen frequently.

Do I think it was occurring like that before? No, I don't. This is forcing them to come out.

So at least three times a day, they are out supervising each post and documenting what they find.

Mr. LALOTA. Great.

And you said in your testimony earlier—and I appreciate you being very forthright with us on these breaches—you said in your testimony they were not a result of technology or process but they were more human error related.

And you also mentioned these breaches could likely have been prevented if established protocols had been properly followed.

How can you describe the job—you have 45 years of law enforcement experience—how can you describe some of the standards and culture that you have experienced in other jobs before you got here to the one that is here? And are there any other differences between the two? And could any of those differences be improved upon, Chief?

Chief MANGER. So I think one of the issues that we are dealing with here is human nature. In the previous jobs that I had in previous departments there was not the repetitive sort of assignment that we have here, especially if you are assigned to a screening post.

So we have got to ensure that we take into consideration the fact that the human attention span is different for different people.

But every single one of us has an attention span. And as you fatigue, as you are involved in repetitive behavior, you start to lose a little bit of focus. So one of the things we looked at was how long are we going to keep people at a particular post, sitting on an X-ray machine. So we are going to make sure that that time is reduced to a point that nobody is there for hours on end, which I don't know that any of us would be able to retain the focus that we would want. So I am not sure if that answers your question, but—

Mr. LALOTA. It does. And with the 15 seconds or so that I have remaining, attention span is something that is important to us. Members of Congress too, you are in a unique position where Members of Congress review your Department's interactions.

With 5 or 10 seconds, what should we be focused on with our attention?

You are not going to be here in a few months. Somebody else is going to fill your shoes. What guidance would you give us as you depart as to how to properly be the frontline supervisors for the brass of the Capitol PD?

Chief MANGER. I think that just to listen and consider not only just the IG's recommendations and what some of the oversight folks will tell you. But the officials, the rank-and-file, the leadership of this department have one focus and one mission.

And one of the things that when I got here, I never in a million years would have recognized or believed about the dedication and the quality of leadership that we have all through the ranks, from you got patrol officers—and you know this probably from your family—you have got people that may not have the rank on their sleeves, but they are leaders in this Department.

And you have got them at every rank in this Department. And never question the dedication that these men and women have to making sure this is a safe campus and that every one of you remain safe. But we all still recruit from the human race, and so we have to continue to try and make sure, through training and accountability and everything else we can use, to make sure that we are giving these folks every opportunity to succeed.

Mr. LALOTA. Thanks for your four and a half decades of leadership, Chief. We appreciate it.

I yield.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Quigley, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you, Chief, for being here and for your service. I want to follow up on that line of questioning if I may.

Giving them every opportunity to succeed, I would imagine that some of that would include feedback on what they are thinking.

Is there an official process for an officer to give feedback on a process or how to improve things or how they are feeling about something that has taken place?

Chief MANGER. There is. Does everyone take advantage of it? No. There are still folks, unfortunately, that feel like, "Well, I am not going to open my mouth because I might get retaliated against or I might piss this person off or whatever."

The fact of the matter is we just finished a Department-wide climate survey where it was dozens and dozens of questions about what goes on in the Department and how people feel about different things.

I meet with, and my leadership team meets with, the FOP regularly and we get feedback in every one of those meetings.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Let me just ask about two things that might have been on their minds.

You were here. I wasn't pulled out of the chambers right away. We were upstairs and got stuck for a while. I tell everyone I wouldn't be here without the courage of the D.C. and the Capitol Police on that day. The fact that, as the ranking member referenced, we actually passed legislation commemorating the heroism that took place that day and asked that a plaque be put up, that still hasn't happened. However anybody feels about that, has there been feedback, some sense of how that might have impacted the morale of the rank-and-file?

Chief MANGER. I definitely think it impacts morale. I mean, look, the fact that January 6 was a pretty traumatic day for this campus and certainly—

Mr. QUIGLEY. How many officers were injured that day?

Chief MANGER. At least 140, I believe.

Mr. QUIGLEY. And those that passed in the coming days?

Chief MANGER. Say again?

Mr. QUIGLEY. Police officers who we lost in the coming days immediately thereafter?

Chief MANGER. We lost a couple of them, yes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Yeah.

Chief MANGER. But, look, there is a wide divergence of opinions about what occurred on January 6, but I will tell you, I know what my cops—how they feel. And I have spent the last 4 years trying to make sure that they know that their service was respected and that what they did was honorable.

But, well, like with any, you have some officers that feel okay about everything that has occurred. You have got others that look at the pardons and look at a bunch of other things and say that, "Well, I guess people didn't care about us." The opinions run the gamut.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Was there any attempt at checking morale as it was affected by the plaque or specifically the pardons?

Chief MANGER. Well—

Mr. QUIGLEY. I mean, I can't believe it was split 50/50. But you tell me how people reacted to it.

Chief MANGER. No one asked those specific questions, but I will tell you that I got an earful with regard to the pardons, and I made a statement to my officers and made a couple public statements about the fact that any time—and it doesn't matter who the President is, what party it is, anything—any time a police officer who is assaulted—someone who assaults a police officer gets pardoned, I think that cops all over this country would look at that and say, "Why are we doing what we are doing?"

Mr. QUIGLEY. Yeah, there are more things I want to talk about, but, Chairman, I don't want to break it up and get into that. I just

want to note that I appreciate what the officers did that day. I had a firsthand view of it.

I want to thank them every day for that because I think they saved more than our lives, but where our Republic was at the time. And we should put the plaque up. We are seeing now that those pardoned, many have been arrested since then. And I believe all that has done is encouraged others to act in a similar way in the future.

So thank you again for your service and for being here today.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Strong, your 5 minutes.

Mr. STRONG. Chief Manger, I want to thank you for your service to our Nation for over 45 years and congratulate you on your upcoming retirement. I also want to extend my gratitude to all of the officers that work tirelessly every day to protect our Capitol, ensuring the safety of elected officials, government employees, and visitors alike. I am glad that we are holding this hearing today to address the recent security challenges faced on the Capitol complex and examine ways to enhance the preparedness of our officers. As a first responder for over four decades, I have seen firsthand how crucial preparedness and readiness are during crisis situations.

While we can never predict every potential crisis, we must prepare, evaluate, and adapt our strategies to ensure our officers are ready to act swiftly and effectively when needed.

Chief Manger, how do you assess the current training programs for Capitol Police officers to ensure that they are prepared for the wide range of potential threats that they face?

Chief MANGER. I think they are good, but there is always room for improvement. We just did a learning needs assessment, which is a pretty global look at our training and how it could be improved.

But I would tell you specifically toward addressing these issues of the security breaches, I think that our training is solid, our policy is solid. It is just making sure that the officers have this refresher.

Look, if it is like important—it is like firearms training. We do that twice a year. Well, now we are going to do the refresher training for the screening twice a year because it is that important.

Mr. STRONG. Okay. You mentioned an updated security screening refresher training for officers, with mandatory testing twice a year.

Can you walk us through the specific areas of security screening that will be tested and the plan to track and analyze the effectiveness of this reoccurring training.

Chief MANGER. So the screening, there is a number of layers to screening. First, I mean, we start the screening process before somebody even gets into the building. We have got pre-screeners outside that are watching people as they approach the building.

We have got—once they get in, they go through a magnetometer so that you can screen the person's body, their clothing that they are wearing, and then any packages that they have goes through screening as well. So it is a dual screening process of the person and anything they have with them.

One of the key things is that if something alerts, whether it is the X-ray machine or whether it is the magnetometer, you have got

to find out what is making it alert. And you don't stop the screening process until you determine what is making it alert.

Mr. STRONG. I would also like to focus on the procedures that directly follow security failures such as the ones mentioned today.

Can you describe the Department's approach to a post-incident evaluation? Specifically, how do the Capitol Police debrief after an event, and how do you apply lessons learned to future security planning?

Chief MANGER. So we put out an after-action report, and we allow anyone who was involved in this, from the newest officer up to the chief of police, to have input on that after-action report.

And once we get all the comments from everybody who was involved, then we use that to look at it through the lens of training, the lens of supervision, through equipment, through all of those different lenses to determine what we can do to make sure that whatever went wrong doesn't happen again—and whatever went right, you know—

Mr. STRONG. That is right.

Chief MANGER [continuing]. Does happen again.

Mr. STRONG. Switching gears a bit, your testimony mentioned that the security screening failures this year were due to human error despite technology correctly identifying prohibited items.

How do you balance the role of technology, such as the introduction of AI in X-ray machines, and officers' critical oversight and decisionmaking responsibilities to avoid becoming overly reliant on automated systems?

Chief MANGER. Mr. Strong, that is a question that we have talked about and an issue that we have talked about quite a bit over the last couple of months. And I think it has to do with training, it has to do with instilling this notion in the officers that it is not their job to look at a screen. It is their job to make sure that no prohibited items get into the building. And just to approach the training in such a way that they understand the importance, that AI is a tool, this equipment is a tool, but it is up to them. They have the final responsibility to make sure nothing prohibited gets through.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Chief.

In a perfect world—staffing, K-9, morale, vehicles, equipment, technology, weapons, tactics, communication—what one thing would you change right now if you could?

Chief MANGER. You know, 46 years of being a cop, I am telling you, I would, if there was a way that I could make cops understand that people do, in fact, appreciate what they do. It is not us versus them. It is that we are all part of this community, that the Capitol Police play a unique role in the congressional community, and to understand, to take pride in that and take that pride in their workmanship and translate that into making sure they are doing the best job that they can do.

And so it really comes down to making sure these cops know how much they are appreciated.

Mr. STRONG. You got it.

Thank you, Chief. And I thank each of those that work under your direction. You have done a phenomenal job.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Representative Maloy.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chief Manger, thanks for being here. Thank you for your 40-plus years of public service. Everybody has said it, but congratulations on your retirement. I really appreciate what you and your officers do here. And I love that we welcome the public into our buildings. And I know that you all have a responsibility to keep me, my colleagues, and our staff safe. So I recognize that you are balancing a lot of factors. I think you do a really great job of it.

But as you pointed out, every one of the breaches was human error. And I recognize that officers are human—we are all human—and I am guessing that humans who enjoy their work environment and feel appreciated are probably more conscientious at what they do. And we all want to see your officers be conscientious and successful at what they do.

So I have been sitting here listening to all the questions—sorry, I have got a little bit of a cough—and I am concerned that there might be a temptation on the part of leadership in the Capitol Police to make changes to satisfy us that might hurt morale in the force.

And so I just—and at the end here, with the few minutes left, I want to give you a chance to talk about that. But let me set the stage for you just a little bit.

The technological improvements you talked about sound great, but every breach was human error. The increased training sounds good too. But as I was listening, things like increasing the rotations and changing the setup at these checkpoints might make officers feel like they are being policed and treated like children.

And we see the same officers a lot. We build up a good rapport with them. There are 438 of us, and a lot of staff, and when people are at the same places a lot, they see us a lot, and they recognize people.

Can you just speak to how these changes in how personnel are handled might impact morale on the force?

Chief MANGER. So it is not lost on me that we had these three breaches, but that 99.999 percent of my officers were not involved in any of those. They made no mistakes.

Ms. MALOY. Right.

Chief MANGER. And so when everybody had to go through the training, believe me, I understood the fact that a lot of them said, “What did I do wrong?” Because they did nothing wrong. So I think it is important for leadership to be consistent. This is not about—I will tell you that—again, been a cop a long time, and even good cops make mistakes sometimes.

And when you make a mistake, it shouldn’t start off with, “Oh, you are going to get disciplined,” or whatever. First mistakes that people make—and it depends on the nature of the mistake and all that sort of thing.

But all of these accountability measures that we are putting in, I want it to start with training. Then, if the people make mistakes, then counseling, just say, “Hey, you did this, this.” And then, after that, you would get into, “Okay, well, do we need to look at some sort of discipline or whatever?”

But I think training and counseling are where the emphasis needs to be. As we add additional accountability measures where officers might find themselves, "Oh, gee, I looked at my phone momentarily when I wasn't supposed to be looking at my phone." "Okay, well, you understand why you don't do that. Don't do it."

So we are trying to be reasonable with these measures and not punitive with these measures.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you. I appreciate that.

It is also not lost on me what you just said, that when officers feel like they are appreciated, they do a better job. And if you could do anything, it would be to make sure that they know that we appreciate them.

So I have got 1 minute left on the record. I just want to say how much I appreciate what you all do and the professionalism of the officers that I interact with every day. And I hope that you will convey that back to your team. And I hope whoever your successor is will work with us to make sure that we have a good working relationship, because we all work here in the same place together every day.

Chief MANGER. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

And I second Ms. Maloy's comments. Obviously, we here, Members, all my colleagues, do appreciate the service of our Capitol Police officers. And we want to make sure that we address some of the things that have happened.

But we agree a hundred percent, Capitol Police officers have done an amazing job, and I have always felt safe here because of the hard work that they do for us and for our constituents. So thank you for taking time today.

And, again, I apologize for being late. Obviously, we were trying to honor a past chair of this committee who a lot of us hold in pretty high regard, and that ended up not working out. So I think they are going to reschedule for the end of the week.

But if there are no further questions, thank you for, one, your service, and congratulations on your retirement, and for testifying here today.

And thank you to all our Capitol Police officers who are here and those who are out working.

And members may submit any additional questions for the record.

And this committee now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:26 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WITNESSES

**HON. CATHERINE L. SZPINDOR, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

HON. KEVIN F. McCUMBER, CLERK, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**HON. WILLIAM P. MCFARLAND, SERGEANT AT ARMS, U.S. HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

**MR. MATTHEW BERRY, GENERAL COUNSEL, U.S. HOUSE OF REP-
RESENTATIVES**

**MS. CHRISTEN STEVENSON, ACTING INSPECTOR GENERAL, U.S.
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**MR. BRIAN LINDSEY, LAW REVISION COUNSEL, U.S. HOUSE OF REP-
RESENTATIVES**

**MR. WARREN BURKE, LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL, U.S. HOUSE OF REP-
RESENTATIVES**

Mr. VALADAO. Well, now that I have a gavel, this meeting will come to order—or this subcommittee will come to order.

The subject of today's hearing is the fiscal year 2026 budget request for the House of Representatives.

I would like to thank Ranking Member Espaillat, committee members, and House officers, Mr. Kevin McCumber, Mr. Bill McFarland, and Ms. Catherine Szpindor, and our other House officials for being here.

Thank you.

I know that all members of this committee share my appreciation for the work that you do and each member of your staff does to keep the House operating efficiently and effectively.

I want to start by highlighting the excellent work you have already accomplished as we have begun the 119th Congress.

You and your teams have each contributed to the several historic events with the organization of the new Congress on January 3, followed by the joint session to count the electoral votes, and the lying in state of former President Carter.

Shortly thereafter, we joined the Senate in hosting the 60th inaugural ceremonies and, most recently, the Presidential joint address.

We know that each of these events requires months of planning and hours of extra work. Congratulations on each successful event, and we thank you for your continued efforts.

Thank you again for joining us today, and I look forward to hearing your testimonies and learning more about budget priorities for fiscal year 2026.

I now recognize Ranking Member Espaillat for his opening remarks.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Chairman Valadao.

And good morning, Ms. Szpindor, Mr. McFarland, and Mr. McCumber. Thank you for joining us to discuss fiscal year 2026 and your budget requests.

You all do an exceptional job serving this body and providing a host of services that are necessary for us to represent our constituents and address our country's critical needs.

House offices, such as the Office of Official Reporters, Legislative Counsel, and our various technology divisions, work behind the scenes to support our operation, and I want them to know that we are thankful and really benefit greatly from their hard work.

The overall fiscal year 2026 budget request for the House of Representatives is \$2.1 billion, which is \$207.8 million or 11 percent above the fiscal year 2025 enacted level.

Many of the requested increases would have been addressed in a full-year enacted bill, but due to the failure to complete the 2025 appropriations process, accounts were frozen in a full-year continuing resolution.

The \$8 million cut to the modernization account came as a surprise to this side of the aisle, and of course we want to work in a bipartisan and transparent manner.

Investments in the U.S. House of Representatives are critical to the growth and progress of our democracy. I look forward to hearing each of you and your testimonies and discussing the IT modernization and security efforts included within the requests as well as the impacts to Congress and our ability to be transparent and responsive to our constituencies if these efforts are not implemented.

It is important for this committee to continue our investment in building a better institution that is more responsive to the needs of our constituents. The bipartisan work we do on this committee helps to strengthen our government and its capacity to serve the American people.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espailat.

The Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, and Chief Administrative Officer are joined today by Matthew Berry, the House General Counsel, Ms. Christen Stevenson, the acting House Inspector General, Mr. Brian Lindsey, the Law Revision Counsel, and Mr. Warren Burke, the Legislative Counsel.

All of their testimonies have been submitted for the record, and members are welcome to ask questions to any of the House officials here today in addition to our three main witnesses.

Mr. McCumber, your full testimony has been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. KEVIN F. McCUMBER

Mr. McCUMBER. Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espailat, members of the subcommittee, thank you for your ongoing support for the Office of the Clerk and our 222 staff. I am extremely proud to testify on their behalf about our operations and fiscal year 2026 budget request.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank my colleagues beside me, Catherine and Bill, and the other House offi-

cials here in the room. Their support and collaboration in managing the House's daily operations is absolutely critical for our continued success.

To put the bottom line up front, we are requesting \$48,992,000 for fiscal year 2026. This is an 18.18 percent increase above the fiscal year 2025 enacted funding level.

There are several reasons for this increase.

First, like everyone coming before this committee, this request reflects a 2-year compounded need.

Second, this level of funding supports our most valued asset—our staff—through mandatory longevities and cost-of-living adjustments.

In addition, this request follows an assessment of our staffing requirements completed over the last year to ensure we can continue to execute our evolving mission and supports funding for 11 new positions.

Four of these new positions will provide the staff needed to support the increase in committee field hearings, six will provide appropriate support for our growing technology portfolio, and one will support our growing administrative needs.

Finally, redevelopment of our Legislative Information Management System, or LIMS, and other modernization projects necessitate the next largest increase to our request, some of which received initial funding from the House's Modernization Initiatives Account.

It is important to know that, absent the inclusion of these LIMS and modernization projects, our budget request is just 1.45 percent above our fiscal year 2025 enacted level.

We are able to keep this request for necessary funding low due to significant efforts to identify savings and find efficiencies, including renegotiating contracts and locking in long-term pricing for recurring nondiscretionary services, all without sacrificing mission readiness.

For instance, in seeking a new backup and recovery solution for both our on-prem data center and cloud environment, we are able to find a modern solution that is \$100,000 a year less than our old legacy backup system.

We didn't stop there, though. Through negotiated pricing, we are able to lock in savings of \$55,000 per year for the next 3 years for our software that manages our virtual servers.

We are committed to doing the necessary work to ensure we are using taxpayer funds responsibly.

This request also supports our work on the eHopper, Comparative Print Suite, our ongoing redevelopment of mission-critical LIMS, the Centralized Committee Portal, collaborative legislative drafting tools, and the lobbying disclosure project.

By including these projects as a part of our budget, we can continue them uninterrupted and stay on track to meet required deadlines.

As I mentioned at the outset, staff are our most valued asset. I want to express my sincere gratitude to our entire Clerk team whose work day in and day out provides the necessary support for the House to conduct business.

In addition to these daily activities, our staff must be agile, creative, and forward-thinking.

A good example of this can be seen in our recent change-of-Congress activities. Included as part of our planning efforts for the 119th Congress was a discussion about potential outcomes of the Presidential election, which resulted in a project to preemptively address a need in the event the House was required to elect the President in a contingent election.

As you know, Article II, Section 1, Clause 3 of the Constitution gives the House the power to choose the President in the event of a tie or if no person receives a majority of electoral votes cast, with each State getting one vote.

While the House would determine the specifics of the proceedings, each State with two or more Representatives would likely need a ballot box to collect the votes of its Representatives to determine which candidate would receive the State's single vote.

We worked with the CAO furniture team beginning late last spring to design and build custom boxes for each State at no outside cost, several of which I brought with me today that just so happen to be for the State each of you represent.

While these ballot boxes were not necessary this year, they will be stored for future readiness.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and subcommittee members, the Office of the Clerk is committed to ensuring faithful stewardship of taxpayer dollars as we continue our service to this great institution.

Thank you again for your continued support and for the opportunity to testify. I welcome your questions.

[The statement of Mr. McCumber follows:]



BIOGRAPHY OF THE HONORABLE KEVIN F. MCCUMBER

Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives

Kevin F. McCumber was sworn in as Clerk of the House by Speaker Mike Johnson on January 3, 2025.

Mr. McCumber began his long tenure with the Office of the Clerk in 1996 as a House Page. He rejoined the Clerk's Office in 2000 and worked in a variety of roles until 2006, when he left to study political science at the University of Colorado and work for the Lakewood Police Department. He returned to the Clerk's Office in 2012 and since then has performed nearly every role in the legislative process in some capacity. He was appointed Deputy Clerk in 2021 after serving as Chief of the Office of Legislative Operations and was sworn in as Acting Clerk by Speaker Kevin McCarthy on June 22, 2023, effective July 1, 2023.



Mr. McCumber grew up in Germantown Hills, Illinois, a small farming community east of Peoria, where he worked as a 911 dispatcher for the Woodford County Sheriff's Department. He lives in Alexandria, Virginia.



**STATEMENT BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
ON THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK FY 2026 BUDGET REQUEST**

The Honorable Kevin F. McCumber, Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives

April 2, 2025

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am extremely proud to testify on behalf of the Office of the Clerk's 222 staff, whose more than 2,500 years of service to this institution are a testament to their dedication and true commitment to public service.

Thank you for your ongoing support for our Office and for the opportunity to testify about our operations and fiscal year 2026 budget request.

To put the bottom line up front, we respectfully request \$48,992,000 for fiscal year 2026, an 18.18 percent increase above the fiscal year 2025 enacted funding level. There are several reasons for this increase. First, this increase reflects our accumulating needs during the past two years as we have been operating under fiscal year 2024 levels due to a continuing resolution. Second, this level of funding supports our most valuable asset, our staff, through longevities and cost-of-living adjustments. In addition, it supports funding for 11 new positions, the result of a staffing needs assessment conducted over the last year to ensure we can continue to execute our evolving mission. Six of these new positions will support our growing technology portfolio, which includes our modernization initiatives; four will support an increase in Committee field hearings; and one will support our additional administrative needs. Finally, our Legislative Information Management System (LIMS) redevelopment and other modernization projects necessitate the next largest increase to our request. Absent the inclusion of these modernization efforts, our budget request is just 1.45 percent above our fiscal year 2025 enacted level. Our request enables us to continue these projects, some of which received initial funding from the House's Modernization Initiatives Account, uninterrupted and to meet the deadlines as prioritized. We are able to keep this request for necessary funding low due to significant efforts to identify savings and find efficiencies, including renegotiating contracts and locking in long-term pricing for recurring nondiscretionary services, all without sacrificing mission readiness.

Eighty percent of the requested amount supports operational activities and mandated projects, including closed captioning and stenographic reporting contracts, salaries, and technology to carry out our existing and added responsibilities. Specifically, personnel expenses for 255 full-time equivalent positions account for \$35,376,000 of our fiscal year 2026 request. Critically, support for our projects accounts for more than \$7,209,000 of our request. These projects include business continuity and disaster recovery activities and required maintenance of the Electronic Voting System (EVS). Our request funds refinement of the Comparative Print Suite (compare.house.gov) and the eHopper (ehopper.house.gov) and allows us to continue our work on LIMS redevelopment and modernization initiatives including the centralized Committee portal, collaborative legislative drafting tools, lobbying disclosure modernization, the Central Legislative Index, the House Calendar, the Floor Action Reporting System (FARS), and the Senate Action Reporting System.

The remaining twenty percent of the request addresses nonpersonnel expenses, including training, equipment, software maintenance and warranties, nontechnology contractor support, and contracts for activities such as curation and exhibition developments.

Your continued investment in our Office supports specialized, professional staff across nine divisions, the technology at the backbone of the legislative process, and the House's ongoing modernization efforts. It also enables us to provide information to the public about the legislative process, support the House's operations, assist Members in fulfilling many of their statutory and constitutional responsibilities, and work to preserve this institution's history, art, and artifacts.

As you can see, our work is wide-ranging and interdivisional, but I would like to focus on projects and personnel that support three main areas: (1) modernizing the legislative process; (2) providing transparency and public disclosure; and (3) supporting Members and the institution.

MODERNIZING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The Office plays a vital role in the House's daily legislative activities. We facilitate House proceedings; operate the EVS; produce the constitutionally mandated *House Journal*; transcribe Floor proceedings for the *Congressional Record* and hearings and depositions for Committees; process submissions of legislative documents; oversee the recording of Roll Call Votes; maintain Chamber technology and provide streaming video; prepare messages to the Senate about legislation that has passed the House; read bills, resolutions, amendments, motions, and presidential messages on the Floor; and make legislative activity updates publicly available via the Office of the Clerk website (clerk.house.gov).

During the 118th Congress, we processed 12,550 bills for introduction—an 8.7 percent increase over the 117th Congress. We manually entered the names of 166,806 cosponsors. We recorded 1,241 Roll Call Votes, supported 1,292 hours of legislative activity, and transcribed, proofread, and edited 14,471 pages of Floor proceedings for inclusion in the *Congressional Record*. Further, we assisted Committees by supporting 2,676 meetings, depositions, transcribed interviews, and classified briefings, and transcribing 266,668 pages of Committee activity.

I would like to highlight a few of our products and projects designed to improve the House's operations. These plans build upon our earlier successes and reinforce our commitment to engaging with users to refine our tools and deliver new features.

eHopper

Implemented in 2020, the eHopper remains the primary submission method for legislative documents. Last year the eHopper accounted for 94 percent of bill submissions. We continue to release new features to increase efficiency for House staff making submissions and Clerk staff processing documents. In February 2024, we deployed features that allow House staff to submit cosponsors with just a few clicks. We subsequently integrated eCosponsor forms into our LIMS application to save Bill Clerks from manually processing hundreds of thousands of cosponsors each Congress. On March 21 of this year, we added a feature to integrate Constitutional Authority

Statements as well. These two updates improve the quality of submissions and move legislative activities toward data-driven workflows.

Comparative Print Suite

We continue to improve the Comparative Print Suite, a set of applications that displays legislative text changes in context, including how a bill changes law and how two versions of legislative text differ. These features allow advanced users to see how an amendment changes underlying bill text and to compare selected provisions in a measure to a bill. We continue to partner with the Congressional Staff Academy to conduct on-demand training for House staff to learn how to use the tool and to gain access to additional features.

In 2024 we welcomed Senate users. We are collaborating with a group of pre-pilot participants and the Secretary of the Senate to ensure a smooth launch. Recently, the Senate gave security approvals to enable general access in the Senate. This will allow us to expand beyond the initial pilot group in coordination with our Senate colleagues.

Legislative Information Management System

LIMS is a mission-critical system that we use to manage House legislative operations, record legislative activities, and exchange data with our legislative branch partners. Nearly all House legislative activities are recorded in LIMS.

Our fiscal year 2025 request included funding for the next phase of the LIMS modernization, which addresses bill introductions (the Bill Briefs module), FARS, and the Member Information System. We continue to deliver new capabilities incrementally and transition users and processes to the modernized LIMS.

In fiscal year 2026, we will continue transitioning activities from the legacy system. We aim to perform all change of Congress activities for the 120th Congress in the modernized LIMS. We will need to continue using the legacy system beyond January 2027, and we anticipate that this will require funding at the current level before we can retire it. It is important to note that we are implementing significant process improvements and efficiency gains throughout this overhaul.

Centralized Committee Portal

Based on initial recommendations from the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress to provide Committee votes as data, we undertook an effort to provide a modern platform for Committee staff to complete their common tasks. Using Modernization Initiatives Account funding, we began creating a Committee portal application that can be used to track Committee referrals, update Committee membership, and collect vote tally sheets as data for publishing on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee Repository (docs.house.gov/Committee). We anticipate initial delivery in the second quarter of 2025, with a pilot rollout in May. The portal will eventually feature additional capabilities, including improved integration with Committee verification processes, the ability to publish meetings on the Committee

Repository, and a meeting scheduler that interfaces with the Deconflict Committee Scheduler.

Collaborative Legislative Drafting

During the 118th Congress, the Offices of the Clerk and the Legislative Counsel worked with this Subcommittee and the Committee on House Administration's Modernization Subcommittee to secure funding from the Modernization Initiatives Account to undertake an extensive study of the current practices in legislative drafting in the House. This study is intended to examine challenges in drafting, collaboration, and any other pain points in the legislative drafting ecosystem.

Our fiscal year 2026 request for \$1,500,000 is to support the follow-on development effort and software licensing anticipated following the completion of the study to improve legislative drafting tools and enhance collaborative drafting among Leadership, Members, Committees, and the House Office of Legislative Counsel.

PROVIDING TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

In addition to supporting the legislative process, we provide information to the public and process, publish, and produce numerous required disclosures. For example, during 2024, Legislative Resource Center staff assisted more than 7,000 people by phone, and the House Library disseminated more than 13,000 documents and answered more than 11,500 in-person, phone, and email reference questions.

Other transparency efforts include those required by law, such as the public disclosure of gift travel (2,209 documents published in 2024) and official foreign travel (150 documents published); financial disclosures (4,035 processed and published online) and periodic transaction reports (2,188 processed and published online); lobbying disclosures (117,711 forms processed and published online), new lobbyist registrations (3,950), and registration amendments (454).

As the Subcommittee is aware, we are actively working with the Senate to modernize and harmonize the chambers' lobbying disclosure systems. Together, we created the Lobbying Disclosure Act Executive Decision Board, which meets monthly and has organized a team to develop a new system. The House and the Senate have decided on the general development framework and the use of an identity management platform to enable unique lobbyist identifiers. The new system will be built on top of the Senate's existing framework, which was upgraded in 2023. We plan to begin the development phase later this month with the House providing two contractors for software engineering support and licensing of identity verification services. We will continue to ensure all tasks and outcomes align with the House's needs and requirements. These upgrades will significantly improve the user experience, provide more efficient processing and automation, integrate the chambers' systems, and allow for greater transparency to the public. As mentioned last year, the new system will solve the issue of duplicate accounts and meet the request of assigning unique identifiers to lobbyists.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND THE INSTITUTION

We support Members and the institution in myriad ways. For example, during the 118th Congress, we conducted 172 required Workplace Rights and Responsibilities training sessions for Members, provided support for 34 Speaker-led ceremonial events, transferred more than 35 terabytes of electronic records to the National Archives and Records Administration, and fulfilled thousands of stationery orders and franked envelope requests.

We successfully completed our transition to the 119th Congress, which required the efforts of dozens of our staff and coordination with our institutional partners during New Member Orientation and on Opening Day. Our congressional transition functions resulted in a reduction in paperwork new Members were asked to complete and required new Members to only sit for one photo, not two, which was shared with institutional offices for official use. We worked with state election officials to review and verify Certificates of Election and in turn to prepare the official roll of the House. We are currently holding after-action meetings with staff to learn what went right and what we can improve when we begin planning anew for this biennial effort.

Included in our 119th Congress planning efforts was a discussion about potential outcomes of the upcoming presidential election should the House be required to elect the President in a contingent election. As you know, Article II, Section 1, Clause 3, of the Constitution specifies the House chooses the President in the event of a tie or if no person receives a majority of electoral votes cast, with each state getting one vote. While the House would determine the particulars, each state with two or more Representatives would likely need a ballot box to collect the votes of its Representatives to determine which candidate would receive the state's single vote. Beginning last spring, we worked with the Chief Administrative Officer's furniture team to design and build custom boxes for each state at no outside cost, several of which I brought with me today.

Along with preparing for the future, many of our staff support efforts to preserve the House's history, art, and archives. Last year, we moved 640 pieces of art and published 684 open-access, downloadable images from the House Collection on the History, Art & Archives website (history.house.gov), making the House's treasures more accessible to Members, staff, and constituents. Our curatorial staff seek important additions to the Collection, which in 2024 included donations that range from an 1830s oil portrait of a House Chaplain to Speaker Joe Cannon's silver walking stick to a prank-loving House Page's sixty-year-old bottle of "Dome Polish."

I want to take a moment to thank the Clerk team, whose work, day in and day out, exemplifies our mission to provide the procedural support necessary for the orderly conduct of the House's official business.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Subcommittee Members, the Office of the Clerk is committed to ensuring faithful stewardship of taxpayer dollars as we serve this great institution. Thank you again for your continued support and for the opportunity to testify. I welcome your questions.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. McCumber.

I now recognize Mr. McFarland for a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM P. MCFARLAND

Mr. MCFARLAND. Good morning, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the committee.

I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today to testify in support of the fiscal year 2026 budget request for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, which totals \$40,606,000 and 206 full-time equivalents, an increase of \$6.5 million or 18.94 percent and zero FTEs from the fiscal year 2025 enacted level, and a modest 4.7 increase over the fiscal year 2024 enacted budget of \$38,793,000.

I would like to thank the committee for its support in funding the Sergeant at Arms at its fiscal year 2025 requested level.

I appreciate the partnership that we have had over the past 2 years, and I look forward to our continued work together to ensure the safety and security of the Capitol complex, Members of Congress, their staffs, and visitors in both Washington, D.C., and in their districts.

As you noted last week, Chairman Valadao, it is when we all work together that we can ensure the greatest level of safety for all of us.

When I began as Sergeant at Arms 2 years ago, I shared with the committee a strategic plan to guide our organization. Since then, we have made significant strides, particularly in how we support our staff and deliver service to the House community.

To build on that momentum, we have launched an updated strategic plan for the 119th Congress to align with every effort, initiative, and resource—including our fiscal year 2026 budget request—towards our mission.

The essential focus of our budget request is continued investment in our workforce. We revised our performance management process so staff can define their own goals in alignment with the strategic plan, allowing them to grow in their roles while contributing meaningfully to the mission.

We are also expanding access to industry training and have partnered with a leadership development firm to develop leadership skills in every Sergeant at Arms employee at every level of our organization.

We also remain laser-focused on providing outstanding service to the House community with this request. During the last Congress, we partnered with a premier hospitality and customer service training organization to improve frontline customer service and have received positive feedback from Members and staff in this area.

We are continuing to refine the Secure Member Portal, expanding our district security support, and implementing new branding and customer service initiatives that will continue improving the consistency and professionalism of our engagement with the House.

We have also worked with the Architect of the Capitol and the U.S. Capitol Police to implement new physical security enhancements, including hardened doors in key areas of the Capitol.

Included in the budget request is funding for the Sergeant at Arms to continue to provide in-person security awareness briefings in Members' districts.

In conjunction with the U.S. Capitol Police, security awareness briefings provide a security overview for Members and staff on how to respond to a typical security issue that an office encounters and includes best practices for district office security, residential security, and for hosting and attending events in their district.

Our request also includes funding to advance innovation, particularly in areas like mobile duress alert systems for Members, AI-enacted event monitoring tools, and new software to modernize parking security.

Each of these initiatives reflects our goal to anticipate needs before they arise and deliver solutions that support safety, efficiency, and responsiveness.

In closing, the fiscal year 2026 Sergeant at Arms budget request has been prepared in the spirit of zero-based budgeting, remaining fiscally responsible without jeopardizing mission-critical services provided to the House community.

My office is fully committed to continue delivering top-tier, non-partisan security services for our esteemed Members, their families, and staff.

In my first Congress as Sergeant at Arms, I placed renewed focus in executing the fundamentals. This Congress, we are fixated on taking the organization to the next level in terms of technology and modernization while still striving for excellence in executing the fundamentals.

We recognize the immense responsibility entrusted to us and are dedicated to upholding the high standards of professionalism and efficiency.

I look forward to working with the committee and my fellow House officers here today, and I welcome any questions you may have.

[The statement of Mr. McFarland follows:]



WILLIAM P. MCFARLAND
SERGEANT AT ARMS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

William P. McFarland was sworn in as the 39th Sergeant at Arms of the U.S. House of Representatives on September 20, 2023, after serving as the Acting Sergeant at Arms since January 7, 2023. Mr. McFarland is an experienced security administrator and educator offering years of progressive experience related to complex intelligence and security-related activities supporting the U.S. Government.

Mr. McFarland attended the University of Maryland, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology, and attended Webster University at Bolling Air Force Base, where he earned a Master of Arts in Security Management.

Mr. McFarland began his professional career as a Security Aide/Facility Security Officer at the National Security Agency from 1990 to 1991. In 1991, he began his career on Capitol Hill as a Security Aide for the United States Capitol Police, a position he held until 1995. Mr. McFarland then transitioned to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where he was Director of Security from 1995 to 2005. In 2005, he became Director of the Office of House Security, and remained until 2021. Mr. McFarland then left Capitol Hill to become Vice President of Security in the private sector from 2021 until his being sworn in as Acting Sergeant at Arms.

Mr. McFarland resides in Severn, Maryland with his wife and two children.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS



OFFICE OF THE SERGEANT AT ARMS

**Statement Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on House Appropriations**

FY 2026 Budget Submission

The Honorable William P. McFarland
Sergeant at Arms | April 2, 2025

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS



Opening

Good morning Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today to testify in support of the fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget request for the Office of the Sergeant at Arms (SAA), which totals \$40,606,000 and 206 full-time equivalents (FTEs); an increase of \$6.5 million, or 18.94% and 0 FTEs from the FY 2025 enacted level, and a modest 4.7% increase over the FY 2024 enacted budget of \$38,793,000.

I would like to thank the Committee for its support in funding the SAA at its FY 2025 requested level. I appreciate the partnership that we've had over the past two years, and I look forward to our continued work together to ensure the safety and security of the Capitol Complex, Members of Congress, their staffs, and visitors in both Washington, D.C. and in their districts. As you noted last week Chairman Valadao, "It is when we all work together that we can ensure the greatest level of safety for all of us."

When I began as Sergeant at Arms two years ago, I shared with this Committee a Strategic Plan to guide our organization for the 118th Congress. Since then, we've made significant strides in investing in our people and providing premier and innovative services to the Congressional community. While I will highlight a few of our past accomplishments during my testimony today, I also know our job is never finished. To continue meeting the evolving needs of the House, we have recently updated our Strategic Plan to set our direction for the 119th Congress.

This revised Strategic Plan builds directly on the tremendous progress we've made over the past two years. It clearly defines our Vision, Values and Strategic Goals and reaffirms our core mission. The Plan provides the foundation against which all of our efforts in the 119th Congress, including this FY 2026 budget request, are aligned. By rooting every initiative in this framework, we ensure all of our resources are most efficiently directed toward our Strategic Goals and that my team is aligned to accomplish our mission.

Cultivate Excellence In People

Our first Strategic Goal for this Congress continues to reflect our dedication to the organization's most important asset—our people. We strive to attract, empower, and develop a respected, dynamic workforce through a high-standard culture of trust and respect.

Since my last appearance before this Committee, the SAA has implemented a revised performance management process in which employees write performance objectives aligned to the SAA strategic plan. This revised performance management process empowers employees to craft their own performance goals and take ownership not only of their day-to-day roles and responsibilities, but also their career growth.



We've also continued to invest in our staff by prioritizing employee training. This includes supporting staff in attending industry training courses and conferences that align with their job responsibilities and individual areas of interest, helping them hone specialized skillsets and stay current with best practices. In addition, we've partnered with an industry-leading leadership development firm to deliver recurring leadership training across all levels of the organization—reinforcing our value of Universal Leadership and ensuring every employee is equipped to lead with purpose, no matter their role.

Included in the FY 2026 budget request, the SAA is requesting \$22.6 million in support of 206 FTEs. In addition to base salaries, this figure includes a projected cost of living adjustment (COLA), longevity increases, and \$200,000 for meritorious increases to be awarded as part of SAA's new performance management program. Additionally, included as part of the non-personnel request, the SAA is requesting \$345,000 to continue providing training and professional development opportunities and investments in the workforce.

Exceed Service Expectations

The next Strategic Goal for this Congress I would like to highlight is centered on our service to the Congressional community. We strive to ensure exceptional, secure, and positive experiences by strengthening the culture of accountability and building strong relationships. Put simply, we seek to exceed the expectations you have of us.

During the last Congress, we partnered with a premier hospitality customer service training organization to improve front line customer service and have received positive feedback from Members and staff in this area. Additionally, we have focused on ensuring our communications are clear, consistent, and professional. To that end, we've implemented new branding procedures that standardize the look and feel of outreach across the organization and continue to expand the services available in the SAA Service Center in Longworth to provide Members and staff a one-stop-shop to engage with the Office of the SAA. And in partnership with your committee, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) and U.S. Capitol Police (USCP), we have made significant strides with new hardened doors, enhancing the physical security of the building while maintaining its historic integrity.

Included in the budget request is \$530,000 to continue contractor support services and end-user enhancements to the Secure Member Portal which the SAA launched in March 2024. This Portal serves as a resource to allow Member offices to request and track security services coordinated through the SAA. The FY 2026 budget request includes funds for system refinements to improve internal workflows and to streamline reporting which I believe will have a positive impact on our service delivery. Based on stakeholder feedback and other best practices, funds will be used to identify, plan, and implement end-user enhancements to system functionality and appearances. Additionally, funds will be used to advance the portal's



development, integration, and expansion using a scalable architecture plan to accommodate future forms and functionality as the SAA requires.

Also included in the budget request is funding for the SAA to continue to provide in-person Security Awareness Briefings in Members' districts. In conjunction with USCP, Security Awareness Briefings provide a security overview for Members and staff on how to respond to typical security issues that an office encounters, and includes best practices for district office security, residential security, and for hosting and attending events in their district. In 2024, SAA staff provided 147 Security Awareness Briefings with Congressional and law enforcement partners around the country. The FY 2026 budget request includes \$115,000 for Security Awareness Briefings and \$60,000 for the District Security Service Center to conduct site visits to district offices to provide information on security systems, mail hoods, and other security functions.

Additionally, in response to direction from this Committee, the FY 2026 budget request includes \$1.5 million for the annual life cycling of 20% of the House's inventory of escape hoods used for respiratory protection during a HAZMAT incident or an airborne agent attack. The annual life cycling of 20% of escape hoods will ensure that no hoods are in use past their manufacture-recommended expiration date and stabilize annual budget requests.

Innovate Ahead

Our final Strategic Goal for this Congress accounts for the need for our organization to forecast and continuously adapt to the needs of the Congressional community. We strive to leverage technology and adaptive processes to drive innovation and proactively anticipate evolving needs.

The budget request includes \$1.9 million for the expansion of a digital communication tool/rapid alert mobile duress system for Members, which is in response to direction received from this Committee in FY 2022. In FY 2024, the SAA issued a Request for Quote (RFQ) and a purchase order for a 90-day mobile duress pilot program. The pilot program was extended in FY 2025 to allow for additional time to test capabilities that were not available during the original 90-day pilot. The funds requested in FY 2026 will support the acquisition, setup, and management of a mobile duress capability for Members to contact emergency responders during a serious security situation.

The budget request includes \$310,000 for an artificial intelligence tool used to generate relevant and actionable alerts and real-time event monitoring when incidents around the country occur. To date, we have utilized this tool to monitor real-time alerts on an array of topics, including weather events, national security advisories, protests, police activity, and Member mentions across the 1.1 million publicly available data sources. We've leveraged this tool in the development of a SAA Common Operating Picture, and this software has been used



in support of recent events to include the 2024 Presidential Nominating Conventions, the 2025 Inauguration, and the March 2025 Presidential Address to Congress. The FY 2026 request supports SAA's expansion of its operations by geofencing key locations, such as Member district offices, so that SAA has a greater awareness of what incidents may be occurring within a predetermined radius of these key locations and can proactively reach out to your staff to see if support is needed.

The budget request includes \$112,000 for real-time parking availability software, fleet management software, and invests in an upgrade to the current parking management software. Since the 114th Congress, Parking Security has used the same Parking Asset Management (PAM) database for permit issuance, renewals, parking space management, enforcement, and reporting. PAM has run its course over the past decade, and we look to identify and acquire a more robust database that harnesses similar features but also integrates with existing systems and offers an easy-to-use interface for both customers and administrators, to include a mobile capability. Further, the investment in a real-time parking availability software will modernize SAA's management of parking security.

Closing

In closing, the FY 2026 SAA budget request has been prepared in the spirit of zero-based budgeting, remaining fiscally responsible without jeopardizing mission-critical services provided to the House community. For FY 2026, the Office of the SAA requests a total of \$40,606,000. This includes \$22,590,000 for personnel expenses to fund 206 FTEs, as well as \$18,016,000 for non-personnel items.

My office is fully committed to continue delivering top-tier, non-partisan security services for our esteemed Members, their families, and staff. In my first Congress as the Sergeant at Arms, I placed a renewed focus in executing the fundamentals. This Congress we are fixated on taking the organization to the next level in terms of technology and modernization while still striving for excellence in executing the fundamentals. We recognize the immense responsibility entrusted to us and are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of professionalism and efficiency.

I look forward to working with this Committee and my fellow House Officers here today, and I welcome any questions you may have.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. McFarland.

I now recognize Ms. Szpindor for a summary of your written statement.

STATEMENT OF HON. CATHERINE L. SZPINDOR

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you.

Good morning, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to present the CAO's fiscal year 2026 budget totaling \$243,184,000.

Since fiscal year 2023, the CAO has operated with a flat budget, without service reductions or disruptions, through careful project planning and budget analysis, achieving service improvements and delivering new products.

During this time, the cost of software and hardware increased between 30 to 50 percent, along with increased personnel and contractor costs.

The CAO's fiscal year 2026 personnel budget represents a \$10.8 million increase in personnel costs to support existing staff, COLAs, longevity increases, overtime, active recruitments, and contractor conversions.

Increases in personnel are offset by planned savings in nonpersonnel costs of \$5.5 million achieved through the conversion of contractors to full-time employees.

We are requesting \$6.7 million of the total increase to replace the House human resources and payroll and benefits system which manages official employee records and payroll and benefit administration for Members and an estimated 12,000 staffers.

The system is over 20 years old and will no longer be supported by the vendor in 2030. Failing to replace the system will jeopardize the continuity of payroll and benefit administration, on-boarding and off-boarding employees, and the maintenance of official records.

A new system will modernize the payroll disbursement processes and improve the user experience.

This is a large, multiyear implementation project requiring additional investment over the next 4 years.

We intend to invest \$2.5 million in artificial intelligence (AI) applications so House staff can take full advantage of AI technology within the House's—and this is important—within the House's secure IT environment.

Funding will be used to purchase licenses, AI expertise and IT infrastructure, and tools needed for deployment. We will also administer a robust training initiative to ensure that all House staff from the top down, are using AI responsibly.

Also, we must continue to update and invest in the current systems that we already have that require some enhancements.

\$2.2 million to upgrade the House campus Avaya phone system that we all use to expand call management and improve user experience.

\$1.8 million for server infrastructure and to support extended warranties for hardware maintenance and software upgrades to systems used by the House, the CAO, the Sergeant at Arms, and the Clerk.

\$1.5 million in websites to maintain accessibility features for 508 compliance, contractors for site development and testing, performance monitoring, and database service and storage resources.

\$1.2 million on the House's cybersecurity program for the sustainment and expansion of secure cloud and on-premise infrastructure, website protections, and continuous security monitoring.

\$1 million to support Mac computers with a new system management and monitoring system to protect House users and data and expedite the deployment of system updates, including multiple users per Mac device used for interns—or requested for interns. Which we haven't been able to do it yet.

Other requests are for the House data storage infrastructure of \$670,000, the House Learning Management System replacement for \$550,000, and \$533,000 for the continued development of successful House-wide tools by the Digital Services team.

Failing to fund these critical projects will jeopardize House operations and reduce services and critical security issues could be the result along with system outages.

I want to thank the subcommittee, along with the Modernization Subcommittee, for their continued support of modernization initiatives. Over the past 3 years, we have been able to get support that has enabled the implementation of numerous Member-driven improvements that strengthened and modernized House operations.

The CAO office is dedicated to being an essential resource for all Members and staff. That is our mission. We have talented and dedicated staff within the CAO prepared to continue providing services for critical House operations.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Szpindor follows:]



Office of the
**CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER**

The Honorable Catherine Szpindor
Chief Administrative Officer
United States House of Representatives

Catherine Szpindor has served as the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for the U.S. House of Representative since the 117th Congress. In January 2025, Catherine was elected by House Members and sworn in to serve as CAO for the 119th Congress. She is an experienced executive with demonstrated success leading private and public entities.



At the House, Catherine is responsible for Member and Staff services, such as Finance, Procurement, Logistics & Support, Information Technology, Cybersecurity, Human Resources, and Staff Training. During her tenure, Catherine has spearheaded major advancements to critical House operations, including cutting-edge technology and human capital resources for Members and the estimated 12,000 House staff.

Catherine initially joined the House in 2011 as the Director of Enterprise Applications. In 2015, she was promoted to Chief Information Officer and served in that position until December 2020. In January 2021, Catherine was appointed by the House Speaker to serve as CAO. Prior to working at the House, Szpindor served as Vice President of Information Technology for Thomas Nelson Community College, now known as Virginia Peninsula Community College. She also worked for many years as Vice President of Information Technology for Nextel, Sprint, and Sprint/Nextel, now known as T-Mobile. Catherine was recognized as one of the [top 50 women leaders in Virginia for 2025](#), by [Women Times Magazine as USA's Most Inspiring Women Leaders](#) in 2024, and as one of [Washingtonian Magazine's D.C. Tech Titans](#) in 2023 and 2024.

Szpindor holds a master's degree in information systems from Mercer University's Stetson School of Business and Economics, a certificate in strategy and innovation from the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a certificate in strategic business leadership from Georgetown University.



Office of the
**CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER**

The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request

The Honorable Catherine L. Szpindor
Chief Administrative Officer
April 2, 2025

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the U.S. House of Representatives appreciates the opportunity to present its Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget totaling \$243,184,000 to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Legislative Branch led by Chairman Valadao and Ranking Member Espallat.

Since FY23, the CAO has operated at the same funding level. During that time, the cost of House-purchased software and hardware increased between 30-50%. Operating with a flat-lined budget despite increasing operational costs requires the CAO to use funding originally allocated for its low to medium priority projects and programs to support its high-priority projects and programs. For the past two fiscal years, the CAO has managed to operate without House service reductions or disruptions. In fact, on the contrary, the CAO managed to achieve notable service improvements. However, for FY26, there are new cost requirements that cannot be deferred nor offset by funding from low-priority projects, and failing to adequately fund them would jeopardize critical House operations.

CAO FY26 TOPLINE REQUEST

The CAO's FY26 budget request is \$243,184,000, which is \$30,112,000 or 14.1% over its FY25 budget.

\$135.5 million or 56% of the requested FY26 budget is for programmatic (non-personnel) costs, and \$107.7 million or 44% is for personnel costs. \$19.3 million or 64% of the requested increase is to cover increased programmatic costs. \$10.8 million or 36% of the requested increase is to cover increased personnel costs.

\$132.0 million or 54% of the CAO's total FY26 budget request is dedicated to its House Information Resources (HIR) division responsible for building, maintaining, and protecting the House's critical IT infrastructure and Member data. Requested funding increases associated with HIR services total \$13.0 million and account for 43% of the total requested increase over FY25.

\$111.1 million or 46% of the CAO's total FY26 budget request covers the broad scope of additional critical functions and services performed by the CAO, including payroll and benefit administration, disbursement and tracking of House payments, broadcasts of Floor and committee proceedings, media gallery operations, House-wide procurement services, office design and moves, custom furniture builds and refurbishment, asset delivery and tracking, executive Member and staff training, staff and intern recruitment and development resources, wellness support and counseling services, management of campus food and convenience facilities, and the administration of the House Child Care Center. Requested funding increases associated with the CAO's non-HIR services total \$17.0 million and account for 57% of the total requested increase over FY25.

HIGH-PRIORITY PROGRAMS & PROJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUESTED FY26 BUDGET INCREASE

Although the CAO has managed to operate at the same funding level since FY23 without House service reductions or disruptions, there now exist new programmatic and personnel funding requirements that cannot be offset through funding reprioritization without serious security and service implications. Below are examples of consequential components of the CAO's request for increased FY26 funding.

House Payroll & Benefits System Replacement: \$6.7 million

The core system used to manage payroll and benefits administration for Members of Congress and the approximate 12,000 congressional staff is over 20 years old and nearing the end of its lifecycle. Failing to replace the soon-to-be obsolete system now will jeopardize the continuity of payroll and benefit administration, onboarding and offboarding employees, and the maintenance of official records. In addition to protecting the continuity of payroll and benefit administration, replacing the system will present opportunities to modernize the payroll disbursement processes and improve user experience. This project is a large, multi-

year project that will require substantial staff resources and several million dollars annually over the next three or four fiscal years.

Personnel: \$5.3 million (\$10.8 million offset by \$5.5 million through contractor conversions)

The CAO's FY26 personnel budget represents a \$10.8 million increase in personnel costs to support existing staff, cost of living increases, longevity increases, overtime, active recruitments, and contractor conversions. The \$10.8 million increase in personnel is offset by savings in non-personnel costs of \$5.5 million achieved through the conversion of contractors to full-time employees.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology Integration: \$2.5 million

With an AI policy and governance structure in place, the House has a unique opportunity to accelerate AI adoption through the rollout of a secure, House-wide AI application that will allow staff to fully utilize AI technology within the House's secure IT environment. This expansion requires \$2.5 million for the purchase of licenses, contractors with necessary AI expertise, and additional IT infrastructure and tools to support large-scale AI deployment. This effort will require a robust training initiative to ensure House staff are using AI responsibly to improve office efficiency.

House Phone System (Avaya): \$2.2 million

Over the past few years, the cost of supporting House phone systems has increased, and additional funds are necessary to sustain and enhance support services for Members' district and D.C. offices. In addition to the increased sustainment costs, increased funding is requested to upgrade the D.C. phone platform from a traditional system to an IP-based platform to expand call management tools and improve user experience. Migration to an IP-based platform includes new costs associated with additional hardware, servers, equipment installation, and annual maintenance.

House Enterprise Infrastructure and Architecture: \$1.8 million

The House's enterprise IT infrastructure is comprised of all on-premises and cloud-based servers, tangible hardware, and software required to securely host every application used by the House, including those deployed by the House Clerk and Sergeant at Arms. In FY26, additional funds are required for virtual server infrastructure, contractors to support servers, extended warranties for hardware maintenance, and software upgrades.

House Websites: \$1.5 million

The CAO Web Services team is currently responsible for building and maintaining approximately two-thirds of all House websites, including those for Member, committee, and leadership offices at no cost to the offices. Additional funding is required in FY26 to support continued website accessibility features (508 compliance), contractors for site development and testing, performance monitoring applications, and database service and storage resources.

House Cybersecurity: \$1.2 million

The House's cybersecurity program requires increased funding to support the sustainment and expansion of secure foundational cloud and on-premises infrastructure, critical House website protections, and continuous security monitoring of systems and applications. The increased funding for cybersecurity will also fund important awareness programs such as phishing campaigns and cybersecurity briefings tailored specifically for the House community.

House Mac Device Management and Security Software: \$1 million

At 3,000 and quickly growing, the footprint of Mac computers used by House offices is significant. These devices require the best-of-breed end-point system management and monitoring application to protect House users and their data. The CAO is seeking additional FY26 funds to upgrade to a new, improved Mac management system. The new system will expedite the deployment of operating system updates and support multiple users per Mac device – a popular intern configuration for Member offices that the current management software does not support.

House Data Storage: \$670K

The CAO's IT infrastructure plays host to a multitude of applications used by House offices and relies on secure data storage platforms to store office files, data, digital content, databases, websites, and multimedia files. To support the increased storage demand, the CAO is seeking additional FY26 funds to expand its secure enterprise storage capacity.

House Learning Management System Replacement: \$550K

In 2019, the CAO's Congressional Staff Academy deployed a centralized learning management system to provide staff with a single portal to access, complete, and track mandatory and elective training. Unfortunately, the current system's software is limited and inefficient. To address these limitations and improve user experience, the CAO is seeking additional FY26 funding to replace the current system.

House Digital Services: \$533K

The CAO's Digital Service team has successfully developed and deployed several popular custom products for the House at the request of the Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Modernization. These products include HouseCal, FlagTrack, LegiDex, and CaseCompass. Though the initial deployment of these applications was funded via the Modernization Initiatives Account, that account does not cover their sustainment. Additional CAO funding is required in FY26 to ensure their continued development and support.

There are many additional high-priority projects and programs across the entire CAO that require increased funding. For example, the cost of House-wide news and clipping subscriptions absorbed by the CAO increased by nearly \$300K, a required rewrite of the House Alert System will cost \$220K, and the pilot digital wayfinding project will cost nearly \$100K.

OPERATIONAL & SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS ACHIEVED IN FY25 DESPITE BUDGET RESTRICTIONS

Despite the requirement to operate at its FY23 level, maximizing the use of its limited resources, the CAO made important advancements to multiple service projects and programs in FY25.

NEW & EXPANDED CAO SERVICE INITIATIVES

Cybersecurity: Protecting the House's IT infrastructure that supports Members, approximately 12,000 staff, and over 40,000 connected devices from cyber criminals is the CAO's most critical and challenging responsibility. During FY25, in addition to its House-wide threat prevention and detection activities, the CAO's Cybersecurity team played the lead role in AI governance and technology risk evaluations. In 2024, 57 security reviews were conducted to evaluate risks posed by cloud services, artificial intelligence products, and newly-developed applications to support House offices. Similarly, as new products were introduced to the House environment, continuous security audits were conducted to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of House data stored in cloud, web, and on-premise servers and database solutions.

Integration of Generative AI technology: Prior to FY25, ChatGPT, a Generative AI (GenAI) Large Language Model (LLM) technology, was approved for limited House use. At the same time, the CAO conducted AI governance assessments, established a House-wide AI Advisory Group, and published AI use cases and best practices. Since

then, to further advance AI integration into House operations, the CAO established an internal, cross-functional team (the AI Center of Excellence) that spearheaded the development of the House AI IT Policy published September 2024. The AI Center of Excellence continues to proactively evaluate emerging off-the-shelf AI technologies and has been exploring the development of House-specific AI tools that would operate in secure cloud space. All AI integration efforts in FY25 were entirely supported by existing CAO resources. More robust integration will require additional dedicated resources as requested in the CAO's FY26 budget.

Casework Aggregation (CaseCompass): At the request of the Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Modernization, the CAO is preparing to launch a cutting-edge casework aggregation prototype called CaseCompass capable of collecting, anonymizing, and analyzing Member office casework. The project, which currently includes 40 offices, is the first of its kind and has great potential to help Members process casework and understand common constituent pain points with federal agencies subject to congressional oversight and policymaking.

Staff Conferences: In 2024, the CAO continued to expand the popular in-person staff conferences tailored for specific D.C. and district office staff positions, including new conferences for Committee Staff, Legislative Directors, Legislative Assistants, Staff Assistants, and staff in Departing Member Offices. All told, 12 conferences were hosted in 2024 to provide training for 10 unique staff roles. Since the CAO conference program was first launched in 2022, 25 conferences have been held with nearly 3,000 staff from 422 different congressional districts attending. In 2024, 97% of attendees reported learning something new that will help them and their office, and 98% of attendees would recommend the conferences to their colleagues. There are 13 conferences planned for 2025.

HouseCal, LegiDex, SocialStats, & eForms: Within the past year, the CAO released multiple applications that assist Members and staff in their daily routines, including HouseCal, LegiDex, and SocialStats. HouseCal is a popular all-in-one online calendar for Members and staff to track voting days, hearings, markups, and meetings in real time. HouseCal also provides quick and easy access to live committee and Floor video feeds. LegiDex is a pilot online staff directory that feeds off multiple official House data sources to give staff an easy way to access contact information for all current House staff. Users can browse by office and see what roles and issues staff are assigned and bulk export email lists based on that data. SocialStats.house.gov is a new social media tracking app that allows offices to track their Member's trends on X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and Facebook and compare them to other Member statistics. The CAO also expanded the use of its eForms application that allows offices to electronically prepare and submit required House forms. Use of eForms over paper submissions has grown exponentially with nearly 30,000 forms submitted via the application to date.

Human Capital Office for House Offices: In January 2025, the CAO launched a new, centralized House Human Capital Office to make the CAO's core human resources more accessible to Member, Committee, and Leadership offices. The new office is comprised of the CAO's Office of Employee Assistance, Center for Well-Being, the Green & Gold Congressional Aide Program, the House Intern Resource Office, and the Office of Talent and Development.

Field Hearings: The CAO's House Recording Studio continues to support the increasing volume of House committee field hearings with on-site audio, broadcast, and streaming services that save committees an average of \$3,500 to \$5,000 per hearing. Today, the Recording Studio supports approximately 30 field hearings annually. During the 118th Congress, the Studio supported field hearings in 23 states and one U.S. territory.

Tech Partner+ Program: The CAO's Technology Partner+ Program, which provides 24/7 in-person and remote consultative and technical services to enrolled Member, Committee, and Leadership offices, continues to grow.

In 2025, the program grew by 17% and currently has 135 participating offices, which is 31% of the Member office community. All CAO Technology Partner support services are provided at no cost to House offices.

119th Transition: Congressional transitions are the Super Bowls of CAO operations where service units work around the clock to execute a high volume of transition activities in a very condensed period. The 119th Transition was certainly no exception. Examples of CAO 119th Transition activities include, but are not limited to, launching 4 customer-facing transition websites with more than 400 tasks and resources, assisting with 65 D.C. office and 125+ district office closures around the country operated by departing Members, reviewing nearly 800 district leases, facilitating 192 D.C. office and 200+ district office moves, onboarding and training 124 Member-elect aides, deploying the New Member Resume Bank that received over 30,000 resumes, onboarding over 1,100 new Member staff, delivering and installing new Member office equipment, installing new office carpet and drapes, refurbishing nearly 600 pieces of House furniture, and building and publishing all new Member House.gov websites.

COMMITMENT TO STEWARDSHIP

The CAO takes seriously its responsibility to obtain maximum value for the finite resources it manages. Operating at FY23 levels amid inflationary increases for three consecutive years makes the CAO's commitment to stewardship critical to the continuity of House operations.

The CAO is especially proud of the estimated \$25 million in savings it successfully negotiated for multiple technology goods and services critical to House operations. In total, in 2024, the CAO's Acquisitions team achieved over \$27 million in savings across 3,980 contracts and small purchases for the entire House valued at approximately \$147.4 million.

CONCLUSION

The CAO's mission is simple. It provides solutions that help Members perform their Constitutional duties. Every service the CAO provides is intended to support and protect House Members and staff. The CAO constantly strives to evolve and improve the broad scope of House services it provides. Often, CAO service improvements are made at the request of its stakeholders, and the CAO welcomes these requests. However, the cost to sustain and expand its services is increasing, and additional funds are required in FY26 to prevent service disruptions and avoid risking critical operations.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ms. Szpindor.

Thank you to all our witnesses for testifying before the committee today.

For questions, I will call on members based on seniority of those present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between the majority and minority, and then we will call on members in order of their arrival. Each will have 5 minutes.

I will recognize myself for the first 5 minutes.

All right. Mr. McCumber, you are requesting a significant amount for modernization efforts, as noted in your testimony. This committee has supported and I suspect will continue to support these large-scale modernization efforts as they are critical to the legislative process. But I am curious if your office is also looking at any modernization efforts that do not require any additional funding.

Mr. MCCUMBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, sir. We routinely look at ways to modernize our processes and operations, both to gain better efficiencies and improve our services.

For a recent example, Members used to have to go to two different places to obtain letterhead depending on if they wanted paper letterhead or digital letterhead, and we consolidated that into one office with one request.

For future efforts, our Office of House Employment Counsel needs to update its training videos and has proposed working with the CAO's Congressional Staff Academy, the House Recording Studio, or Creative Services to develop these updated classes.

And we feel that using internal resources will give OHEC more latitude in creating unique training classes and scenarios more tailored to the House's unique needs while saving money over utilizing outside vendors to receive the same product.

Mr. VALADAO. How are you communicating these modernization initiatives to make sure staff and Members know it is available to them?

Mr. MCCUMBER. So we communicate all of our services using available House-wide tools, whether it is the CAO's e-Dear Colleague system, the digital posters located throughout campus, various newsletters, and both courses through the Congressional Staff Academy; the House Library offers courses.

And we also offer a pretty popular Clerk services course taught by staff from our Office of Communications to make sure staff are aware of all of our resources.

We have a one-page handout front and back that includes both all of our online resources and all the services that we offer to the community.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Mr. McFarland, as you know, last week the subcommittee held an oversight hearing with U.S. Capitol Police Chief Manger to call attention to the recent breaches of House office buildings and the Capitol. We discussed ways in which we could all work together to strengthen the security of the Capitol campus.

In light of these security breaches, and given your role as a member of the Capitol Police Board, can you share with us your rec-

ommendations you might have for strengthening security on campus?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Chairman Valadao, as the House Sergeant at Arms is a member of the Capitol Police Board, we have actually listened to Chief Manger's strategy to mitigate these security lapses that are happening, and we hope that he is holding the Uniformed Services Bureau at a higher standard for these lapses.

One of the recommendations that has come up was we created a secure working group for research and development where we utilized technology and AI to try to be a little bit more proactive in their approaches that might cause some of these security lapses instead of being reactive. So that is one of the recommendations that we have actually put forth.

Mr. VALADAO. Any timeline for replacing the chief, who is now retiring?

Mr. MCFARLAND. As it relates to the chief, I can let you know that the process has started. We are looking at about 10 weeks right now.

That being said, we are looking for a proven leader, because the Capitol Police has a very unique mission.

But we are wishing Chief Manger well in his retirement. He has offered to stay on. We appreciate that. As we look forward to the new chief, we are looking forward to a thorough process of picking the next chief.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Ms. Szpindor, as you might remember, the Library of Congress experienced a cybersecurity breach last year. Was the House affected, probed, or breached in a similar manner?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Last year's compromise—the LOC had their cybersecurity incident—was just a breach of their LOC email system by a threat actor, one that we all know about most of the time.

The House employs a different email system, and that is not connected to the LOC's email system. Our House email system is not—was not impacted at all by the LOC issue.

We worked with the LOC—my staff, my cybersecurity staff—to do whatever we could to assist them. And we have quite a bit in place on our side that allows us to monitor 7 by 24, 365 days a year, our system and be able to quickly determine if something like the attack they had was happening to our system in any way.

So we continue to be available if they would like to work with us and they need our help in any way.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Well, thank you.

My time has expired. So, Mr. Espallat, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McCumber, I like those boxes, particularly the one with the New York seal. The question is, who will have the key?

I submit to you that a copy of that key should be given to Mr. Hoyer. He has been around for a long time. I am sure he will ensure that the proper count is taken.

Mr. MCCUMBER. Yes, sir. And the Maryland box is in the back corner, too. We just didn't have room on the table for all the States.

Mr. HOYER. We are filling it up now. [Laughter.]

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. McFarland, thank you for being here today.

How many security breaches occurred? Do you have a number?

Mr. MCFARLAND. The count right now is, I think, four, sir.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Four security breaches?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Correct.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And how many—

Mr. MCFARLAND. Go ahead.

Mr. ESPAILLAT [continuing]. Weapons were? Was it ammunition? Knives?

Mr. MCFARLAND. If it is ammunition and guns, we are talking three out of the four.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Okay. Now, thank you for that. And I might add that the men and women of the Capitol Police, I find them to be in a more proactive mode. So I want to commend you for whatever it is that you are doing to ensure that they are more alert in the points of entry into the Capitol grounds. I have seen that firsthand myself.

But I also know that many individuals that were involved in the January 6 riot were pardoned and were allowed back on campus. It is almost like if someone assaulted a family member of yours and then, all of a sudden, they are released and they come back and they show up on your block in front of your house, in front of your apartment building. I am sure that any family would be alarmed about that.

In fact, I saw one of them holding a press conference just a short distance away from the Ways and Means room where the men and women of the Capitol Police ushered Members from both sides of the aisle during January 6 to protect them from bodily harm or, if we take into consideration what some of the chants were, maybe even death.

And so what measures are you taking to ensure that some of the same Capitol Police officers that were in harm's way during January 6 are not in harm's way again when a violent person—with a violent history, obviously—shows up on our campus?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, every day we don't know some of the people that come through our doors. We are an open building. It is open to the public. We don't do background checks on everybody that comes through those doors. So what we have got to do as the members of the Capitol Police is we have to treat everybody the same.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Yeah, but you have an intelligence component to your operations. These guys were pretty open about when they were going to be there and where.

Do you take any particular measures to ensure that nobody is harmed?

Mr. MCFARLAND. We actually, if we know about individuals that are coming up to the Hill and someone with a record of such, we are alerted of that if it is on social media.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Right. So what if, like, the Proud Boys or the Oath Keepers announce publicly that they are coming into Rayburn, right outside of here, or Longworth, where I saw this individual holding a press conference with about a dozen cameras? What measures do you take?

Mr. MCFARLAND. If it is something that comes in, I really don't want to go into great detail about our methods. But if our intel-

ligence section of the Capitol Police alerts us of the situation that is coming up and this is where they are going to be, we will make sure we have extra uniforms into place and we will make sure that we do the proper screening of everybody that comes into the building.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I mean, I would love for you to find out if, in fact, that was the case on that particular day.

But thank you, Mr. McFarland.

Real quickly, Ms. Szpindor. How many attempts are there on a daily basis to try to breach our system?

Ms. SZPINDOR. It is millions. I mean, monthly counts are in the millions and millions.

Mr. HOYER. Your microphone.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Bill, you are supposed to be doing that. [Laughter.]

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sorry about that.

Ms. SZPINDOR. It was in the millions and millions.

But I am so proud of the staff we have—our technical staff, our cybersecurity staff—because we keep evolving our cybersecurity posture.

We have a great forensics team. We have people, like I said, that monitor 7 by 24. We have had some near misses, I have to tell you, but we were able to react within 10 minutes, 15 minutes, to recognize the issue, start the first processes we have to prevent them from moving any farther into our systems.

But it is a constant, constant battle. And we do cybersecurity training—I have mentioned that to a few people lately—where they can come to your office and talk to you about some things that you and the people within your office can do to help better protect yourself from being hacked in any way.

So if you are interested in it, we would be glad to send someone up. Our CISO, who has been going around and doing some of these briefings, would be more than willing to come talk to you.

But it can be as simple as someone you don't know but you think you know their name, you click on an email, you go to a link, and they are into our network. So—

Mr. VALADAO. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. I will recognize Mr. LaLota for your 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you, Chairman.

Thanks, folks, for being with us here today.

Mr. McCumber, good to see you. My colleagues, my Republican colleagues and I were anxious about what those boxes were. We see New York and California. We see our great seals.

I came to the conclusion that they were boxes for the highest-taxed States in the Nation, and that is where you put your high taxes, in there, but I guess they are for another purpose.

Nevertheless, I want to talk about artificial intelligence with you all. It is reshaping how organizations are doing business on a daily basis, and it should be no exception that that is how we are probably going to proceed here in the House of Representatives.

Private industries, universities, hospitals, and local governments are already integrating AI into their routines to improve perform-

ance, reduce inefficiencies, and better serve the people that we all represent.

As stewards of taxpayer dollars and representatives of the American people, we ought to be doing the same, thoughtfully and deliberately. But I think we all agree that we need to proceed with caution and with clear standards in place.

And any AI used within the House must meet the highest standards for data security and privacy, and I appreciate your commentary earlier. And, most importantly, it must never be used in a way that undermines the trust or safety of Members, staff, or the American people.

Ms. Szpindor, it is great to see you again. Thanks for being in my office a couple of days ago.

How is your office approaching AI tools that can make internal operations more efficient, things like HR, payroll, and trainings?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Thank you for that question.

This is something that we have worked on very seriously, of course, AI, since it became a thing, a product, primarily ChatGPT was the first introduction of it, and we have worked with many of the offices and their staff to have responsible ChatGPT usage.

And as we move forward we developed the first—of many agencies, I think we were the first agency to develop our cybersecurity and AI position and our policy on AI and the use cases by which we would agree to use AI.

We are looking, as I mentioned in my testimony, at an AI product. It is with a vendor that we are very familiar with, and they are in a FedRAMP environment with the product. We would be using it against our secure data and monitoring it thoroughly to make sure it was used appropriately.

But, most importantly, with any new product it is a whole lot more than just the product. If you do not go and you do not, as I mentioned before, make sure everybody understands how to use it properly—

Mr. LALOTA. Let me ask you a follow-up question then. Tell us specifically on policies, procedures, protocols, what are you all doing to ensure that we maintain the highest levels of cybersecurity, privacy and data, things that just make for good business in this quickly evolving space? What are you doing formally to ensure those high standards?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Formally, we will take any product that anyone is interested in using that may have AI in it. We run it through a thorough cybersecurity process to make sure that it does meet the policy that we put out—which is on HouseNet, by the way, if anyone would like to go out and look at it.

Mr. LALOTA. That is what I am getting to, ma'am.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yeah.

Mr. LALOTA. Is that specifically with our staffs, committee staffs, what sort of policies are you promulgating to us to ensure that we are compliant with those high standards?

Ms. SZPINDOR. It is the House AI policy that we have released. And, in addition to that, we are available, as I said, to go come out and talk to anyone that would like to delve into it a little bit more, be able to understand what type of products we are looking at to make sure that they are secure for the House.

For any product, whether it is AI or otherwise, we go through a thorough review of it before we initiate any implementation of it in our environment.

Mr. LALOTA. Yeah. I would offer you to continue that interaction. It is healthy. It is productive. The advance of AI is going to be exponential and we are going to all have to keep pace, and the more that our offices can communicate with each other on that, the better we will do our jobs.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yeah.

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you, Chairman. I yield.

Ms. SZPINDOR. You are welcome.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. LaLota.

I now recognize Mr. Hoyer for his 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am glad to be back on this subcommittee after two or three decades. And I want to say the reason I came back is because I think the operations of the House of Representatives—and the United States Senate—of the House of Representatives is critical to the American people.

They don't know any of you and they don't know any of the people sitting in front of us, but what you do for them is absolutely essential, and it is absolutely essential that we keep the best and the brightest.

And when they leave, they retire or leave for some other reason, it is critically important for us to be able to recruit the best and the brightest to deal with some of the complex issues that have been raised by the chairman, Mr. LaLota, and the ranking member.

When Speaker Pelosi was Speaker, she decoupled the salaries from Members who have not raised their salaries now in 15 years, not with raises but with COLA adjustments. I would like each one of you to tell me the impact that has had on your ability to retain and recruit the best and the brightest to serve our institution and the American people.

Mr. MCCUMBER. Thank you, Mr. Hoyer.

Quite simply, it has allowed us to be able to recruit and retain to keep pace with both the Senate as well as the executive branch. So it is—

Mr. HOYER. Specifically, the Senate and the executive branch, how out of kilter were we with those two competitors, if you will?

Mr. MCCUMBER. With the Senate, we were at pace with them until we both decoupled, and I believe they got 1 year ahead of us until we caught back up. But the executive branch has been consistently.

Mr. HOYER. And, prior to that time, I think one of you mentioned to me in my office that we were losing people to the Senate.

Mr. MCCUMBER. Yes, sir.

So our terrific Official Reporters, the stenographers, when we—both staff pay as well as the way we handled the leave system for our stenographers, the Senate offered better benefits along those lines.

And so until we changed the way our leave system worked, as well as we were able to increase staff pay, we were consistently los-

ing stenographers to the Senate for those better benefits. And since we have put those in place, we have been able to retain staff.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. McFarland and Ms. Szpindor, would you like to comment on that?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sure. Just to let you know, we have actually taken some people from the Senate side. So I feel better about that. We have actually—we have been able to retain.

I think one thing that I can say from my personal experience of leaving and coming back is the fact that I saw what it is like in the private sector.

I saw where, for Catherine's purposes, cybersecurity folks and how much they make on the outside compared to where they are in the government is a large contrast.

So that is something that should be looked at.

Mr. HOYER. Can you give me sort of a guess at what the contrast is?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sure. I think when you take a look at the company that I worked for, there were system security administrators that were making \$200,000 a year, and they were working from home.

Mr. HOYER. And we were paying similar people——

Mr. MCFARLAND. And we were paying someone similar maybe \$100,000 or \$120,000 a year.

Am I correct on that?

Ms. SZPINDOR. It depends on their position.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Correct.

Ms. SZPINDOR. They could be making a little bit more.

Mr. HOYER. You have unique—somewhat unique—you have worked for Sprint and Nextel and Sprint Nextel. Compare the quality of people that we have with the quality of people you worked with in the private sector.

Ms. SZPINDOR. From their dedication and the quality of the individuals work on what they do, I would put it right next to anything that I had seen in my career in the private sector—quite frankly.

We have individuals that probably could retire if they wanted to, but—and when I asked them, I said, “How much longer do you think you might be here? We value you.” And they usually say, “We are here because we love this place. We are here because we are serving the American people.”

And that is exactly how my staff feels. They are talented. They are some of the best technicians I have ever worked with.

And, yes, they make a little less than what they would probably make if they were with a firm outside of the government, but they have such dedication to what they do, the mission they serve, they stay, and they are the bedrock of our organization.

Mr. HOYER. I am over time, and I will go back when we do the second round with some other questions.

But the bottom line is, all three of you—particularly those of you who have worked in the private sector—would compare our employees not only favorably but as good as anybody you can find in the private sector.

Is that accurate?

Ms. SZPINDOR. That is most certain.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Hoyer.

I now recognize Mr. Strong for his 5 minutes.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member.

I want to start by thanking the witnesses and their staff for their hard work and dedication to the U.S. House of Representatives. Each of your jobs and your teams are vital to ensuring that our Nation's legislative process runs smoothly.

With this being said, everyone understands, with a \$26 trillion national debt, each of us are required to maximize the expenditure of every taxpayer dollar.

I gratefully appreciate each of your visit to my office to present your update on your budget and your vision for the days ahead.

Ms. Szpindor, you mentioned that the CAO has faced a 30 to 50 percent increase in cost of House-purchased software and hardware since fiscal year 2023.

Have these rising costs impacted your ability to maintain and upgrade the House's IT infrastructure? And how will your fiscal year 2026 requests address these challenges?

Ms. SZPINDOR. I can say we have managed okay, and the way we have managed is that some of the projects that we have planned during those years we were not able to do.

We go through a thorough project prioritization process to look at can we extend this just a little bit longer and what is serious, what is necessary to be done at a particular point in time. We meet quarterly to review all of our projects to see if the prioritization needs to change.

So we have been able to manage with a lot of prioritization choices, but we are at the point after 3 years that we just can't with the price manage increases and everything I spoke about.

Mr. STRONG. Okay.

Ms. SZPINDOR. We just cannot do that.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Some of these projects have got to be done. If they aren't, then we will start having problems with our systems.

Mr. STRONG. Ms. Szpindor, in your opening statement you mentioned overtime costs, overtime costs versus full-time salaried employees.

Has there been a cost comparison to evaluate at what point the cost break is established with salaried employees versus your overtime costs?

Ms. SZPINDOR. We look at that on a regular basis, and we look at it usually every time we do a budget.

A lot of the overtime costs are for individuals at some of the lesser salary levels. So they are not extraordinary. We try to limit those. The time we see a lot of overtime is during transition.

Mr. STRONG. Has there been consideration to reorganize either these departments through attrition and technical upgrades that would strengthen each of your organizations?

Ms. SZPINDOR. We look at that on a regular basis, yes.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

I also understand that the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress worked with the CAO to identify areas that would benefit from modernization initiatives.

Ms. Szpindor, can you share some of the recommendations provided by the committee that you have implemented?

Ms. SZPINDOR. The answer is quite a few that we have done.

We developed for the House a HouseCal, which is a House calendar, that is acceptable to show you—what is happening in session—and a full calendar that you can select and look at as to what might be going on any particular day.

We also have a product that we are working on now which I think has huge potential. It is called a Case—let me get the exact name right—CaseCompass project.

And what this is, it is a pilot program with the support of the subcommittee that collects and anonymizes casework across 40 offices that have volunteered to be part of this. And what that does, it ingests casework data and breaks it down by Federal agency, subagency, and what the problem is.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Ms. Szpindor. Thank you.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yeah.

Mr. STRONG. Switching gears.

Mr. McFarland, I know the Sergeant at Arms office takes steps to ensure readiness for emergencies, whether due to natural disasters, civil unrest, or other threats.

Can you expand on why the requested funding is necessary to maintain and improve capabilities?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, if you take a look, what we have asked for, for emergency management, basically is 20 percent of the escape hoods.

Instead of going for a large portion of the budget that we used to do once every 5 years where it would cost \$7.5 million, we are now taking 20 percent of the escape hoods and replacing them at that time. That way we are not gouging, you know, a big number to you every year, every 5 years. We are just giving it to you. Now it is going to be a steady flow of \$1.5 million.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Strong.

And I now recognize Ms. Maloy for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

One of the great things about being new on a committee is all the good questions get asked before they get to you. So I may not even need my full 5 minutes.

Thank you all for your efforts at modernization. As someone who was a staffer on the Hill and is now a Member of Congress on the Hill, I can see the need to update a lot of the things we do where we are operating on old technology a lot.

Mr. McCumber, you came and talked to me yesterday and we talked about Comparative Print Suite. I am just going to give you a minute to brag. Will you just explain what that is and why it is going to make all of our lives so much better?

Mr. MCCUMBER. Yes, ma'am. Thank you for the question.

So the Comparative Print Suite has been a yearslong effort. I should add it is—compare.house.gov is the——

Ms. MALOY. Thank you.

Mr. McCUMBER [continued]. Website, the link to be able to access it for—currently, it is only available to Members and staff in the House.

But it allows you to do a real-time, red-line comparison, a bill-to-bill comparison, bill-to-existing law, and changes to existing law. You can pull out various sections of a bill and compare it to drafts.

And it takes a lot of the effort that may have—that had to be expended previously and it just takes it right down, drills it right down, and pulls exactly what you are looking for—using, I should add, a form of AI natural language processing. And it has been a really helpful tool both to Members, I know committees and staff, to be able to have that real-time comparison.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you. As a former legal counsel on the Hill, I would have loved to have had that.

Mr. McCUMBER. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MALOY. There were a lot of times I was trying to explain what a bill would do to an existing law, and I would always say it would be so nice to be able to have a red line. So I appreciate that.

Mr. McFarland, we talked about the Secure Member Portal app, and without disclosing anything proprietary, can you explain how that works and how often it is being used?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sure. So every Member of Congress voluntarily—we offer them what we call the Secure Member Portal, and now we have created an app to go with that portal.

So when Members of Congress are needing law enforcement coordination back in their home districts because they are having a town hall, whether or not they want residential security or they want cybersecurity or they need some air operations help during the airports when you guys go home, fly home, this Member app now is on your phone that you can utilize it a lot quicker.

I can say right now we have a very good portion of the Members. Over 75 percent of the Members are using this. So I am very happy.

Ms. MALOY. I am in the 25 percent that didn't know about it till yesterday, so—

Mr. MCFARLAND. We will sign you up today, ma'am.

Ms. MALOY. We will make that 76 percent soon.

Thank you for doing that.

Ms. Szpindor, we are talking about these AI functions, and you said in your testimony that you are working on how to use more AI and make sure we are using it responsibly. And with 12,000 employees and a lot of turnover on the Hill, can you just talk a little bit about how you are going to be able to get 12,000 young, ambitious employees to be smart with AI?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Well, it is going to take a lot of training. I met with Gartner not too long ago. It was a 2-day session that we talked about AI and responsible use of AI.

And they made it very clear, all of the individuals I have worked with, that without doing a dedicated education program across the board from the top of the organization down on AI and constantly providing additional feedback, you have to do that if you are going to implement AI, you have to, or it will not be successful.

So I asked my staff about a month ago after I came back from meeting with Gartner that we needed to start our planning now, our strategy now, for how, when we roll out a product, how we are going to do the training, and train and train and train. And that is what we are going to do. We have to.

I don't want to see a major investment in any product go unused or not used correctly when there is so much potential to use the data that we can garner from it.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you.

I am just about out of time. Mr. Chairman, can I have 30 more seconds because I have got two quick questions?

Mr. VALADAO. The gentlelady is recognized.

Ms. MALOY. I will be fast.

So, to all of you, thank you for being here.

One question I want to ask—it is not even a question. You don't have to respond. I will be fast.

We have so many forms we have to fill out from your offices, and they all have to be signed by a Member. And I would just request that you look at some of the forms you require us to fill out and see if a chief's signature would satisfy something like a request to remove junk from our offices.

And then the only other thing. I talked to some of you yesterday about coming in, in a special election, and trying to get through some of these processes outside of the normal freshman orientation.

Please let my office help you improve that. We have got two people being sworn in today, and I would like them to have a better experience than I had.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ms. Maloy.

And I now recognize Mr. Moore for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here.

I just want to start off real quick touching on what Mr. Hoyer had talked about a little bit as it relates to retention.

Is some of that—have we seen a dramatic change over the years? They stick all the former staffers on the end. I have worked here, too.

Has there been a change as it relates to the benefits here for the staff that you all employ on the Hill over time? Does that relate at all to the retention issues that you have?

Ms. SZPINDOR. We have actually increased some of our benefits—

Mr. MOORE. Okay.

Ms. SZPINDOR [continuing]. In the past couple of years for education, outside education, being able to go and get loans.

Mr. MOORE. Your mic?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Oh, it is on. I am sorry. You didn't hear me.

I have got hearing aids, so I can hear myself really good. [Laughter.]

Ms. SZPINDOR. But we have rolled out a number of the new initiatives in the past 2 or 3 years to help staff with their education costs and being able to get private loans now, which is new.

And I will be honest with you. In my organization, we don't see a huge retention issue.

Mr. MOORE. Okay. Well, that is good.

And then, Mr. McFarland, if I could ask real quick. And thank you for coming by my office there the other day. And we talked a little bit about this, the need for increasing the number of MOUs with law enforcement partners around the country to try to keep Members and their families safe.

Could you talk a little bit more about some of the challenges around that? Because there have been some increased issues out there in people's districts where folks are camped out in front of people's houses, people's spouses are being chased around. And it feels like perhaps there might be a growing threat, but you would know better than I.

But maybe you could talk a little more about those MOUs and challenges that you face. Obviously, Capitol Police can't be everywhere in every district every moment. But maybe you could expand on that a little bit.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sure. The memorandums of understanding is that we—that the Capitol Police partner with local law enforcement, State law enforcement, even the Federal law enforcement agencies in every State.

And over the time it has been a very small number. And we are hoping that—something that the new chief I hope will do—we will start expanding that to reaching out to at least every State organization and trying to get some help.

There are a lot of Members of Congress that are at home in their districts. And, yes, I can give you residential security; and, yes, I can give you cybersecurity, with the help of Catherine's shop.

But the reality is, you are right, there are Member spouses that are at home that all of a sudden a pop-up demonstration happens.

I have actually—when I went out for both the RNC and the DNC, I actually made it a point to go thank some of the agencies that were around those areas for their assistance, but not only that, but also talked to the locals that were right next to the Members' houses.

We see a great support from local law enforcement when we are asked to do it. I just hope that the next chief coming in has a vision that this is a top priority.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you.

And then I just want to echo what she said. I really wish the red-line capability was around when I was a staff member. But that is great that that is there now.

So I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Moore.

I believe there are a couple of us that want to have a second round of questions, and those who don't have questions just let me know and I will skip you.

But I will start off with my first 5 minutes.

When a Member of Congress dies or resigns from office, I understand that it is the responsibility of your office, Mr. McCumber, to take over that office until a new Member of Congress has been elected and sworn into office.

How many of these vacant offices have you already taken over in the 118th, how many were taken over at once, and what responsibilities do you take on in leading these vacant offices? And how

do you plan and budget for these activities? And how do you maintain constituent services? Because I feel like that is probably the most important part of this.

Mr. MCCUMBER. Yes, sir. No. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We agree with you that maintaining constituent services is our highest priority. So in the 118th Congress, we managed 18 vacant offices. We had seven at one time. It was for a short period of time. We had four that we had for a pretty long while.

Thankfully, the budgets for these offices are maintained by the Members' MRA and so it doesn't have any impact to the Clerk's organization budget.

We work very closely with the CAO and her team to maintain those office operations. And, again, agreeing with you that maintaining those constituent services is our number one priority.

We meet with the staff of the vacant office within a week or so of when it becomes vacant. Obviously, we have conversations with them as soon as it happens, but a more formal meeting, with myself included. And I make sure every one of them has my cell phone number in case they need to reach me directly if they are not getting the assistance that they need from our staff.

And I really stress the importance of, "We will stay out of your way. You guys know your district better than I ever will or that our staff ever will and we are here to support you." And that we stress that maintaining those constituent services is our highest priority and should remain their highest priority.

Mr. VALADAO. Does the staff at that point have the ability to do any sort of outreach to constituents to help clarify that the office is still able to provide these constituent services?

Mr. MCCUMBER. Yes.

And so shortly after the vacancy there is a letter that goes out for existing casework, letting them know, "Is this something you would still like to continue?" Staff can still accept new casework requests. Staff still attend town halls.

If there is anything where they can learn something that will affect their constituents, whether it is with going to a town hall from another Federal department that is coming to visit or just going to other town councils and hearing and seeing what is going on in the area, that they can then share that information with their constituents.

Mr. VALADAO. Okay. So I guess what I meant by that was if they are able to send out any sort of, like, mass mail or some sort of post on social media, something more visible. Are they allowed to do that without a Member in place?

Mr. MCCUMBER. Not typically. When there are natural disasters that happen in the district they come through us and say, "Is this something we can post?"

We are very concerned about making sure that while the constituent services are still in place, that we are not taking any sort of a position on anything one way or another.

And so things like a natural disaster or preparations or where to get resources, we have allowed them to make those posts and to make sure that those—

Mr. VALADAO. Yeah. I just imagine that some constituents might be a little bit concerned if they have a case. And, obviously, if there

is a pending case, that is one issue. But if they have a case that comes up, do they feel comfortable reaching out.

And I am just curious if they have the ability to send out an email saying, "Hey, even though this happened, we still have the ability to take care of folks, so feel free to reach out." But I imagine you guys would have to approve that on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. MCCUMBER. That is right.

Mr. VALADAO. Casework is something I have always taken pretty serious and I know a lot of my colleagues do as well, and it is something our constituents depend on. And if they are not able to do that as staff, I imagine those constituents are troubled by that.

Ms. Szpindor, so I notice a lot of new hardware around the building mounted, and I assume we have updated a lot of our hardware for some of our HousePublic networks.

Is there ever a conversation about having two, separating one for the public and one for Members themselves and staff, go down that path, so that you don't have one that gets bogged down by a lot of visitors, I guess?

Ms. SZPINDOR. It is certainly something we can look into. We have not had a request for that. We have the WiFi system that is for the general public, the HousePublic WiFi system, as opposed to what we would use internally.

But our networking organization is always tasked to make sure that everything is working. We replaced some of the network components over the years simply because it is complicated in the House buildings to have good connectivity all the time because of the age of them and other things.

But we can look into that if that is something that you all would like us to do and what the cost would be for it. It would be additional expenses as far as network switching, connectivity, and everything. No one has asked, but I will be glad to look into it.

Mr. VALADAO. Yeah. I have had a few people complain about sometimes the system getting bogged down during, I think, higher traffic times. So it was just something that has been brought to my attention, so it would be interesting to get some feedback on that.

And my time is expired, so I will recognize Mr. Espallat for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPALLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McFarland, I think we have had a conversation in the past where I have shared with you my concern about perhaps what I view as the most vulnerable time for Members of Congress, which is when we are coming out from votes and we have got to catch a flight or make a meeting and we have someone picking us up in front of the Capitol. We are somewhat distracted, and I think that that is a vulnerability.

But also at Union Station or at the airports, when we are trying to make a flight or trying to catch Amtrak and we may be somewhat distracted and open to an attack.

And first, I wanted to know if there has been any consideration for AI-related security in the Capitol campus that would ensure that we are a little bit more protected.

I also am concerned that as we are getting swept by the dogs, the canine unit, people are just walking right by us with backpacks, cyclists, runners, hundreds of them. And yet we are du-

tiful in making sure that the cars don't go through with any threat, but there are dozens of folks that are just walking right by us as we enter.

So I know there must be some technology that gives us greater protection for that scenario. And also, I want to know what has happened in the airports and in Union Station.

Mr. MCFARLAND. So, sir, I can say right now some of the mitigation factors that we put in place when there is a vote on, besides the sweeping of the cars, we lock down the plaza. So we lock down the plaza that it is only for staff and it is only for Members to go through. We do not let the public come through that area without being searched.

That said, I personally can tell you that I saw this just the other day. We have vapor dogs, and the vapor dogs will go by people to make sure to see if they have any explosives. Those dogs are patrolling the plaza at any given day at any given time. It is not a set time.

I actually watched it. They actually were testing the dogs out. And they went through a large group of school kids at 8 o'clock in the morning, and the vapor dog found the backpack right away. So it was a good success story from just watching it happen.

Like I said, we just started the secure working group for R&D and AI and technology to help us out. I can tell you that as far as the metal detectors have gone, as well as the X-ray machines, we have added AI tools to those. We have actually purchased electronic screening procedures that you see at the airports.

As it relates to Union Station, we haven't really, given—if there is an incident, Capitol Police will respond to Union Station. Our focus has been mostly at the airports, and we have actually increased officers at the airports on fly-in days and fly-out days, just to make sure that the Members can get gate to gate without any incidents happening.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I encourage you to take a look at Union Station as well, as many of our Members don't fly. They take Amtrak.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, sir.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And so I think that would be a smart thing to do. And I have seen the greater attention at the airport. So I thank you for that.

Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espailat.

Now I recognize Ms. Maloy for a second round of 5 minutes.

Ms. MALOY. I apologize, Mr. Chairman. If I would have realized we were having a second round, I would not have gone over on my first round. Now I am going to prove I can use time wisely.

Mr. Burke, would you be willing to come up to the mic for a minute.

I read your testimony. By the way, congratulations on your appointment as Legislative Counsel for the House.

Mr. BURKE. Thank you.

Ms. MALOY. I read your testimony, and you talked about the large increases in your office's workload in helping draft bills and get them ready for introduction.

Will you just share with my colleagues some of the trends you are seeing and what you are doing to address them?

Mr. BURKE. Yes, Congresswoman. Thank you for that question. You are exactly right. My office has seen over years now a trend in the increase in legislation.

I actually included in my written testimony a chart which you might look at on the fifth page of my written testimony.

And one thing it will show you is that if you were to go back to the 114th Congress, there were 6,563 bills introduced in the House. But then you jump ahead to the 118th Congress, and that number leaps all the way up to 10,534 bills.

For every bill that is introduced, we draft about two in my office. And this trend does not seem to be changing in the 119th.

You can also see a couple stats on the chart that show that in the first 60 days of this Congress my front desk has received a 72 percent increase in requests, which surprised me. I did not expect it to be that high. And also, there has been a 34 percent increase in the number of bills introduced during those 30 days.

But I will say that this has been a long trend now. So my office has come up with a plan. We are, in fact, taking steps to address this. We have a three-part plan.

The first part is, well, in direct response to requests by this subcommittee and leadership and Members over the years, which is to properly staff our teams at the capacity they need to be. We are on-boarding 11 attorneys this fiscal year 2025.

In the past, when my predecessor discussed this, I know there has been discussion of the training bottleneck. Yes. Because we work in small specialized teams of two to six attorneys, I can't just take a team of three that is overwhelmed and add three more attorneys to fix the problem because the team would be crushed, not helped, by the addition of three. They are spending hours of the day training.

But this year, the way we are doing it, the way we are addressing that training bottleneck is, of the 11—I have an ace up my sleeve—of the 11 we are on-boarding this year, 4 are former Leg Counsel attorneys. They don't need to be trained. They can hit the ground running day one. And they have all agreed to actually be trainers themselves.

Also, a second step we are taking is we are trying to do a better job of triaging requests for what is the desired level of review.

As you know, not every Member wants full legal review for every request. Sometimes they just want their words fast. And so for that, we have created a new formatting-only track where a Member can submit a request and just get their words back in XML.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you for that.

Mr. BURKE. And it is going to be messy. I have to warn you, the quality is going to go down for those. But it will be very fast and it will help us to give us time to focus our time on the requests where the Members do want full legal review.

A third thing I would like to do but I haven't been able to do yet is establish a new first-ever floater team, which would be two to three attorneys who would not have a specialization, who could be moved around according to the needs of the House.

You know, if my health finance team is super busy on a markup and the bills in that area for introduction are backing up, I can

shift over this floater team. That would allow us to be more nimble than we ever have been.

So, again, thank you for the question, because my office is both drafting and training at all-time record levels right now, we really appreciate the support.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back with a few seconds left.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Ms. Maloy.

I now recognize Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am going to—counsel, I want you. You engendered a question.

We froze you for fiscal year 2025 at existing levels. I am going to ask all of you this question. But, obviously, your workload has substantially increased as a result of the Members of Congress themselves.

Mr. BURKE. Yes, sir.

Mr. HOYER. First of all, I want to ask a question. What is your breakout? How many Democrats? How many Republicans? What Congress? Subject matter? Do you have that broken out in terms of the number of, what, 1,700, is that what you said? It went from 1,000 to 10,000?

Mr. BURKE. Oh, no, we don't really provide—of course, all of it is public on Congress.gov, but we treat as confidential who has requested what. So that creates a barrier for us disclosing what is not already public on Congress.gov.

Mr. HOYER. Yeah, I am not talking about individual Members. What I am talking about is a gross—you say there has been a very substantial increase over the last few Congresses.

Mr. BURKE. There has.

Mr. HOYER. And what I am trying to get at is what engendered that increase.

Mr. BURKE. Yes. It is a good question, which I admit I cannot fully explain the increase, but I do have some theories, some factors that are contributing to it.

Most notably, of course, we have the Supreme Court's decision in Loper Bright last year where now that is an increase in workload, not necessarily an increase in requests, but an increase in workload to the extent bills need to be drafted in greater detail than they were before.

And also I would say outside stakeholder text proliferates, messaging bills. Those are probably part of the answer but not the full answer for why it is increasing.

Mr. HOYER. You said messaging bills.

Mr. BURKE. Yes, sir.

Mr. HOYER. Okay. I understood what messaging bills are.

I would like all of you to answer that question. You were frozen at fiscal year 2025. You, I know, Ms. Szpindor, essentially at 2023 numbers. You are working at 2023 numbers.

What I want to ask you, if you continue to be frozen—or, better said, what was the effect of freezing you at fiscal year 2025 numbers in terms of what we didn't get, which is sort of like the question that Mr. Strong asked. But I would like to have a broader aspect of: What do we pay for that, not doing that? What do we lose?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Well, we lose possibly hiring some additional people. We lose the ability—

Mr. HOYER. We are jettisoning a lot of people at the Federal level, unfortunately, without, in my opinion, knowledge of the consequences of those reductions. Ten thousand people were fired yesterday without notice, a despicably inhumane, stupid way to operate.

But we froze you, all of you—

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yes.

Mr. HOYER [continuing]. Without, I think, a full understanding of the impacts of that freeze, is what I am trying to get at.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Well, for us, it just prevented us from doing some of the additional projects and things that we had hoped to do.

We are trying very, very hard, with the help of the Modernization Committee and others, to modernize our technology, to make it available, so that people don't go out and look for an alternative AI tool that they use and they don't fully understand what the security of it is and things like that.

So we were hoping over the past 3 years to have done more of that than what we have done. Our team has outperformed. They have done a great job. We have got new tools. But it is not all we wanted to do.

So we are now just—I know this isn't part of your question—but I just wanted to reemphasize we are now in a situation where we have to have more money to be able to maintain the critical systems that we have.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I can say that for the first 2 years as Sergeant at Arms I took a 25 percent—total 25 percent decrease. I am just now starting to see the pendulum swing the other way, based off of technology and modernization.

When I take a look at our budget, if we were frozen, I would have to go back and talk to my executive team where we need to make the cuts. But that affects the security that we are providing for you.

So that would be something that I would really need to take a long hard look at and see where we can make the cuts.

Mr. MCCUMBER. Thank you, sir.

I would just add as well that we have made some really good progress on our modernization initiatives using seed money from the Modernization Initiatives Account.

And should we stay flat for fiscal year 2026, that would have some pretty significant impacts on our ability to keep that momentum going and be able to continue to provide these requested services to the House, both to the Members and the staff.

So it would have a pretty significant impact, that we have to go back and revisit our timelines and really prioritize the projects, working with this committee and others.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. Well, if there are no further questions, I would like to thank Mr. McCumber, Mr. McFarland, and Ms. Szpindor, and all of our House officials for being here today.

Members may submit additional questions for the record.

And the committee now stands adjourned. Thank you all.

[Whereupon, at 11:24 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



Matthew Berry, General Counsel

Mr. Berry has served as General Counsel since February 1, 2023. Previously, he was a Partner at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP. Mr. Berry has also served as General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and Chief of Staff of the Federal Communications Commission. As the Commission's General Counsel, he was responsible for defending the Commission's orders in court and providing legal advice to the Commission on a wide range of issues, including those involving constitutional law, statutory interpretation, and administrative law. Earlier in his career, Mr. Berry was a partner at Patton Boggs LLP. Additionally, Mr. Berry has served in the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel and Office of Legal Policy, where he earned the Department's John Marshall Award for providing legal advice related to counter-terrorism policy. He was also a law clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and Judge Laurence Silberman of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, and has served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at William & Mary Law School and a staff attorney at the Institute for Justice. He received his A.B. in Government and Economics from Dartmouth College, summa cum laude, and his law degree from Yale Law School, where he was a member of the Yale Law Journal.

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**STATEMENT OF MATTHEW BERRY, GENERAL COUNSEL
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**REGARDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET REQUEST
OF THE OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL**

**BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

APRIL 2, 2025

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify about the fiscal year 2026 (“FY 2026”) budget request of the Office of General Counsel (“OGC”) of the U.S. House of Representatives (“House”). OGC requests \$2,079,000 for FY 26, a sum that includes \$1,843,000 for personnel costs and \$236,000 for non-personnel costs. This budget request represents an increase of approximately 4.63% over the OGC allocation for FY 2025, which under the FY 2025 Continuing Resolution was held flat from FY 2024. Thus, under this budget request, OGC would receive a modest 2.3% funding increase on an annual basis from FY 2024 to FY 2026, which is below the rate of inflation. In this testimony, I will first discuss the important work carried out by OGC and then set forth the justification for OGC’s FY 2026 budget request.

Functions of the Office

Pursuant to Rule II.8(a) of the Rules of the House (119th Cong.), OGC provides legal advice and representation to the House, and as appropriate, to its Members, Committees, Officers, and employees, without regard to political affiliation, on matters related to their official duties. With respect to litigation matters involving the House, OGC consults with the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (consisting of the Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, and the Majority and Minority Whips). *See* House Rule II.8(a), (b). While it is difficult to furnish an exhaustive list of the types of advice and representation that OGC provides, OGC is involved in the following types of matters with some frequency:

- **Judicial Proceedings:** OGC represents the House in litigation, and also represents House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees, both as parties and as non-party witnesses, in litigation arising from or relating to the performance of their official duties, at the pre-trial, trial, and appellate levels. Among other responsibilities, OGC defends civil suits; moves to quash or limit subpoenas; represents the House and its Committees in suits for affirmative relief, such as enforcement of House subpoenas; represents the House in defending Acts of Congress that the Department of Justice declines to defend; files *amicus curiae* briefs on behalf of the House or one or more of its constituent entities in cases that raise issues of significant institutional interest to the House and its Members; and applies to district courts, on behalf of Committees, for immunity orders for witnesses.

- **Committee Subpoenas:** OGC provides advice to House Committees in connection with the preparation, issuance, and enforcement of subpoenas, including advice and assistance in dealing with recalcitrant witnesses.
- **Requests for Information:** OGC provides advice and representation to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees in connection with responses to informal and formal requests for information (e.g., grand jury subpoenas, trial and deposition subpoenas, and FOIA requests) from governmental agencies (including the Department of Justice), as well as from private parties.
- **Privileges:** OGC provides advice to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees regarding the applicability of various privileges including, most particularly, the Speech or Debate Clause privilege (U.S. Const., Art. I, § 6, cl. 1), but also executive, Fifth Amendment, attorney-client, attorney work product, and other privileges.
- **Social Media Guidance:** OGC advises House Members, Committees, Officers, and staff regarding best practices for the use of official social media accounts.
- **Tort Claims:** OGC reviews and evaluates tort claims for possible administrative resolution by the Committee on House Administration and, where appropriate, refers such claims to the Department of Justice for defense under the Federal Tort Claims Act, and then assists the Department with such defense.
- **Constituent Casework:** OGC provides advice to Members and their staff regarding legal issues related to the handling of constituent casework, including responding to questions that concern the confidentiality and discoverability of constituent communications and information.
- **Internal Policies:** In consultation with the Speaker's office and other leadership offices, OGC assists in drafting, amending, and evaluating internal House policies, rules, and regulations.
- **MPCECA Claims:** OGC reviews and evaluates claims for administrative resolution by the Committee on House Administration under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act, which provides an administrative remedy for House employees whose personal property was damaged incident to their federal service.
- **Tax Matters:** OGC advises House offices and vendors regarding applicable tax exemptions for official purchases.
- **Other Matters:** OGC provides a great deal of day-to-day advice on a wide variety of other legal matters including, but not limited to, immigration, intellectual property, debt collection, jury duty, landlord/tenant disputes, and miscellaneous constitutional and separation-of-powers issues.

Demand for OGC's services has been extensive in recent years, as has the number of complex and high-profile legal matters that the office has been asked to handle.

Justification for the FY 2026 Budget Request

At normal staffing levels, OGC is comprised of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, several senior attorneys with extensive legal experience, multiple law clerks, and an office administrator/member services director.

Based on the proposed funding level set forth in OGC's FY 2026 budget request, I expect OGC to be able to continue to deliver the same level of effective service we currently provide to the House. The vast majority of OGC's budget request, almost 90%, is for the personnel compensation needed to retain the highly qualified attorneys and staff who handle the bulk of OGC's workload. It is imperative that OGC be able to continue offering competitive salaries to ensure that we are able to attract and retain top-flight legal talent to carry out the office's important responsibilities.

As noted in our budget request, there exists a distinct probability that OGC will be required to undertake significant litigation during FY 2026. Such litigation may include cases in which the House authorizes OGC to initiate litigation, intervene or file amicus briefs in pending cases, or seek judicial enforcement of subpoenas issued by various House Committees. It is therefore critical that OGC have the resources necessary to maintain a staff of talented attorneys capable of skillfully handling such matters.

In past years, OGC has on occasion, before my tenure as General Counsel, utilized private attorneys to handle certain cases. Such legal services have been provided to OGC by private attorneys on a pro bono basis, and OGC has also entered into contracts with private attorneys for paid legal services. Previously, such contracts have required the reprogramming of funds to increase OGC's budget. In FY 2026, OGC will seek to utilize its own staff to litigate cases wherever possible. And if the need for private attorneys should arise, OGC always will first seek to have such legal services provided on a pro bono basis; during FY 2026, OGC will only enter into contracts for paid legal services with private attorneys as a last resort.

Non-personnel costs represent roughly 10% of the OGC budget request. The primary drivers of non-personnel costs include: computers and technology, printing costs for submitted court documents, subscription access to research platforms, and standard office supplies and equipment. We anticipate increased travel-related expenses with OGC attorneys representing the interests of the House in-person outside of Washington, DC.

In conclusion, it is an honor to serve the House and to lead OGC's talented team of professionals. OGC's FY 2026 budget request will give us the resources necessary to continue to provide the House with high-quality legal advice and representation. Thank you for considering this request, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions the Subcommittee might have for me today.



Biography of the Acting Inspector General

Christen Janell Stevenson



Ms. Christen Stevenson began serving as the Acting Inspector General of the U.S. House of Representatives (House) on February 10, 2025. Christen joined the Office of Inspector General at the U.S. House of Representatives in 2016. She has served the House and the Office in various capacities, including as Deputy Inspector General, Director of Management Advisory Services, and an Assistant Director in the Performance and Financial Audits and Investigations Division.

Before joining the House, Christen held various positions of increasing responsibility in both the public and private sectors. Her experience includes roles at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, ABN AMRO Bank, Freddie Mac, the Government Publishing Office, Deloitte Consulting LLP, the U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Inspector General, and Cotton and Company LLP.

Christen is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA), a Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), a Certified Fraud Examiner, a Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM), and a Certified Financial Services Auditor (CFSA). She is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the AICPA, the IIA, the ACFE, the AGA, and ISACA. Christen earned her Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Central Michigan University, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland, and a Master of Engineering in Cybersecurity from George Washington University.

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**Statement Before the House Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Appropriations**

**U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Inspector General, Fiscal Year
2026 Budget Request**

April 2, 2025

**Christen Janell Stevenson
Acting Inspector General**

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**Statement Before the House Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Appropriations**

Office of Inspector General, Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request

April 2, 2025

**Christen Janell Stevenson
Acting Inspector General**

**Funding
Request
Summary**

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to share with you the important work of the Office of Inspector General (OIG, Office) and our Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget request. Our request seeks a total funding of \$6,227,000, an overall net increase of \$455,000 (7.31%) above the Continuing Resolution annualized for FY 2025. This request encompasses our Audit and Advisory, Administration, and Training programs.

The elements of the request for additional funds are:

- \$395,000 due to changes in mandatory spending (e.g., the Speaker's Pay Order Change, adjustments in the Personnel Base Adjustment-HEPCA and Personnel Base, the approved 2025 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), the projected COLA for FY 2026, and scheduled longevity step increases).
- \$60,000 for the purchase of equipment (e.g., laptops last upgraded in FY 2023).

**Organization
History and
Background**

The "*House Administrative Reform Resolution of 1992*" (House Resolution 423 of the 102nd Congress) established the Office of Inspector General for the House. Since the appointment of the first Inspector General, John Lainhart IV, in November 1993, this Office has worked closely with House Leadership, the Committee on House Administration (CHA), House Officers and Officials, and this Subcommittee to 1) identify risks to the legislative process and to the House, 2) improve services for Members and Committees, 3) identify and deter fraud, and 4) enhance the

operational effectiveness of the House and reduce inefficiencies and costs.

The Office offers audit services through its two audit divisions, in addition to forward-looking analysis and guidance through its management advisory services division. Our work is performed by a staff of experienced and dedicated professionals who possess at least a bachelor's or a more advanced degree, a minimum of one relevant professional certification, and extensive experience in both the public and/or private sectors.

**Highlights from
the Second
Session of the
118th Congress**

During the second session of the 118th Congress, the OIG completed eight reports across its diverse range of services, including our financial, performance, and information systems audit services, as well as our management advisory services. These reports focused on risks and enhancing efficiencies in areas such as 1) Member and House-wide support, services, and space, 2) Cybersecurity and Information Technology resilience, 3) Human capital, and 4) Fiscal compliance through the Financial Statement Audit.

Furthermore, the OIG offered various forms of support and advice to House Officers and Officials by participating in working groups that assessed risks and enhanced the overall efficiency of operations at the House.

The House Officers have worked with the OIG to mitigate risk by taking corrective actions to address open recommendations outlined in OIG reports. Information about outstanding recommendations is shared regularly with the House Officers and monthly with the CHA to help ensure that the risks identified in our audit reports are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. Since the beginning of the second session of the 118th Congress, the House Officers have taken corrective actions to address 13 outstanding recommendations. The OIG has validated these corrective actions, and those audit recommendations are now closed.

**Focus for the
119th Congress**

The OIG will continue to use a strategic, risk-based approach when planning and executing projects in its work plan. This approach prioritizes projects that address the highest risks to the House and those that address management challenges. The OIG will work more closely with House leadership, the CHA, and House Officers and Officials to ensure this prioritization aligns with the environment. This is especially

**Overview of
the Budget
Formulation
Approach**

important given that the environment is changing and new challenges are constantly emerging, particularly in areas critical to the House, such as the legislative process, physical security, and cybersecurity.

The OIG will provide quality, timely, and objective information along with actionable recommendations that address risks and improve the overall efficiency of the House. The OIG will also continue to work with House Officers to address open recommendations that, when addressed, will further help mitigate risk to the House.

The OIG expects to be held accountable by the People, the House, and this Committee for our spending. We are always mindful that our funding comes from the People. Consistent with our record of sound fiscal stewardship, the OIG's budget request for FY 2026 has been formulated to fund our mission.

Accordingly, our request is based on our work plan and ensures that the OIG can promptly respond to special projects as needed. We use zero-based budgeting to identify program needs and to make realistic estimates for each program's execution.

Audit and Advisory Program

The OIG's audit and advisory services program provides objective, value-added information and advice to House Leadership, the CHA, and House Officers and Officials. These services cover a number of areas, including financial management, administrative operations, workplace matters (e.g., health, safety, and physical security), cybersecurity, and the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information systems.

Training and Development Program

House Rules state that the OIG conducts its work in a manner consistent with government-wide auditing standards. These standards require our staff to have specialized training. Accordingly, the OIG's training and development program ensures that our staff remains in compliance with government standards.

Additionally, investing in staff through training and coaching fosters a culture of integrity, excellence, and innovation—the OIG's core values—and helps the Office attract and retain highly skilled professionals in our competitive field. During the second

session of the 118th Congress, our staff attended 227 classes totaling 1,288 training hours at a cost of \$20,927. This demonstrates our commitment to staff development while reducing the need for and the cost of outside consultants.

Administration Program

The OIG Administration program provides comprehensive administrative and technical support to the audit and management advisory staff, as well as to OIG leadership. This program includes funding for OIG operations (e.g., equipment, maintenance agreements, enterprise computer software, licensing agreements, contractors, technical support).

The OIG takes considerate and deliberate steps to examine and, where possible, reduce costs without compromising the quality of the services we provide or our mission. This is achieved, in part, by using existing House-wide licenses and bulk purchase agreements, negotiating favorable pricing for contract purchases, and streamlining internal processes through automation. The focus on sound fiscal stewardship has enabled us to proactively release funds for reprogramming when our funding exceeds our projected spending.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request Details

The OIG's FY 2026 budget request seeks a total funding of \$6,227,000. Our overall FY 2026 budget net request is \$455,000 (7.31%) over the Continuing Resolution annualized for FY 2025. Our FY 2026 request includes \$5,043,000 for mandatory items, \$3,000 in price level increases (inflation), \$1,291,000 for current program services, with a \$110,000 decrease in program changes.

Our gross request includes an increase of \$395,000 for mandatory items (e.g., COLA and merit increases) as well as \$60,000 for the purchase of equipment (e.g., laptops last upgraded in FY 2023).

Our programs' current and continuing services include funding for the annual audit of the House financial statements by an external certified public accounting firm; software licensing and support agreements; publications, resources, research services, guidance for audit, advisory, and investigative inquiry work; supplies and equipment; communications service plans; technical service support; staff training to remain in compliance with government audit standards and increase specialized, in-house knowledge; and when necessary, external specialized subject

Conclusion

matter experts to support a variety of engagements performed by our Office.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and the Members of this Subcommittee, thank you again for this opportunity to highlight the work of the OIG and its FY 2026 budget request.

Each year, the OIG looks forward to working with this Subcommittee, House Leadership, the Committee on House Administration, and House Officers and Officials to conduct relevant, risk-based projects that are unique to this environment.

Again, the OIG will continue to provide quality, timely, and objective information along with actionable recommendations that address risks and improve the overall efficiency of the House.

Please be assured that *the staff within the Office of Inspector General is committed to our mission and is honored to be of service to the House.*

Thank you for considering my testimony. I would be honored to answer any questions.

Brian D. Lindsey
Law Revision Counsel
U.S. House of Representatives

Brian Lindsey serves as the Law Revision Counsel for the United States House of Representatives. He received a B.A. and M.A. from Indiana University, graduate degrees from Southern Illinois University and the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a J.D. from the University of Minnesota School of Law. After law school, he spent a brief period of time working with State statutes at a private publishing company before joining the Office of the Law Revision Counsel in January of 2006. Brian became the Deputy Law Revision Counsel in February of 2022 and was appointed Law Revision Counsel in October of 2024.



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STATEMENT OF

BRIAN D. LINDSEY

LAW REVISION COUNSEL OF THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

to the

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
of the House Committee on Appropriations

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

TESTIMONY OF

BRIAN D. LINDSEY

LAW REVISION COUNSEL OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

to the

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
of the House Committee on Appropriations

Mister Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the budget request of the Office of the Law Revision Counsel (Office) for Fiscal Year 2026. The Office was established in the House of Representatives by section 205 of House Resolution No. 988, Ninety-third Congress, which was enacted into permanent law by Public Law 93-554. The Office continues to fulfill its mission and appreciates the continuing support given to us by the Subcommittee and Congress.

Budget Request

For fiscal year 2026, I am requesting a budget of \$4,998,000. Of that amount, \$3,998,000 is for the Office to sustain operations with respect to existing personnel and ongoing technology needs. The remaining \$1,000,000 of this request is for No-Year money to begin work on a new website for the Office.

Continuing Operations.—The amount of \$3,998,000 represents a 2.5 percent increase over the amount appropriated by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Public Law 118-47. This amount will allow for the continuation of current personnel, including salary adjustments, routine maintenance and replacement of equipment, and the continuation of service contracts for editorial work and technical support.

New Office Website.—The budget request includes a request for \$1,000,000 of No-Year money to build a new website for the Office. The current website was designed in 2009. Upgrades to the search engine for the United States Code database and the user interface of the Office's website were released during fiscal year 2011 and fiscal year 2017. Additional critical updates for the software supporting the backend of the website were deployed during fiscal year 2021. The current website has served the Office well but is aging. Standards for accessibility, user expectations for performance, and the requirements for running a secure website have become significantly more complex over the last 16 years. A new version of the website is now needed to meet current standards.

House Modernization Project.—Work progresses on the House Modernization Project begun at the behest of House leadership. While no additional funding for the House Modernization

Project is being requested in the Office's fiscal year 2026 budget, the replacement of the antiquated technology currently used for publishing is a priority. Development of the new editing system for the Office is projected to be completed in spring of 2025. In addition, the Office continues to work with the Office of the Clerk and with the Composition System Replacement Group of the Government Publishing Office (GPO), supporting their efforts to develop the ability to maintain congressional data in United States Legislative Markup (USLM) and to publish directly from USLM files, both online and in print.

Functions of the Office

The principal functions of the Office are specified by chapter 9A of title 2 of the United States Code. They are: (1) to maintain and keep current the official version of the Code, and (2) to prepare legislation to enact individual titles of the Code into positive law.

Maintaining the United States Code

The United States Code contains the general and permanent laws of the United States, organized into titles by subject matter. The two primary tasks in maintaining the Code are classifying new laws and updating the text.

Classifying New Laws.—Every law enacted by Congress is read in its entirety by a number of attorneys to identify the general and permanent provisions and any amendments that should be classified to the Code and to decide where in the Code they should be placed. The Office gives the highest priority to this classification function, and the classification of a law is normally completed by the time it is signed by the President and issued a public law number. While thoroughness and accuracy are the prime concerns, speed is also important so that classifications can be posted online and so that our work to update the text of the Code can begin as soon as possible.

Updating the Text.—Updating the text of the Code includes not only integrating new statutory provisions into existing text but also preparing extensive editorial material enabling users to find, track, and understand the updates. This editorial material includes statutory citations and amendment notes to help track the legislative history, notes to explain such things as effective dates, cross references appearing in text, and a variety of other matters, tables to indicate the status of statutory provisions and their location in the Code, and an index. A number of Federal court rules and executive documents are also prepared and published as they are often closely connected to statutory material.

The Office publishes the Code, in both searchable and downloadable versions, on its public website and updates it continuously throughout the legislative year. The Office also publishes, in printed form, a complete new version of the Code once every six years and annual cumulative supplements in the intervening years.

Timeliness of Publication; Improvements in Organization

Publication.—The timely update of a publication of the size and complexity of the Code is a challenging task and depends heavily on the training and expertise of the staff of the Office. The Office places a high priority on retaining existing staff and also seeks to retain the services of retired employees by contracting with them for part-time work. As a result of the efforts of experienced staff, the Office has consistently published online updates in a timely manner without sacrificing the high level of accuracy that is expected and demanded of the official United States Code.

The Office maintains a current, easily accessible online Code in addition to producing the print Code. The Office continues to streamline its editorial practices to tailor them for an online publication that is continuously updated throughout a congressional session. The Office updated the Code online approximately 33 times during the Second Session of the 118th Congress. Bulk data is currently made available for download in a variety of formats (XML, XHTML, PDF, and locator text files) with every update, although this will change when USLM version 2.0 becomes the new standard for Code data. Updates to the main table indicating the status of statutory provisions and their location in the Code, which have traditionally been published at the end of each congressional session, are now being made more frequently to correspond with publication of updates to the Code text. The Office continues to strive for timely updates of the Code by adapting its editorial practices to take advantage of modern technology.

Improvements in Organization.—As part of its ongoing mission to produce both a useful and a usable Code, the Office has undertaken reclassification projects to identify areas of law that have become difficult to navigate or convert into XML and to improve their organization. Some past projects have improved the organization of laws within various existing titles of the Code, and others have even created new editorial titles containing material that had been scattered throughout the Code. More detailed information on these projects is available at <http://uscode.house.gov/editorialreclassification/reclassification.html>.

Positive Law Codification

The second principal function of the Office is to prepare legislation to enact individual titles of the United States Code into positive law as required by 2 U.S.C. 285b. A positive law title is a title that has been enacted into law by Congress in the form of a title of the Code. In contrast, a non-positive law title is an editorial compilation by the Code editors (the Office of the Law Revision Counsel or its predecessors) of various acts separately enacted into law by Congress. The Code currently consists of twenty-seven positive law titles and twenty-six non-positive law titles (one title is reserved).

Positive law codification is an intricate process. It may take a codification attorney a year or more to prepare a codification bill for introduction. There is an extensive period for comment and review as the draft bill is prepared and submitted to the House Committee on the Judiciary. Congressional committees, Government agencies, legal experts, and members of the public are invited to review and comment on the bill to ensure that the meaning and effect of the law as

restated in the new title remain unchanged and to achieve the best possible organizational structure for the new title.

If comments are received requiring revision of the bill after it is introduced in the House, the codification attorneys prepare the necessary amendments. The codification attorneys may prepare a new version of the draft bill, which is then reported by the Committee on the Judiciary as an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Typically, the bill is passed by the House under suspension of the rules. In the Senate, the bill goes to the Committee on the Judiciary and the process continues until the bill is passed by the Senate, typically by unanimous consent. Codification bills not enacted by the end of a Congress must be updated to incorporate new legislation and reintroduced in the next Congress. The codification attorneys are involved throughout the process, working with House and Senate committee staff, Government agencies, and other stakeholders to perfect the bill and move it toward enactment.

In the first session of the 119th Congress, the Office is updating and planning to resubmit eleven bills to the Committee on the Judiciary. The bills were previously submitted to the Committee, but not enacted, in previous sessions of Congress. Two of the bills will enact Title 6 “Domestic Security” and Title 48 “Territories and Insular Possessions” into positive law. Four of the bills will update statutory references in the United States Code. The remaining five bills will incorporate recent enactments to positive law titles, including making technical corrections if necessary. The Office is also working on several new codification projects.

House Modernization Project

No additional funding for the House Modernization Project is being requested in the Office's fiscal year 2026 budget, but the work is ongoing. The House Modernization Project was originated in 2012 as a set of interrelated projects being undertaken by the House Office of the Law Revision Counsel and the House Office of the Legislative Counsel in consultation with representatives from the Committee on House Administration, the Legislative Computer Systems branch of the Office of the Clerk, and the Acquisitions Management branch of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. USLM is an XML schema developed as part of the Office's work on the House Modernization Project. The USLM schema is designed to be extensible and is the emerging standard for maintaining congressional data. Congress needs to replace the antiquated technology currently used for publishing, and the Office continues to work with the Office of the Clerk and with GPO's Composition System Replacement Group, supporting their efforts to develop the ability to maintain congressional data in USLM and publish directly from USLM files, both online and in print.

In the Office of the Law Revision Counsel, work on the House Modernization Project has proceeded in three stages. In the first stage, a conversion tool was designed and implemented to enable the Office to convert the United States Code into XML using the USLM schema. Since July 2013, the Office has made the Code available for use and bulk download in XML through the Office's website.

In the second stage, a new system for drafting codification bills was designed and implemented to enable the Office to produce codification bills and associated material in XML.

In the summer of 2015, the new system was delivered. It is being used for live production work, and refinements are underway to continue to improve functionality.

In the third stage, a new XML-based system for editing and updating the United States Code is being designed and implemented. Currently, the Office uses a specialized suite of internally developed software programs to edit and update the Code. The current methodology works well to promote accuracy and efficiency, but it is an outdated, locator-based system. The bill classification component of the new system is essentially complete, and work continues on the editing and updating components. The goal is to transition to the new system for Code production later in 2025.

Website for the United States Code

The United States Code website maintained by the Office at <https://uscode.house.gov> is the definitive and most current source of United States Code data. The website enables the detailed and meticulous search of the United States Code required for drafting legislation and maintaining the Code itself, and it provides a host of unique features related to that work. In addition, the website hosts information on Code codification projects, downloadable titles of the Code in multiple formats, and products related to the Code's updating and dissemination process. To that end, the website is used by the Office itself for its classification, Code updating, and bill drafting functions. It is also used by numerous other Federal legislative offices and functions (e.g., House and Senate Legislative Counsel offices, the Comparative Print Suite); the Department of Defense and other Federal agencies; commercial publishers of the Code; law schools and their legal research websites; and the public generally.

The present version of the website was developed in 2009. The website has had maintenance updates since then, but it has largely remained unchanged from the version initially placed online in 2011. Standards for accessibility, user expectations for performance, and the requirements for running a secure website have become significantly more complex over the last 16 years. A new version of the website is now needed to meet current standards.

It is essential that this key website for access to Federal statutory law is upgraded to be able to meet the expectations of its varied users now and in the future and to ensure that access remains safeguarded through the use of more robust security mechanisms.

Conclusion

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the fiscal year 2026 budget request of the Office of the Law Revision Counsel and for the Subcommittee's support for the Office. This support has enabled the Office to maintain, update, and improve the United States Code. I will be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

**Warren Burke, Legislative Counsel
Office of the Legislative Counsel
U.S. House of Representatives**



Warren Burke was appointed the Legislative Counsel on November 3, 2024. He is the 9th person serving in this position since the Office of the Legislative Counsel was established in 1919.

The Office of the Legislative Counsel operates under a statutory charter enacted as title V of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (2 U.S.C. 281 et seq.). The Office's purpose is to advise and assist the House of Representatives, and its committees and Members, in the achievement of a clear, faithful, and coherent expression of legislative policies. The Office is charged with maintaining impartiality as to issues of legislative policy and is prohibited from advocating for the adoption or rejection of legislative policy. The Office is required to maintain the attorney-

client privilege as to all communications between it and Members or committees.

Warren received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1992 from the University of Texas at Austin where he was a Battle of Normandy Scholar. He earned a Juris Doctor from Tulane University's school of law in 1997 where he was a member of the Tulane Law Review and Tulane Moot Court Board. Warren served as a judicial clerk in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana from 1997 to 1999.

Warren joined the Office in 1999. Over the next 25 years, he rendered nonpartisan legal analysis and drafting services at all stages of the legislative process and in many areas of law, specializing in public health law.

Warren has a long history of leadership and academic service. He has served in many leadership positions of the Federal Bar Association, including as the President of the Capitol Hill Chapter, a national board member, the national Parliamentarian, the national General Counsel, and the Chair of the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee. He has taught legislative drafting and procedure in numerous contexts, including for the Graduate School, USDA, the D.C. Bar Association, and the International Law Institute.

Warren has long been dedicated to sharing expertise with, and learning from, other drafting offices and institutions. He conducted a 2-week workshop in Monrovia in 2013 to strengthen the capacity of the drafting services of the Liberian House and Senate. He founded the International Conference on Legislation and Law Reform (www.ilegis.org) that same year and continues to serve among the conference's organizers. He participated in the Congressional-Bundestag/Bundesrat Staff Exchange Program in 2018 and served as a Fulbright Specialist at the National Law University Odisha in Cuttack, India, in 2023.

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**Statement of Warren Burke, Legislative Counsel
Office of the Legislative Counsel
U.S. House of Representatives**

**Statement of Warren Burke, Legislative Counsel
Office of the Legislative Counsel
U.S. House of Representatives**

Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the fiscal year 2026 appropriation request of \$18,400,000 for the Office of the Legislative Counsel (Office).

I am pleased and honored to appear before you today in my capacity as the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives. I thank you and your staff for your past support of the Office, and I look forward to working closely with you in carrying out our mission of advising and assisting the House, and its committees and Members, in the achievement of clear, faithful, and coherent expressions of legislative policies.

Meeting the Needs of the House

In direct response to requests by this Subcommittee, Leadership, and Members over recent years, the Office is taking the necessary steps to increase its capacity to meet the increasing legislative needs of the House, reduce backlogs and turnaround times, and preserve our traditional high standard of quality. Our budget reflects the funding level needed to implement these steps.

Increase in Legislation

As illustrated on page 5, requests to the Office for legislation have consistently increased over recent Congresses. The total number of bills introduced (excluding resolutions) in the House increased from 6,536 in the 114th Congress to 10,564 in the 118th Congress.

This trend continues in the 119th Congress. During the first 60 days of the 119th Congress, the number of requests for legislation received by the Office increased by 72 percent (from 3,271 requests during the corresponding period of the 118th Congress to 5,623 requests). Over the same 60 days, the number of bills (excluding resolutions) introduced in the House increased by 39 percent (from 1,259 bills during the corresponding period of the 118th Congress to 1,744 bills).

Another source of increased legislative work is amendments. While during the 118th Congress, the Office prepared 30,494 individual bills (188 percent more than the 10,564 bills that were introduced), the Office also prepared 21,484 amendments. This is a 46-percent increase from the 14,682 amendments prepared by the Office during the 114th Congress. As an example, the process for the 2025 NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act) saw the bill (comprised of 1,008 pages) favorably reported from the Armed Services Committee with a 57–1 vote followed by more than 1,387 amendments filed at the Rules Committee. Ultimately the House-passed version of the bill contained 1,484 pages after 338 amendments were agreed to.

Reducing Backlogs and Turnaround Times

The Office is committed to doing more than merely keeping up with workload. To honor the requests of this Subcommittee, Leadership and Members, the Office is taking the necessary steps to reduce backlogs and turnaround times.

There are two primary challenges to reducing backlogs and turnaround times. The first is meeting the increasing demand for legislation while preserving the Office's traditional high standard of quality. The second is a "training bottleneck", meaning that the same attorneys who are experts in drafting in a particular area of law are also responsible for training new attorneys in that area. The training bottleneck can be an especially formidable challenge when adding team members to a team that is overburdened by workload.

The Office has three approaches for addressing these challenges. First, the Office is onboarding 11 attorneys during FY2025 (instead of the more typical 4 to 6) and 6 new attorneys during FY2026 which will result in an estimated 25-percent increase in the number of attorneys as compared to the beginning of the 118th Congress. The Office is also onboarding 2 new paralegals during FY2025. The Office is addressing the training bottleneck by including 4 former Office attorneys among the 11 new attorneys onboarded during FY2025. These 4 former Office attorneys do not need to be trained, can help with workload immediately, and can serve as trainers.

A second approach is for the Office to improve its system of triaging new requests. Legislative proposals serve a variety of legitimate goals. Not all clients want full legal review. The sooner the Office can determine the desired level of review, the more efficiently the Office can process a request. To this end, the Office recently established its first-ever "formatting only" track through which clients who have proposed legislative text can request mere formatting without any legal review. In addition to expediting the process, this new formatting track allows the Office to focus its legal expertise on requests where clients do want full legal review and assist the Clerk and Government Publishing Office to more efficiently process text not otherwise prepared by the Office.

A third approach would be to establish the Office's first-ever "floater team", meaning 2 to 3 attorneys who could be reassigned weekly according to the most acute drafting needs of the House. For instance, if the Office sees that the health finance team has an increased backlog of requests for bills for introduction because the team is focused on a committee markup, the floater team could be assigned to assist in preparing those bills. The Office hopes to implement this innovative change soon, but only after filling all high-priority staffing gaps.

Supporting Teaching and Collaborative Drafting

The Office has historically performed an important institutional role by teaching staff how to understand and explain legislation so they can effectively advise Members on whether legislation accomplishes the intended goals. The need for these skills is especially high now because of staff turnover rates and the high volume of legislation.

The main way the Office teaches these skills is through the drafting process, especially collaborative drafting sessions. The Office also offers classroom-style training, such as the popular

Leg Counsel 201 interactive in-person course through the Staff Academy. The Office plans to add a Leg Counsel 301 course focusing on drafting at later stages. The Office also participates in numerous other training activities, such as new Member orientation and meeting with committee staff at the beginning of each session.

Unfortunately, excessive workload limits the capacity of the Office to engage in sufficient collaborative drafting and teaching to meet the needs of the House. As backlogs and turnaround times are reduced, the Office will have more time for collaborative drafting and teaching and can further bolster its Staff Academy and other training sessions.

Personnel

The Office's personnel account (entitled "Draft") comprises 93 percent of our total expenses.

Proper staffing is essential to keep up with workload, reduce backlogs and turnaround times, and preserve a high standard of quality. The Office has taken the necessary steps to increase its personnel as the following table depicts:

Staff	115th 2nd Session	116th 2nd Session	117th 2nd Session	118th 2nd Session	As of April 2, 2025	Percentage Change: 115th 2nd Session to Present
Attorneys	47	53	59	68	73	55%
Average Attorney Experience Years	15.5	12.8	12.3	11.4	12.1	-22%
Support Staff	21	25	22	22	23	9.5%
Average Support Staff Experience Years	14.9	14.5	16.6	16.6	17.5	17.4%

The table shows that even though there has been a 55% increase in the number of attorneys, the corresponding years of drafting experience and institutional knowledge have decreased. Expressed another way, for the 2nd Session of the 115th Congress, 19% of the attorneys had 30 or more years of service while 40% had less than 10 years of service. By comparison, as of April 2, 2025, 9% of the attorneys had 30 or more years of service while 56% had less than 10 years of service.

Pay and benefits are the cornerstone for compensating and caring for our staff. The Speaker's Pay Orders have been helpful to the Office's success in retaining staff. The cost of living in the Washington, DC metro area, especially the cost of housing and childcare, continues to

increase. These costs are a heavy burden and harm staff morale. It is important that staff pay continues to keep up with these costs and inflationary pressures.

Technology

The major nonpersonnel expenditures of our Office are associated with acquiring, maintaining, and enhancing Office technology (hardware and software) to support our mission. As much as possible, we seek to work in collaboration with the Office of the Clerk, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Government Publishing Office to plan, test, and place into service tools that improve our processes and allow the wider House community to better interact with us and legislative text. The Office is working with the Office of the Clerk to convert the Office of the Law Revision Counsel's U.S. Code files to Comps DTD so these files can continue to be used for the Comparative Print Suite and the Office's Ramseys after the Office of the Law Revision Counsel switches to USLM 2. Similarly, the Office is participating with others in the House and across the legislative branch to better understand artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential uses, benefits, and risks in the legislative environment. Finally, the Office recently upgraded our document management system from iManage FileSite to iManage Work 10, bringing together previously disparate client emails and drafts into a unified, complete package.

Legislative Drafting Study

Together with the Clerk of the House, the Office is participating in a Legislative Drafting Study whose aim is to facilitate collaboration between the Office and its clients during the drafting process, including through the development of a potential portal or other new software. The Office awaits the resulting plan and funding recommendations and looks forward to improving collaboration.

Conclusion

Thank you for the support this Subcommittee has given our Office. With it, we have provided efficient and expert drafting assistance to the Members and committees of the House. With continued funding, we look forward to continuing to meet the increasing legislative drafting needs of the House and improving collaboration. I am extremely proud of the Office's work to consistently meet the legislative needs of the House.

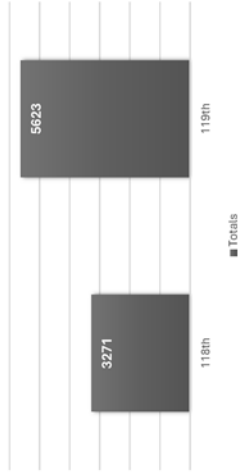
This completes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions that any Member of the Subcommittee may have.

Warren Burke
Legislative Counsel

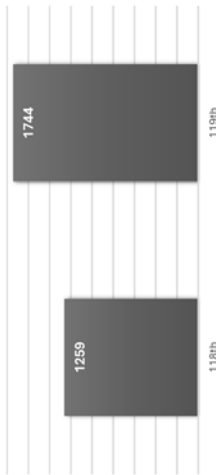


Measures of HOLC Workload

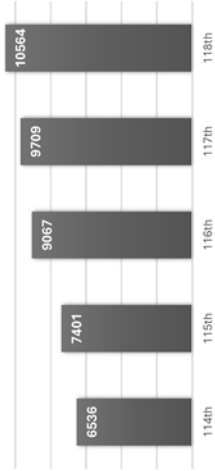
Requests Received in the First 60 Days



Bills Introduced in the First 60 Days



Total Number of Bills Introduced



HIGHLIGHTS

- During the first 60 days of the 119th Congress:
 - The number of requests received by HOLC increased by 72%.
 - The number of bills introduced in the House increased by 39%.
- In the 11th Congress, over 10,000 bills were introduced in the House for the first time since 1977 (when limits on co-sponsorship resulted in many duplicate bills).

ONE CAO

One Vision.
Member Focused. Service Driven.

One CAO is our promise to each other that we embrace teamwork, service, innovation, integrity, and respect to drive all our decisions and actions. It is the very essence of how we work so we can deliver on our mission, achieve our vision, and stay Member Focused. Service Driven.

WHO WE ARE

Our Mission

We serve the House Community by providing administrative, technical, and operational solutions so Members can perform their Constitutional duties

WHAT WE STRIVE FOR

Our Vision

To be an essential resource for every Member of the People's House through outstanding customer experiences delivered by exceptional employees

HOW WE WORK

Our Values

TEAMWORK

We embrace unity and recognize collaboration as one team across the CAO and House Community

INTEGRITY

We embody honest, responsible, and ethical behavior in service to the CAO and House Community

SERVICE

Our focus is to make it easier for Members by taking ownership of requests and simplifying the customer's experience

RESPECT

Our team recognizes and embraces our diverse strengths and unique contributions

INNOVATION

We are empowered to seek new ideas that exceed customer expectations



U.S. House of Representatives

CAO
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER





OFFICE OF THE CLERK, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mission

The U.S. House of Representatives established the Office of the Clerk in 1789. The duties of the Office are mandated by federal law and House Rules, policies, and traditions. The mission of the Office of the Clerk is to provide the procedural support necessary for the orderly conduct of the House's official business.

Over time, the duties of the Office have expanded to include disseminating organizational information, preserving House history, and supporting technological advancement. With an enduring legacy of service, transparency, and accessibility, the Office is dedicated to supporting House Leadership, Members, Committees, Officers, and staff and to providing legislative and historical information to governmental partners and to the public.

House Rules and federal law charge the Clerk with administering a range of record keeping, procedural, and other services on behalf of the House, including

- Certifying House passage of bills and joint resolutions
- Attesting to and affixing the House seal to all writs, warrants, subpoenas, and other formal documents the House issues
- Receiving messages for the House from the Senate and the President when the House is in recess or adjournment
- Preparing and delivering enrolled measures to the White House
- Publishing the *House Journal*, a record of the proceedings of each legislative day in the House
- Supervising vacant Member offices
- Serving as the custodian of noncurrent House records
- Maintaining a library of official legislative documents and House publications
- Managing lobbying disclosure filings and maintaining financial disclosure reports filed by House Members, Officers, candidates, and staff

The Office is led by Kevin F. McCumber, Clerk of the House, and Michelle H. Reinshuttle, Deputy Clerk.



Mission and Values of the Office of Inspector General

Mission Provide value-added recommendations for improving the performance, accountability, and integrity of House financial, administrative, and technology-based operations by performing independent audit, advisory, and investigative services in a non-partisan manner.

Values We embody three core values as we fulfill our service to the House and our duty to the American people. We demonstrate these core values individually and collectively in every facet of our organization, from high-level strategic decisions to individual interactions with clients and peers.

Integrity – Our cornerstone

- We faithfully and honorably execute the duties of our office, without bias or prejudice.
- We build trust through sustained honest dealings and believe in treating others with dignity and respect.
- We value diversity and foster an inclusive workplace where each individual's talents and contributions are leveraged to achieve organizational objectives.
- We perform our work in the highest ethical manner.

Excellence – What drives us today

- We apply a risk-based approach to detecting and preventing fraud, waste, abuse, and violations of law according to House Rules and the standards of our profession.
- We promote accountability and stewardship in safeguarding House assets and resources.
- We add strategic value for our customers and commit to delivering quality products and services through exemplary work practices.
- We strive for continuous improvement, both in ourselves and in our products and services.

Innovation – Ensures our continued success

- We encourage creative and innovative approaches that meet the needs of our customers.
- We understand that both successes and failures can be drivers of growth and learning.
- We aim to understand emerging trends, practices, and technologies to identify their benefits and risks to our customers and their applicability within the House.
- We choose to be forward-thinking and embrace solutions and policies that promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness for the betterment of the House.

Mission of the Office of the Legislative Counsel

The Office of the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives provides advice and assistance on a nonpartisan and confidential basis to the House of Representatives, and its committees and Members, in the achievement of a clear, faithful, and coherent expression of legislative policies. The Office was established on February 24, 1919, as the Legislative Drafting Service (section 1303 of the Revenue Act of 1918 (Ch. 18, 1141)) and currently operates under its charter, title V of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (2 U.S.C. 281 et seq.)

The Office achieves its purpose by applying its significant drafting, legal, and institutional expertise to the wide variety of requests for legislative drafting assistance throughout all stages of the legislative process. In doing so, the Office partners with its clients and institutional legislative entities to support both its mission and the legislative purposes of the House.

The Office provides legal services through subject matter teams. These teams are supported by clerk-paralegals, Ramseyer specialists, technology specialists, front office communication specialists, and Office leadership. The Legislative Counsel of the House leads the Office, serves as a player coach, and seeks to align all teams with Office policies and best drafting practices. The Office partners with the Clerk of the House and GPO to provide and improve drafting tools that use XML data, including the customized authoring tool, XMetal, Microcomp and its successor, XPUB, and the Comparative Print Suite.

Personnel in the Office are highly trained. New attorneys must successfully complete a two-year training program which is provided through an apprentice-style tutorial and supplemented by class instruction. It consists of intensive training on drafting fundamentals followed by a mentorship with an assigned subject matter team. During mentorship, the attorney is mentored in all phases of drafting throughout the legislative process, including drafting in complex legal matters, parliamentary procedure, and client management. The Office uses a similar approach for training new members of its support teams, with the duration and scope of training appropriate to the team involved.

The Office provides many opportunities for Members and staff to learn about working effectively with the Office as well as basic drafting matters. These opportunities include information on the Office's website and educational services through presentations, classes through the Congressional Staff Academy, and partnering with the American Law Division of the Congressional Research Service.

In addition to matters inside the House of Representatives, the Office participates in meetings involving members and staff of parliaments around the world through the House Democracy Partnership, the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel, and others. These meetings are for mutual education on drafting and technology matters common to legislative systems of government.

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL (OGC)
Mission Statement

Pursuant to Rule II.8(a) of the Rules of the House (119th Cong.), OGC provides legal advice and representation to the House, and as appropriate, to its Members, Committees, Officers, and employees, without regard to political affiliation, on matters related to their official duties. With respect to litigation matters involving the House, OGC consults with the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (consisting of the Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, and the Majority and Minority Whips). *See* House Rule II.8(a), (b). While it is difficult to furnish an exhaustive list of the types of advice and representation that OGC provides, OGC is involved in the following types of matters with some frequency:

- **Judicial Proceedings:** OGC represents the House in litigation, and also represents House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees, both as parties and as non-party witnesses, in litigation arising from or relating to the performance of their official duties, at the pre-trial, trial, and appellate levels. Among other responsibilities, OGC defends civil suits; moves to quash or limit subpoenas; represents the House and its Committees in suits for affirmative relief, such as enforcement of House subpoenas; represents the House in defending Acts of Congress that the Department of Justice declines to defend; files *amicus curiae* briefs on behalf of the House or one or more of its constituent entities in cases that raise issues of significant institutional interest to the House and its Members.
- **Committee Subpoenas:** OGC provides advice to House Committees in connection with the preparation, issuance, and enforcement of subpoenas, including advice and assistance in dealing with recalcitrant witnesses.
- **Requests for Information:** OGC provides advice and representation to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees in connection with responses to informal and formal requests for information
- **Privileges:** OGC provides advice to House Members, Committees, Officers, and employees regarding the applicability of various privileges including, most particularly, the Speech or Debate Clause privilege (U.S. Const., Art. I, § 6, cl. 1),
- **Social Media Guidance:** OGC advises House Members, Committees, Officers, and staff regarding best practices for the use of official social media accounts.
- **Tort Claims:** OGC reviews and evaluates tort claims for possible administrative resolution by the Committee on House Administration and, where appropriate, refers such claims to the Department of Justice for defense under the Federal Tort Claims Act, and then assists the Department with such defense.
- **Constituent Casework:** OGC provides advice to Members and their staff regarding legal issues related to the handling of constituent casework.

MISSION STATEMENT

LAW REVISION COUNSEL OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

to the

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
of the House Committee on Appropriations

The Office of the Law Revision Counsel (Office) serves the House of Representatives, Congress as a whole, the legal community, and the general public by producing and maintaining the United States Code, which is the official codification of the general and permanent statutory law of the United States. The mission of the Office is to make the United States Code “the free Code of choice” for the Hill community and the general public by ensuring that the official Code is the most accurate version available, whose currency rivals or exceeds the versions produced by the private sector.

To carry out its mission, the Office makes the United States Code available online and in print. For the online version, the goal is to make the Code as current and user-friendly as technologically possible. For the print version, in accordance with 1 U.S.C. 202, a complete new edition is published every 6 years with annual cumulative supplements printed in each of the 5 intervening years. In the Office’s pursuit of its mission, there are 4 principal drivers:

- Accuracy—This is a paramount concern. Every effort is made to ensure that the United States Code is as precise and error-free as is humanly possible.
- Timeliness— The United States Code online is usually updated within days of the date of enactment of the most recent Federal legislation. The size (53,000+ pages) and complexity requires a concerted effort by a dedicated staff to make this a reality.
- Ready availability online and in print—The Hill community and the general public need the United States Code to be transparent and accessible. For the online version, that means a quality website presence downloadable in multiple formats, including XML using the USLM schema.
- Positive Law Codification—Ongoing title-by-title positive law codification, as required by 2 U.S.C. 285b, is essential to the improvement of the organizational structure of the United States Code as a whole, and to resolving inconsistencies and errors in existing law.



Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Summary

Office of the Sergeant at Arms

Office of the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) Mission

We safeguard the security and uphold the decorum of U.S. House of Representatives operations.

FY 2026 Budget Summary

The following divisions comprise the SAA: Administration, House Garages & Parking Security, House Security, Information Services, Police Services, Emergency Management, Chamber Operations, and Protocol & Special Events.

The SAA Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Budget Request is \$40,606,000. This is an increase of \$6,465,000 or 18.94% above the FY25 enacted budget, and a modest 4.7% increase over the FY24 enacted funding level of \$38,793,000.

FY26 personnel costs show an increase of \$1,007,000 or 5.01% over the FY25 enacted budget. This increase is due to costs associated with the personnel base.

The FY26 non-personnel costs show an increase of \$5,388,000 or 42.67% above the FY25 enacted budget. This increase is primarily due to the establishment of a mobile duress capability for Members (\$1,968,000), and the lifecycle of emergency escape hoods (\$1,500,000). This increase is also primarily due to costs associated with contractor support services for video production and website design (\$120,000), revision of the SAA's performance management and career development process (\$250,000), and enhancement of the Secure Member Portal (\$530,000).

The FY26 budget request includes funding for the following security initiatives: the District Office Security Program, the Residential Security Program, the Residential Cybersecurity Program, travel to advance and support off-campus events involving Members of Congress; security items to be used in the 120th Congress, including Member and spouse identification pins. Non-personnel items also include funding to reimburse the United States Capitol Police travelling outside of the United States to protect House Leadership. Funding is also requested for various emergency preparedness and planning programs to include the replacement and maintenance of annunciators throughout the House side of campus.

Additionally, the FY26 budget includes funding to continue contracted services through subject matter experts that provide high-level advisory services to the House and for Sergeant at Arms staff development and training.

OFFICE OF THE CLERK, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

5-Year Comparison of Funding and Positions

Fiscal Year	Funding (\$)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)	FTEs
2026	48,992,000	7,537,000	18.18	255
2025	41,455,000	0	0	244
2024	41,455,000	628,000	1.54	244
2023	40,827,000	4,327,000	11.85	244
2022	36,500,000	4,525,000	14.15	239

Major Priorities Funded by Fiscal Year

- 2026**
- 56% of the \$4,086,000 in program changes will fund existing Clerk projects. Included is contractor support for projects such as Phase 6 of the Legislative Information Management Systems (LIMS) redevelopment project and the continuation of modernization initiatives such as the Member Information System (MIS), the Financial Disclosure System, the Floor Action Reporting System (FARS), the House Calendar (HCAL), the Senate Action Reporting System (SARS), Clerk Websites, and the Committee Portal/Votes Database.
 - 38% of program changes will fund 11 newly requested positions: 10 supporting House legislative activities (6 technology, 3 reporters, and 1 editor) and 1 position for administrative support.
 - Subscriptions used by House staff within the Legislative Resource Center, subscriptions utilized by Clerk staff across multiple divisions, storage, maintenance and conservation of the House Collection, design/implementation of a digital record/archiving system, and staff augmentation within the Office of House Employment Counsel (OHEC).
 - Business continuity disaster recovery (BCDR) activities, stenographic reporting (increased due to the surge in activities requesting this support), and closed captioning contracts (increased due to the negotiated option year).
- 2025**
- BCDR activities, stenographic reporting, and closed captioning contracts.
 - Storage, maintenance and conservation of the House Collection, freight charges for loaners shipped across the country, the continuation of the Cannon basement rotunda and Capitol Connecting Corridor exhibitions.
 - Contractor support for projects such as Phase 5 of the LIMS redevelopment project, and the continuation of modernization initiatives such as the Comparative Print data integration and user engagement requests, MIS, financial disclosure modernization efforts, live.house.gov, eHopper development, the Committee Portal/Votes Database, and the Legislative Drafting Tool Modernization Project.
- 2024**
- Personnel base adjustment to fully fund professional positions established during FY2022 and FY2023 execution to address the significant expansion of OHEC's practice over the past several years.
 - BCDR activities, stenographic reporting, and closed captioning contracts.
 - Contractor support for projects such as the Clerk's websites, enhancements to the Comparative Print Suite, eHopper application, continuation of the redevelopment of LIMS, Committee Portal/Votes Database, tools that enable collaborative drafting, and forthcoming projects such as the committee scheduling tool, and an application to monitor Members' individual vote status.
 - Maintenance and conservation of the House Collection such as the inkstand, Speaker's chair, treatments for exhibitions, deferred conservations due to COVID-19, and increased storage fees, as well as installations according to the Committee Hearing Room Renovations list and exhibitions such as the Cannon basement rotunda.
- 2023**
- Technology and communications positions to address a growing Clerk technology portfolio and duties supporting the House legislative floor activities, Members, and Committees.
 - Procurement of license, maintenance, and equipment, and contractor-related costs for required maintenance of the Electronic Voting System (EVS), continued rollout of the Comparative Print Suite, development of the eHopper application, the redevelopment and modernization of LIMS as well as the design and development of the lobbying disclosure system, and other items per the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.
- 2022**
- Hiring of additional official reporters and technology staff.
 - Lifecycle replacement of the EVS equipment.
 - Continued development of the Comparative Print Suite, redevelopment and modernization of LIMS.
 - Contractor support for information dissemination and legislative operations, such as the Office of the Clerk website, Financial Disclosure System, and the eHopper.
 - Maintenance of the House Collection and scheduled rotations of exhibitions.

Budget summary to accompany FY 2026 budget request
Office of the Clerk - March 28, 2025

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
FY 2026 Budget Request & 5-Year Budget History

Budget Year	Budget	\$ Year Over Year Increase	% Year Over Year Increase	Funded Positions
<i>FY 2026 Request</i>	<i>\$243,184,000</i>	<i>\$30,112,000</i>	<i>14.1%</i>	<i>829</i>
Major Changes: The CAO's FY 2026 request supports personnel and non-personnel funding increases critical to the continuity of House operations. Requested personnel funding is required to support the existing personnel and active recruitments for 769 positions, 30 new FTEs, 30 contractor conversions to FTEs, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities. Requested non-personnel funding supports mission critical projects and programs such as the lifecycle replacement of the House payroll and benefits administration system, artificial intelligence (AI) integration, sustainment and expansion of House telecom services, House IT infrastructure and architecture, House website development and maintenance, cybersecurity, a Macintosh security solution to strengthen controls around Macs connected to the House network, secure House data storage, House-wide Learning Management System replacement to address system limitations, sustainment of applications requested by the Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Modernization.				
Budget Year	Budget	\$ Year Over Year Increase	% Year Over Year Increase	Funded Positions
<i>FY 2025 Full Year CR</i>	<i>\$213,072,000</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>769</i>
Major Changes: To ensure the CAO could continue to maximize resources across the organization, to produce the highest strategic benefit to the House, the CAO used its portfolio prioritization process to conduct a rigorous evaluation of its existing programs and planned projects. Supports funding for existing personnel, active recruitments, and projected COLA; sustainment of contractor support for the House-wide training programs, HouseNet redesign licensing and support, and ongoing videography, photography, and design service requirements; sustainment and maturation of the Congressional Excellence Program and inflationary costs associated with the Capitol Telephone Exchange operators; the sustainment of the Centralized Human Resources (HR) Program (e.g., HR Hub, House Resume Bank); and the House Recording Studio's Engineering Quality Control Station migration to the House Visitors Center (HVC) Room 337 project.				
Budget Year	Budget	\$ Year Over Year Increase	% Year Over Year Increase	Funded Positions
<i>FY 2024 Enacted</i>	<i>\$213,072,000</i>	<i>\$1,500,000</i>	<i>0.7%</i>	<i>769</i>
Major Changes: FY 2024 Request of \$227.9M was reduced at Markup by \$14.8M to \$213.1M. Supports funding for existing personnel, active recruitments, and the COLA; enhancement of the House cloud security posture and the modernization of House services; House enterprise licenses, and the House's deployment and expansion of a data storage environment to support robust data archival and retrieval services; Congressional Excellence Program consultants to develop content and provide personal and professional development courses/programs including distance learning opportunities for all congressional staff; sustainment of House Creative Services contractors that provide multimedia, design, and photography services for all Members, Committees, Leadership and House offices; the lifecycle replacement of House Recording Studio equipment and House-owned furniture; ongoing costs of the House mail contract, the Human Resources Hub, and the House Resume Bank; and the implementation of the Enterprise Risk Management program. Also includes funding for reorganization of the CAO to include the restructuring of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.				
Budget Year	Budget	\$ Year Over Year Increase	% Year Over Year Increase	Funded Positions
<i>FY 2023 Enacted</i>	<i>\$211,572,000</i>	<i>\$18,384,200</i>	<i>9.5%</i>	<i>769</i>
Major Changes: Supports personnel funding for existing staff, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities; equipment and travel associated with providing Field Hearing support for Committees; renovation of the Rayburn Banquet Rooms; and additional contractors to support event rooms and provide audio support; continuation of technology costs associated with cloud migration, enterprise licensing, cybersecurity, lifecycle replacement and upgrades. Also supports increased services and improved delivery times to Members and Committees; additional contracts/ services for the development of career and leadership programs for Member office staff; and the establishment of the CAO Emerging Project Investment Fund.				
Budget Year	Budget	\$ Year Over Year Increase	% Year Over Year Increase	Funded Positions
<i>FY 2022 Enacted</i>	<i>\$193,187,800</i>	<i>\$15,987,800</i>	<i>9.0%</i>	<i>768</i>
Major Changes: Supports personnel funding for existing staff, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities; costs associated with renovation of First Call and the Office Supply Store; contractor support to manage the Customer Relationship Management System, CAO survey program and SharePoint development; replacement of the in-bound mail sorter; continuation of technology costs associated with cloud migration, enterprise licensing, cybersecurity, lifecycle replacement and upgrades.				
Budget Year	Budget	\$ Year Over Year Increase	% Year Over Year Increase	Funded Positions
<i>FY 2021 Enacted</i>	<i>\$177,200,000</i>	<i>\$23,650,000</i>	<i>15.4%</i>	<i>768</i>
Major Changes: Supports personnel funding for existing staff, projected COLA, overtime, and longevities; costs associated with new Digital and Traditional Mail contract; continuation of migration of applications to the cloud, cybersecurity, lifecycle replacement, hardware/software maintenance, and enterprise licenses and support contracts; and costs associated with upgrades to the House's enterprise human resource and financial systems.				



Before the House Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch Appropriations
 U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Inspector General
 Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request
Budget Request History

Fiscal Year	Request (000s)	Change	Auth. FTE	Explanation of Major Changes
2026	\$6,227	7.3%	25	1. \$395,000 due to mandatory increases for approved 2025 cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and anticipated COLA for FY 2026. 2. \$60,000 for the purchase of new equipment (e.g., laptops last upgraded in FY 2023).
2025	\$5,772	4.5%	25	1. \$427,000 due to changes in mandatory spending (e.g., staff salaries, including the COLA, the projected COLA for FY 2025, and scheduled longevity step increases). 2. \$3,000 due to price level increase. 3. \$170,000 reduction in costs within program budgets achieved via strategic purchasing and delaying hardware replacements.
2024	\$5,512	6.8%	25	1. \$211,000 due to FY 2023 increases in the House Schedule and the COLA, and the projected COLA for FY 2024. 2. \$28,000 due to price level increases. 3. \$135,000 due to program changes.
2023	\$5,138	2.3%	25	1. Changes in the SPO effective June 2022, which led to adjustments in the Personnel Base Adjustment-HEPCA and Personnel Base. 2. SPO changes to the House Schedule effective January 2023 increased salaries and simultaneously added unanticipated COLA to previously restricted salary levels, which we absorbed in the FY 2023 budget.
2022	\$5,019	-0-	25	1. Operating on allotments of FY 2021 Appropriation. Adjustments to Personnel Budgets due to SPO change. 2. Increases in the House Pay Schedule combined with decreases in salaries eligible for COLA.
2021	\$5,019	-0-	25	1. Adjustments to Personnel Budgets due to several positions meeting SPO limit; ineligible for COLA. 2. Released \$650,000 of FY 2021 appropriation for reprogramming. 3. Released remaining \$151,000 of FY 2021 for reprogramming.

Summary of Budget Request and Five-Year Snapshot for Legislative Counsel

	Total Budget Authority	Percent change	FTE	Actual FTE (start)	New Staff	Departing Staff	Actual FTE (end)
FY 2021 Enacted	\$11,937,000		91	80	4	4	80
FY 2022 Enacted	\$12,625,000	5.80%	93	80	7	6	81
FY 2023 Enacted	\$13,457,000	6.60%	93	81	6	3	86
FY 2024 Enacted	\$14,671,000	9.00%	97	86	8	5	89
FY 2025 Request	\$15,300,000	4.29%	104	89	16 (est.)	1 (est.)	104 (est.)
FY 2026 Request	\$18,400,000	20.26%	109	104 (est.)	5 (est.)		109 (est.)

Explanation of Major Changes

The major change in total budget authority requested by the Office of the Legislative Counsel from FY2021 to FY2026 is for staff salaries at the level needed to recruit and retain staff in numbers commensurate with the increasing needs of the House and requests of this Committee, Leadership, and Members to reduce backlogs and turnaround times.

Personnel (Draft Account)

For fiscal year 2026, of the \$18,400,000 requested, \$17,200,000 is for personnel, which is a 21.13-percent increase from our FY2025 request, a percentage increase which would be smaller if the amount requested for FY2025 reflected the use of no year funds from previous fiscal years. Our personnel account (entitled "Draft") is approximately 93 percent of our total budget. This amount provides for a planned addition of five attorneys during FY2026. The Office expects to make merit pay increases and cost-of-living adjustments during FY2026.

Administrative Expenses (Admin Account)

For fiscal year 2026, of the \$18,400,000 requested, \$1,200,000 is for administrative expenses, which is approximately a 9-percent increase from FY2025. The major nonpersonnel expenditures of our Office are associated with acquiring, maintaining, and enhancing Office technology (hardware and software) to support our mission.

**OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
TOTAL BUDGET AUTHORITY**

Office of General Counsel	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2020 Enacted	FY 2021 Enacted	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 Request
FTE	11	13	15	15	15	15	12	12
Total General Counsel	\$1,502,000	\$1,751,000	\$1,815,000	\$ 1,912,000	\$ 1,912,000	\$ 1,987,000	\$ 1,987,000	\$ 2,079,000
\$ Budget Increase (Decrease)		\$249,000	\$64,000	\$97,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$92,000
% Budget Increase (Decrease)		16.6%	3.7%	5.3%	0.0%	3.9%	0.0%	4.6%

Office of the Law Revision Counsel
FY 2026 Budget Request & 5-Year Budget History

Fiscal Year	Budget	\$ Year over Year Increase	% Year over Year Increase	Funded Positions	Explanation of Major Changes
FY 2026 Budget Request	\$ 4,998,000	\$ 1,098,000	28.15%	21	The budget request consists of two parts: (1) \$3,998,000 for Continuing Operations (a 2.5% increase over the FY2024 amount); and (2) \$1,000,000 of No-Year money to replace our aging website. The request for No-Year money echoes our request from the FY 2025 budget submission.
FY 2025 CR Annualized	\$ 3,900,000	\$ -	0.00%	21	
FY 2024 Enacted	\$ 3,900,000	\$ 154,000	4.10%	21	
FY 2023 Enacted	\$ 3,746,000	\$ 146,000	4.06%	21	
FY 2022 Enacted	\$ 3,600,000	\$ 131,000	3.78%	21	
FY 2021 Enacted	\$ 3,469,000	\$ 50,000	1.50%	21	

FY21 – 25 Budgets & FY 26 Request

Office of the Sergeant at Arms



Program Type	FY21 Enacted	FY22 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$14,163,000.00	\$14,690,000.00	\$527,000.00	3.72%
Non-personnel	\$9,097,000.00	\$13,005,000.00	\$3,908,000.00	42.96%
Total	\$23,260,000.00	\$27,695,000.00	\$4,435,000.00	19.07%
Total FTEs	166	168	2	1.20%

The increase from FY21 to FY22 enacted is primarily due to costs associated with staff development and associated training, Member and spouse identification pins and license plates, staff parking permits, costs associated with the District Office Security Program annunciator replacement project, Rapid Alert System Pilot Program, Digital Communications, and Gunshot Detection System.

Program Type	FY22 Enacted	FY23 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$14,690,000.00	\$16,558,000.00	\$1,868,000.00	12.72%
Non-personnel	\$13,005,000.00	\$22,235,000.00	\$9,230,000.00	70.97%
Total	\$27,695,000.00	\$38,793,000.00	\$11,098,000.00	40.07%
Total FTEs	168	182	14	8.33%

The increase from FY22 to FY23 enacted is primarily due to costs associated with 14 new FTE, staff development and associated training, security expert consultant services, costs associated with the District Office Security Program and the Member Residential Security Program, costs associated with an off-site House Operations Center, and the replacement of escape hoods.

Program Type	FY23 Enacted	FY24 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$16,558,000.00	\$16,558,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
Non-personnel	\$22,235,000.00	\$22,235,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
Total	\$38,793,000.00	\$38,793,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
Total FTEs	182	195	13	7.14%

FY23 is flat with FY24 enacted.

Program Type	FY24 Enacted	FY25 Enacted	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$16,558,000.00	\$21,513,000.00	\$4,955,000.00	29.93%
Non-personnel	\$22,235,000.00	\$12,628,000.00	\$(9,607,000.00)	-43.21%
Total	\$38,793,000.00	\$34,141,000.00	\$(4,652,000.00)	-11.99%
Total FTEs	195	206	11	5.64%

The decrease from FY24 enacted to FY25 enacted is primarily due to costs associated with the Member Residential Security Program, an off-site House Operations Center, and the replacement of escape hoods.

Program Type	FY25 Enacted	FY26 Request	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Personnel	\$21,513,000.00	\$22,590,000.00	\$1,077,000.00	5.01%
Non-personnel	\$12,628,000.00	\$18,016,000.00	\$5,388,000.00	42.67%
Total	\$34,141,000.00	\$40,606,000.00	\$6,465,000.00	18.94%
Total FTEs	206	206	0	0.00%

The increase from FY25 enacted to the FY26 request is primarily due to costs associated with the current personnel base salaries, the establishment of a mobile duress capability for Members, and the lifecycle of emergency escape hoods. This increase is also due to costs associated with contractor support services for video production and website design, revision of the SAA's performance management and career development process, and enhancement of the Secure Member Portal.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2025.

**ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL AND LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS**

WITNESSES

MR. THOMAS E. AUSTIN, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

HON. CARLA HAYDEN, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

**MS. SHIRA PERLMUTTER, REGISTER OF COPYRIGHTS AND DIRECTOR,
U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE**

**MS. KAREN E. DONFRIED, DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH
SERVICE**

Mr. VALADAO. The subcommittee will come to order.

The subject of today's hearing is the fiscal year 2026 budget request for the Architect of the Capitol and the Library of Congress.

I would like to thank Ranking Member Espaillat, committee members, and our two main witnesses—the Architect of the Capitol, Mr. Thomas Austin, and the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden—for being here today.

Dr. Hayden is joined by Ms. Shira Perlmutter, the Register of Copyrights and the Director of the U.S. Copyright Office; and by Ms. Karen E. Donfried, Director of the Congressional Research Service.

Both of their testimonies have been submitted for the record, and members are welcome to address questions to either in addition to Dr. Hayden.

The Architect of the Capitol's fiscal year 2026 request is \$1.3 billion. In addition to the around-the-clock personnel requirements, the budget focuses on the life safety, physical security, and critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus.

Mr. Austin, I welcome you to your first appearance before the subcommittee.

I also want to extend my congratulations and thanks to you and your employees for the incredible work that you have already accomplished this Congress. From the 119th transition to the 60th inaugural ceremonies, the office of the Architect of the Capitol has shown its dedication and professionalism in completing the enormous tasks required for these events.

The Library of Congress fiscal year 2026 request, with offsetting amounts, totals \$901 million, a 5.8 percent increase from the enacted fiscal year 2025 CR.

The budget would support the professionals and staff across the Library, including at the Congressional Research Service, and the vast collections of books and other media. It would also support upgrades to preservation storage, digital collections and website modernization, data analytics capabilities, and digital accessibility.

The Library recently opened two new exhibits, including "Collecting Memories: Treasures from the Library of Congress" and

“Two Georges: Parallel Lives in an Age of Revolution,” in addition to growing its collection by 2.5 million new items.

Thank you again to our witnesses for being here.

And now I would like to recognize the ranking member for his opening remarks.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Chairman Valadao.

Good morning, Dr. Hayden, Mr. Austin, and agency leadership. I echo the chairman in welcoming you to discuss your agency budget and your request for fiscal year 2026.

Dr. Hayden, thanks for the recent call.

And, of course, Mr. Austin, it is great to see you again, and I look forward to helping your goals and objectives as the new Architect of the Capitol.

Dr. Hayden and Mr. Austin, you and your teams are here today representing the living museums of Congress, which is the Capitol and, of course, the Library of Congress. They are living museums of Congress. They interact with our folks on a daily basis. Their collective histories are so important to us.

As ranking member and chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I am concerned about the future of your agencies. The ideas presented in the recent executive orders, such as restoring truth and sanity to American history, are disturbing, and I hope these ideas will not influence the future directives of the legislative branch.

In fact, I will call them, rather than restoring truth and sanity to America, imposing lies and distorting the truth of America more so, and I hope that we can direct our efforts in the right direction.

They pretend, really, to ignore if not erase the diverse history of our Nation. And, of course, America is built on these diverse histories, collectively having been shaped by migrations from Europe, from Ireland, from Italy, from a Jewish background, a Greek background, and now new voices that must be included in the history of our Nation that cannot be ignored and certainly not erased.

And so we welcome you, and we hope that we can work together to have some level of sanity and equilibrium so that everybody is respected, that no one is pushed down. You don't need to push anybody down to go up. All ships could rise at the same time if we work together and we work with a clear view of where we need to go for the future.

So thank you both for being here. I hope to have an honest and transparent discussion with you.

And, again, America is made up of many voices. It is reflected right here in this room. We need not to ignore any one of them, and certainly not to erase them.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Mr. Austin, your full testimony has been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS E. AUSTIN

Mr. AUSTIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espailat, and members of this committee. I am honored to make my first appearance before you to represent the men and women of the Archi-

tect of the Capitol and discuss our budget request for fiscal year 2026.

I would like to thank the members of your staff, particularly Lori Rowley, April Lyman, and Faye Cobb, for their expertise and consistent professionalism.

I welcome this opportunity to share more about the agency's work in preserving the historic buildings and grounds that inspire our Nation while serving the 20,000 daily occupants and 3 million annual visitors to our Capitol campus.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge and express my deepest gratitude to the 2,500 dedicated Architect of the Capitol employees for all of their hard work, which makes it possible for this agency to successfully carry out its mission to serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America's Capitol, and inspire memorable experiences, all of which require round-the-clock care for the 18.5 million square feet of historic facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art that make up our historic campus.

As you know, I began my tenure in June of 2024, and it is the greatest honor of my professional career to serve as the 13th Architect of the Capitol. Thank you for entrusting me to serve as a steward of the historic and vital buildings that make up the Capitol campus, ensuring the preservation, functionality, and safety for Members of Congress, staff, and visitors.

One of my top priorities is consistent communication with the Architect of the Capitol staff, which I believe is essential to building and maintaining faith and confidence in our agency's leadership. Whether discussing the particulars of everyday operations or our broader visions for the future of the agency, I am equally committed to practicing clear and timely communication that ensures accountability and coordination with this committee, Congress, and internal entities.

For fiscal year 2026, the Architect of the Capitol is requesting a combined total of \$1.3 billion. This request is focused on three key priorities: life safety, physical security, and the critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus.

Additionally, this budget request ensures adequate funding is available for the staffing levels necessary to oversee our planning and project management needs and to deliver quality services to Congress.

This agency is dedicated to delivering exceptional services through its strategic initiatives. This commitment helps create a safer and more efficient workplace.

Across the agency, we are dedicating time and attention to safety training, procedures, and operations. I am proud to report that our employee injury rate is significantly less than that of the private sector.

This budget request recognizes these essential measures, with our concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks, and interruptions.

We are equally committed to the safety and functionality of the campus for all those who work here and visit. This involves proactively addressing the entire range of facility management challenges, big and small, everything from trimming tree limbs before they become a safety hazard, to ensuring compliance of life

and safety code, to long-range master planning for the future of this campus.

Security is also a key priority. With the support of this committee and in coordination with the U.S. Capitol Police and the House Sergeant at Arms, we have made significant progress over the past few years and will continue to improve the security posture across this campus.

Another top priority for the agency is the critical infrastructure needs of the historic Capitol campus. To assist in addressing challenges of aging infrastructure, we are developing the Enterprise Asset Management system. This robust system will enhance data-driven decisions and help prioritize projects aimed at reducing our very significant and growing maintenance backlog.

I recognize the importance of a well-coordinated, holistic, multiyear approach to facilities management focused on maintaining and preserving the Capitol campus while also modernizing facilities.

We are committed to working closely with you and your staff, as well as the Committee on House Administration, to ensure the Architect of the Capitol meets the needs and expectations of the U.S. House of Representatives and the American people.

With the support of Congress and an incredibly talented and skillful team, I am proud that we have accomplished much over the past year and I look forward to the success of future projects.

The fiscal year 2026 budget request is not only critical to facing the challenges posed by our aging infrastructure, but also ensuring we account for the future needs of this campus.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the committee, thank you again for your continued support and consideration of the Architect of the Capitol's budget request. I am honored to be here, and I look forward to your questions.

[The information follows:]

Thomas E. Austin

Architect of the Capitol



On May 22, 2024, the bicameral Congressional Commission announced its unanimous selection of Thomas E. Austin to serve as the 13th Architect of the Capitol. In this role, Austin is responsible for leading the agency's mission to preserve and maintain the historic buildings and grounds across the Capitol campus.

Austin oversees facilities maintenance and operation of the historic U.S. Capitol, the care and improvement of more than 570 acres of grounds, and the operation and maintenance of 18.5 million square feet of buildings including: the House and Senate Office Buildings, Capitol Visitor Center, Library of Congress Buildings, U.S. Supreme Court Building, Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, and other facilities. He is responsible for the care of all works of art in the U.S. Capitol as well as the maintenance and restoration of murals, outdoor sculpture and other architectural elements throughout the Capitol campus. He also serves as Acting Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden.



The Architect of the Capitol is a member of the Capitol Police Board and the Congressional Accessibility Services Board, as well as an ex officio member of the United States Capitol Preservation Commission. Additionally, the Architect of the Capitol is a member of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission, the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Capital Memorial Commission, the Art Advisory Committee to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the National Institute for Conservation of Cultural Property.

Professional Experience

In 2023, Austin retired from the U.S. Army as a Colonel after nearly three decades in engineering and leadership roles including serving overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia, and as a Battalion Commander in the 18th Engineer Brigade. His last decade of service focused on construction and facilities management roles including assignments with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). As the NGA Chief of Facility Programs, Austin was responsible for policy, planning, budgeting, design and execution for facility repairs across multiple facilities and campuses totaling several million square feet of classified space; he also led the emergency management program. As the ANC Director of Engineering, Austin oversaw the design and construction of the 50-acre Southern Expansion Project which added over 80,000 interment spaces, relocated the operations complex, and integrated the Air Force Memorial into the cemetery. He oversaw the Memorial Amphitheater project to clean, preserve and enhance accessibility. He also directed the restoration of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier memorial and plaza, the reconstruction of the historic Ord and Weitzel Gate, and other restoration projects of all sizes. Most recently, Austin oversaw the construction management advisory team for the Cannon House Office Building Renewal in Washington, D.C.

Education

Austin earned his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Michigan, Master of Engineering Management from the Missouri University of Science and Technology, Master of Business Administration from Webster University, and Master of National Resource Strategy from the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy. He is a licensed Professional Engineer, Certified Construction Manager, and Project Management Professional. In the military, he was awarded the Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Combat Action Badge, Ranger Tab, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge and other honors.



Statement of Thomas Austin, Architect
Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request, Architect of the Capitol
 Legislative Branch Subcommittee | House Committee on Appropriations
 April 8, 2025

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC) budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. We are committed to working closely with you and your staff to ensure the AOC meets the needs and expectations of the U.S. House of Representatives in service to Congress and the American people.

It is an honor to serve as the 13th Architect of the Capitol and as a steward of the historic and vital buildings that make up the Capitol complex, ensuring their preservation, functionality, and safety for Members of Congress, staff, and visitors. As you know, I began my tenure in June of 2024 and am privileged, day in and day out, to be entrusted to lead this amazing agency.

I speak on behalf of the entire AOC leadership team when I say we are enormously grateful for the 2,500 hardworking, devoted AOC employees who tirelessly carry out their duties in support of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress (Library), and the many other AOC-managed facilities.

One of my top priorities is close communication with AOC staff, which I believe is essential to building and maintaining faith and confidence in our agency's leadership. Whether discussing the particulars of daily operations or our broader visions for the future of the campus, I am equally committed to practicing clear and timely communication that ensures accountability and coordination with this Committee, Congress and AOC-internal entities.

In keeping with the trust inherent in this role, I am dedicated to leading with transparency and integrity as we meet our mission to serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America's Capitol, and inspire memorable experiences.

I. Overview

The AOC plays a vital role in supporting the operations of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Library. Our staff works around-the-clock to preserve and maintain over 18.5 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds and thousands of works of art. This 24-hour, seven-days-per-week operation works in concert to preserve our historic assets and improve aging infrastructure. Beyond these preservation and maintenance priorities, our team is also responsible for hosting many key events and seasonal traditions that bring together thousands of visitors each year. From preparations for the annual Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, to a multi-month effort in constructing the Presidential Inauguration platform, the AOC continually delivers with professionalism and expertise.

For FY 2026, the AOC is requesting \$1.3 billion in appropriations to address critical infrastructure needs, safety and security improvements, and modernization efforts across the Capitol complex. This request reflects our commitment to ensuring the safety, preservation and operational efficiency of the Capitol complex while being responsible stewards of taxpayer

funds. Over the past year, the agency has navigated significant budget adjustments, including a 12 percent reduction from the FY 2024 enacted budget to the FY 2025 Full Year Continuing Resolution (CR) level, which resulted in the deferment of critical projects to future fiscal years. The FY 2025 CR funding level required budget adjustments resulting in temporary spending limitations, deprioritized projects and operational constraints. The FY 2026 budget request addresses both short-term constraints and long-term strategic planning to address pressing infrastructure, security, and operational needs.

While the AOC adjusted to the FY 2025 CR constraints, it is critical to restore funding in FY 2026 to maintain the integrity and functionality of the Capitol complex. This includes, among other things, restoration of deferred maintenance and Capitol projects, critical security enhancements, workforce investments, and emergent critical mission requirements. The requested increase is a strategic investment in long-term efficiency, resiliency, safety and preservation.

Prioritizing Physical Security & Life Safety

Ensuring physical security and life safety is paramount. Thanks to your support, the AOC has made significant strides in enhancing security measures across the campus. Collaboration with internal and external partners has strengthened emergency planning and bolstered security for events at the Capitol complex. The FY 2026 budget request aligns with our coordinated approach to address security projects, consisting of significant construction or system replacement requirements to support the United States Capitol Police and House and Senate Sergeant at Arms' missions.

The agency also remains committed to staff safety, dedicating time and attention to training, processes, procedures and operations. These efforts also ensure staff are well trained to assist visitors during emergencies. This budget request recognizes these essential measures, with projects and requests that focus on supporting our concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks and interruptions.

II. Supporting the House Community

The AOC's FY 2026 budget request highlights significant priorities for the House office buildings and House operations; these critical needs can be addressed through close collaboration with this Committee and the Committee on House Administration.

As the Cannon House Office Building Renewal project is nearing completion, the FY 2026 request continues to look forward on the future modernization of the Capitol complex. Requests to further the pre-design efforts of a large-scale Rayburn House Office Building modernization project and swing space designs are pertinent to the advancement of these large initiatives.

This budget requests also helps us continue to address each facility's deferred maintenance, systems and capital renewal requirements.

III. Modern Management of Aging Infrastructure

The AOC is dedicated to a long-term strategy for facilities management that emphasizes the maintenance and preservation of the Capitol complex while also modernizing these spaces. The aging infrastructure and facilities of the campus present ongoing challenges which are further compounded by inflationary increases, uninterrupted operations and unforeseen emergency repairs. The AOC's FY 2026 budget request focuses on critical priorities such as upgrading hearing rooms, addressing aging elevators, replacing mechanical systems, and needed renovations of fire alarms and sprinkler systems.

Additionally, the AOC is developing an Enterprise Asset Management system to create an enhanced organized method for managing, coordinating and overseeing asset-related activities throughout their respective lifecycles. A well-developed asset management system will offer more detailed insights to enhance data-driven financial decisions and prioritization of projects, while also addressing backlog and deferred maintenance issues.

IV. Workforce Investments & Meeting Mission Requirements

Our workforce is a top priority at the AOC. The agency must ensure it retains a skilled workforce capable of maintaining and modernizing the complex. Our Human Capital Strategy revolves around three pillars: talent acquisition, talent development, and engagement and retention of employees. The AOC recently completed a study on wage-grade salaries, which contribute to retention and attrition. One important thing we learned was that pay for our Wage Graded staff was not on par with other federal agencies. The FY 2026 budget request will help us appropriately compensate and retain a skilled workforce to meet the needs of Congress.

V. Conclusion

On behalf of the men and women at the AOC, I extend our gratitude to this Committee for your ongoing support. Your dedication and partnership in service to the American people is integral to our daily operations and mission accomplishment. Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaiilat, and Members of the Committee, thank you for your time and support in consideration of the AOC's FY 2026 budget request.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Austin, for your testimony.

Dr. Hayden, your testimony has also been submitted for the record, and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. CARLA HAYDEN

Ms. HAYDEN. Thank you, Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and members of the subcommittee. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal year 2026 budget request.

The mission of the Library of Congress is to engage, inspire, and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity. And above all, the Library exists to serve.

Service to Congress remains the foundation for the Library's mission every day, with analysis, policy consultations, briefings, programs, and constituent engagement.

The Library's resources are authoritative, expansive, and evergreen. In a time of rapidly evolving technology and a fast-changing world, the Library of Congress stands as it has for over 225 years, as a steward of the largest collection of information and resources ever assembled, not as a memorial but as a living source of knowledge and creativity for Congress and the betterment of the Nation.

The Library meets its responsibility to collect, preserve, and share the collection every day by constantly renewing the collections and the services it provides to Congress and the American people. With congressional support, the Library is extensively modernizing and optimizing its systems, processes, and staff.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and extraordinary support of this committee and Congress, and I especially appreciate the funding you have provided for the major information technology investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access with new and enhanced tools.

I would also like to give special thanks for your continued support for the Library's Visitor Experience initiative. The Library's Treasures Gallery opened to the public in June of 2024, and we are excited to open the Library's new education center—The Source—by the end of 2025, in time for the Nation's celebrations. I am pleased to report that the construction and fabrication for the Orientation Gallery is now underway too.

I come before you today to discuss the Library's fiscal year 2026 appropriations request of \$946.2 million, which represents a 5.4 percent increase over the Library's current funding, which had been set at a fiscal year 2024 appropriation level, as we operate under a continuing resolution.

Given the current economic conditions, we have revised programmatic increases and minimized out-year costs, deferring all but the most time-critical requests.

Our staff are at the heart of the Library of Congress, and our employees represent the apex of their professions, bringing unparalleled knowledge, expertise, and experience to bear.

While modernization and automatization have allowed us to expand productivity in some areas and to do more with less, it is

worth noting that the Library's staffing level has remained largely unchanged since fiscal year 2015.

In fact, the Library's permanent workforce steadily declined from over 5,000 employees in the early 1990s to its current level of approximately 3,300.

It is critical that this relatively low staff level be adequately supported. And, as such, the Library's fiscal year 2026 appropriations request does include \$30.9 million in mandatory pay and price-level increases.

As a result of the continuing resolution, the Library has had to absorb the cost of mandatory pay and high inflationary price-level increases in fiscal year 2025. The need to absorb these expenses threatens our ability to execute the Library's full range of programs and services.

The Library has three modest programmatic requests for fiscal year 2026 that, if funded, would provide the resources we need to develop strategic initiatives that deliver greater access and enhance services. These requests would also enable the Library to keep pace with digital advancements and deliver exceptional service.

For Preservation Object Storage Upgrade, the Library is requesting \$5.4 million to replace and upgrade the decades-old digital preservation system at the Library's on-premises sites.

For web Application Delivery and Management Improvements, the Library is requesting \$2.5 million annually to better serve the millions of users who access the Library's data, collections, and services through its primary public websites.

And for Continuous Development of the Enterprise Copyright System, the Library is requesting an appropriation of \$6.8 million for the U.S. Copyright Office for 3 years to accelerate development and delivery of the registration component of the Enterprise Copyright System, ECS, reducing the time to completion by approximately 2 years.

Recent stakeholder concerns involving technological demands and congressional focus make it imperative to more quickly address the limitations of the existing online copyright registration system, which has been used to support copyright registrations for over 15 years.

In keeping with the Library's strategic goals, the Library is re-submitting the three requests that were not funded in fiscal year 2025, and these support CRS, data analytics capacity, our digital collections processing capacity, and digital accessibility.

Given the current economic conditions, these requests have been revised to reduce overall funding and eliminate permanent staff hires where possible.

Thank you for supporting the Library of Congress and for your consideration of our fiscal year 2026 budget request.

[The information follows:]

**Statement of Carla Hayden
The Librarian of Congress
Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives**

Fiscal 2026 Budget Request

April 8, 2025

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2026 budget request.

The mission of the Library of Congress is to “Engage, inspire and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.” Above all, the Library exists to serve. Service to the Congress remains the foundation for the Library's mission every day with analysis, policy consultations, briefings, programs and constituent engagement. The U.S. Copyright Office within the Library promotes creativity and knowledge by administering the nation's copyright system for the benefit of all. And service to the American people – Copyright users, researchers, visitors, teachers, students, veterans, and blind and print disabled citizens, among many others – delivered in countless ways, takes a user-centered approach with access in person and in digital form.

The Library's resources are authoritative, expansive, and evergreen. In a time of rapidly evolving technology in a fast-changing world, the Library of Congress stands as it has for over two hundred and twenty-five years (225) as the steward of the largest collection of information and resources ever assembled – not as a memorial but as a living source of knowledge and creativity for Congress and the betterment of the nation. The Library meets its responsibility to collect, preserve and share these treasures every day by constantly renewing the collections and the services it provides to the Congress and the American people. With congressional support, the Library is extensively modernizing and optimizing its systems, processes, and staff. Throughout, the Library never stops its drive to engage, inspire and inform, increasingly through digital means.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and extraordinary support that this committee and the Congress gives to the Library. I especially appreciate the funding you have provided for major Information Technology (IT) investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools. In fiscal year 2024, nearly 120 million people viewed more than a half a billion pages of websites managed by the Library.

These investments include the Copyright Office's Enterprise Copyright System (ECS); CRS's Integrated Research and Information System (IRIS); the National Library Service's Braille and Audio Reading Download service (BARD) and next generation devices; the Library Collections Access Platform (LCAP); Congress.gov; and the Library's core IT infrastructure and IT security. Across the

Library there's been great progress in modernization and information technology security, but we are not yet finished. Pulling back now will jeopardize our efforts, and we must maintain this momentum and continue building upon these investments to leverage their true potential for all Americans.

I would also like to give special thanks for your continued support of the Library's Visitor Experience initiative. The Library's Treasures Gallery opened to the public in June 2024, and we are excited to open the Library's new education center – The Source – by the end of 2025, in time for the nation's Semiquincentennial celebrations. I am pleased to report that construction and fabrication for the Orientation Gallery is now underway, too. We are grateful for the Committee's efforts to secure a successful outcome for this central component, and we continue to work closely with the Architect of the Capitol to complete the Jefferson Building's transformation for the benefit of all Americans.

I come before you today to discuss the Library's fiscal 2026 appropriations request of \$946.2 million, which represents a 5.4 percent increase over the Library's current funding, which has been set at fiscal 2024 appropriation levels as we operate under a continuing resolution (CR). Given current economic conditions, we have revised programmatic increases and minimized out-year costs, deferring all but the most time-critical requests.

The Library's fiscal 2026 appropriations request aligns with the strategic goals set forth in our fiscal 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, A Library for All – expand access, enhance services, strengthen capacity, and foster innovation. It affirms the Library's user-centered mission of service. It builds on multiyear strategic efforts to rebuild the Library's information technology foundation and to optimize advanced IT systems and business processes, while at the same time enhancing access and customer service. And it invests in the future, ensuring that the Library can safeguard and support its collections, services, and workforce in person and online.

Staff are the heart of the Library of Congress. Our employees represent the apex of their professions, bringing unparalleled knowledge, expertise, and experience to bear for the benefit of Congress and the American people. To strengthen our operations, we continue to streamline our processes and advance the systems that support them, making the most of today's evolving technologies and operational best practices to deliver for our users.

We are providing more programs and services than ever before, and while modernization and automation have allowed us to expand productivity in some areas and to do more with less, it is worth noting that the Library's staffing level has remained largely unchanged since fiscal 2015. Indeed, the Library's permanent workforce steadily declined from over 5,000 employees in the early 1990s to its current level of approximately 3,300. It is critical that this relatively low staff level be adequately supported.

With that said, the Library's fiscal 2026 appropriations request does include \$30.9 million in mandatory pay and price-level increases. As a result of the continuing resolution, the Library has had to absorb the cost of mandatory pay and high inflationary price-level increases in fiscal 2025. The need to absorb these expenses threatens our ability to execute the Library's full range of programs and services. It also has an outsized negative impact on the Library of Congress, Salaries & Expenses appropriation, which funds centralized support services across the entire agency.

The Library has three new programmatic requests for fiscal 2026 that, if funded, would provide the resources we need to develop strategic initiatives that deliver greater access and enhanced services, strengthen our capacity, and foster innovation. These requests would also help us to keep pace with digital advancements and deliver exceptional service to the Congress and the American people.

Preservation Object Storage Upgrade

The Library is requesting \$5.4 million to replace and upgrade the decades-old digital preservation system at the Library's on-premises sites with Object Storage technology to achieve compatibility with cloud-native technologies and storage.

The Library is responsible for preserving and securing the world's largest collection of knowledge. To meet this responsibility with digital collections and data, the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has established specific strategies for preservation data (preserved for future generations) and presentation data (available on Library web sites). Both strategies require multiple copies of data stored securely on-premises and in the cloud.

The Library currently maintains two digital preservation tape libraries that are now over twenty years old. The requested funding will allow OCIO to replace and upgrade this decades-old digital preservation system with the industry standard Object Storage format, which is required to support the applications developed by the Library within the cloud including: the digital collections platform; NLS's Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) application; the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), and the Audio-Visual Content Management System (AVCMS). Each of these cloud-native applications depends on access to Library data to deliver content and provide important services to the public.

This upgrade will establish parity between the Library's on-premises and cloud storage environments and best support current and future cloud-native technologies. It will provide greater portability between data centers when necessary and support the ability to scale storage capacity over time. Additionally, this strategic design provides redundancies that ensure that no single event such as a disaster or termination of cloud service puts this **incredibly important** data at risk.

Web Application Delivery and Management Improvements

The Library is requesting \$2.5 million annually to better serve the millions of users who access the Library's data, collections, and services through its primary public websites by transitioning web development activities and hosting to the cloud.

For decades, the Library has developed and hosted its primary public websites and applications within its own data centers, working hard to meet the challenges created by the sites' rapidly increasing usage and scope. In recent years, however, keeping up with the sites' higher usage and the fast-growing scope and scale of the sites' content has led to challenges maintaining a high level of scalability, reliability, and performance.

The technical and financial limitations of physical data centers leave us unable to provide needed capacity during periods of high demand from individual users and impact a growing number of data partners and research institutions using bulk-data services such as Application Program Interfaces (APIs). The physical limitations of the data centers, including bandwidth capacity constraints, limit options for increasing performance beyond current measures.

This request will enable OCIO to update the Congress.gov, loc.gov, and copyright.gov websites and applications to utilize elastic technology available from commercial cloud providers. Elastic technology is a cloud feature that allows for the quick adjustment of resources like memory, storage, and processing power based on demand. This allows users to scale resources up or down to meet changing demands, without having concerns about capacity planning or peak usage.

In addition to cloud migration, the Library's well-established software development processes and management practices require increased licensing and integration tools providing development, security, and operations support. Converting from limited licenses to enterprise versions of these tools increases efficiency and future enhancements.

This request invests in upgrading how the Library makes content and service available to the Congress and the American people and supports the access of collections in connection with the Preservation Object Storage Upgrade request.

Continuous Development of the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS)

The Library is requesting an appropriation of \$6.8 million for the U.S. Copyright Office for three years to accelerate development and delivery of the Registration component of the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), reducing the time to completion by approximately two years.

Recent stakeholder concerns, evolving technological demands, and congressional focus make it imperative to more quickly address the limitations of the existing online registration system, eCO, which has been used to support copyright registrations for over 15 years. There have been growing demands to accelerate the pace of IT development and delivery of the ECS Registration component to include the capabilities to support the entire registration process.

Registration acceleration will include all types of registration and methods of deposit (electronic and/or physical) presently available in eCO. Increasing resources devoted to registration will meet the demands of stakeholders for a new, enhanced and efficient registration system, allowing the Copyright Office to quickly sunset the legacy eCO system and other workflows that rely on legacy platforms.

In addition, this initiative will ensure that all ECS components are integrated with the Library's financial system. Once developed and integrated, ECS will be used across the Copyright Office to administer all aspects of copyrights, manage collection of fees, and enable electronic payment for services. If funded, this initiative is targeted to provide a fully operational ECS Registration system available to the public in fiscal 2028.

Fiscal 2025 Re-Submissions

In keeping with the Library's strategic goals, the Library is re-submitting the following three requests that were not funded in fiscal 2025. Given current economic conditions, these requests have been revised to reduce overall funding and eliminate permanent staff hires where possible.

Digital Collections Processing Capacity and Infrastructure (Expanding Access) will enable the Library to invest in end-to-end modernization of IT infrastructure to support the centrality of digital collecting and to upskill staff capacity to process digital content and support the associated IT systems. These resources are necessary to support a host of IT infrastructure and systems to

redesign and refresh workflows critical for the Library to meet the objectives, principles, and targets to acquire, preserve and make accessible digital content as described in the Library's Strategic Plan.

This request is essential as the Library increasingly moves toward digital as the preferred format for acquiring items for the collections that were born digital or converted from analog form. Transitioning from an almost exclusively physical collections to increasingly digital collections is a multi-year undertaking. The Copyright ECS system for digital deposits is emerging without the Library capabilities for scaled digital processing systems, to receive those deposits for regular Library collection building, management, preservation and limited onsite access. A delay in beginning the digital collection processing capacity upgrade will result in deposits making it through Copyright registration but with the Library unable to perform necessary processing at scale, resulting in significant backlogs with a risk of loss and users unable to access the content. Existing digital systems that support most digital collections were developed iteratively more than a decade ago and are in need of investment to better standardize, integrate, and modernize to accommodate the scale of digital collections growth. These resources allow the Library to manage the actual digital collections ingest, processing, and access.

The request supports ongoing work to digitize and manage materials from the collections, and the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format. To achieve this, the request will provide resources critical to upgrading and improving the IT systems, workflows, and processes necessary to support ongoing work to digitize and manage digital materials from our collections, and to support the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format. Copyright deposits, for example, are central to building the Library's collection, and it is critical for it to be as easy as possible for digital content and metadata delivered to the U.S. Copyright Office to be considered for additions to the Library's collections. This request also includes staffing with advanced skills to process and describe content to make it accessible, as well as staff to support IT systems for digital content management and processing.

CRS: Expanding Data Analytics Capacity (Strengthening Capacity & Fostering Innovation) will enable the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to expand capabilities in quantitative data analysis and policy simulation capacity. It will expand CRS' ability to perform quantitative analysis of both research and operational "big data" for congressional clients, establishing a base process and increased capacity for in-depth data analysis. In alignment with Congressional Members and Committees expressed interest, CRS is investigating how artificial intelligence (AI) technologies could enhance its work for the Congress.

CRS is working to make information more readily discoverable and accessible. It is also working to make finding reports and experts easier on CRS.gov and exploring AI and machine learning for analyzing legislative bills and text to expedite summaries and searches. CRS divisions are developing interactive tools for Members, so that Members can determine more easily and immediately how multiple policy approaches might impact specific constituencies. CRS experts are also using big data to improve analysis. The request includes staffing to strengthen existing capabilities and an investment in the tools and datasets required to broaden the depth of quantitative analysis and models by leveraging big data.

Ensuring Access through a Digital Accessibility Program (Expanding Access) will enable the Library to fully meet its mission in the information age. The Library's digital products, materials, and services must be accessible to all, including veterans and those with disabilities. Direct patron and

staff feedback, along with preliminary expert assessments, point to a large gap between the Library's products, materials, and services and federal/international accessibility standards.

The Library established a small Digital Accessibility Program within OCIO that provides in-house digital accessibility expertise and guidance for Library IT projects and other digital initiatives. Additional resources will mature the enterprise digital accessibility program, expanding capacity to meet growing Library demands for accessibility services including consultation, compliance assessment, and remediation within OCIO. Establishing greater capacity and tools in the Digital Accessibility program will enable OCIO to meet growing demands for accessibility services including consultation, compliance assessment, and remediation and to improve access to the Library's digital products, materials, and services for Americans with disabilities.

The Library seeks to expand the program to address accessibility as the Library enhances current digital products with custom development, releases new IT development efforts, and procures new commercial-off-the-shelf and software-as-a-service products. This request allows the Library to include accessibility training and integration at the beginning of the software development lifecycle.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for supporting the Library of Congress and for your consideration of our fiscal 2026 budget request.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Dr. Hayden.

We will now begin the question portion of the hearing. I will call on members based on seniority of those present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between the majority and minority, and then will call on members in order of their arrival. Each will have 5 minutes.

And I now recognize myself for my 5 minutes.

Mr. Austin, as you have been Architect of the Capitol for nearly a year now, can you share with us what you have learned from your organization so far and the trajectory you plan to take the agency moving forward?

Mr. AUSTIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question.

So this is a very much longer answer, but I will try to put it down to just a few observations.

Number one, the AOC has an incredibly talented, diverse, and committed workforce. They look at this as much more than just a job. They understand the privilege of working here on Capitol Hill and the mission that we support. And despite all the distractions over the past year, couple of years, with the AOC, their commitment to this mission never wavered.

I am also very impressed by the breadth of the mission that we have, from the day-to-day things like custodial minor repairs to the broad strategic things with our master plan, planning for the next 20 to 50 years of the campus. It runs the full gamut.

So I am continually challenged every day by being in this position, but it is a wonderful challenge to have.

Some of the things, some of those initial challenges I wanted to address over the last 12 months or so, number one was the hiring actions, especially at the wage grade and at the senior—at the executive level.

At the executive level, we had more than a third of our vacancies were being staffed by temporary. And that is something we have worked hard. And despite having an attrition of two more of those executives, we only have three hiring actions left, and we should have those complete in the next 45 to 60 days.

That, combined with my own appointment, I believe will bring stability to the top of the organization, which this organization I believe desperately needs.

In a more concrete thing, where we are taking this agency is we are very much working on the master plan for the Capitol campus. It is called the Capitol Campus Master Plan. Normally, those are done in every 5-year increments, but the last one for this agency was done in 2012, so we are 13 years past that threshold. So we are quite far behind.

But that is going to inform the major actions and where we are headed, both with the construction activities as far as the disruption on campus but also from a budget request to the Appropriations staff. And we are working on that, several aspects of that.

The House portions of it are essentially done, but we are working on the Senate, as well as working with the Library of Congress and other entities to make sure we have a holistic view for the campus. And that is going to be the focus for this next year, is coordination with both the House and Senate Appropriations as well as the

Committee on House Administration and the Senate Rules to ensure that we have your needs met.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

Dr. Hayden, we recently learned that a significant number of your patrons mainly use the digital resources that the Library provides.

Can you share the statistic with us and tell us more about the new e-preferred strategy you are implementing as a result of this statistic?

Ms. HAYDEN. The Library of Congress provides a significant number of materials digitally. And with the e-preferred strategy, we are cognizant that we will need to provide direct service and materials in digital format. So that is e-preferred.

And we produced in fiscal year 2023 12.7 million digital images. That is more than triple of what had been available in 2019. And in terms of our usage, we have millions of users that are coming to our websites, also our media, social media websites as well.

So the increase has been substantial, and that is why most of our requests are to advance our ability to be able to provide more digital.

Mr. VALADAO. Dr. Hayden, it is my understanding that the Library experienced a cybersecurity breach last year. Without disclosing anything that wouldn't be appropriate for a public setting, can you share your current cybersecurity status and the steps you have taken to mitigate those risks moving forward?

Ms. HAYDEN. We take IT cybersecurity very seriously at the Library. We are very unique in many ways, because we serve Congress and the general public.

And, with that breach, we worked with the authorities, security authorities. And we also just received word from a second vendor that we had come in and look at our systems to make sure that the threat environment was alleviated. And we just got that reassurance from the second vendor we had to reinforce what the first vendor had worked with us on, that the threat actors are not in our environment at this point.

We can provide additional information. But we have been very pleased with being able to report that the threat was alleviated that we had last year.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Well, thank you.

My time is expired. I am going to recognize Ranking Member Espaillat for his 5 minutes now.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Austin, aside from mentioning as interventions in this committee, I am deeply disappointed that the plaque honoring the men and women, the officers who responded to January 6, has not been installed.

The directive was passed into law in a bipartisan vote on 2022. It has been 4 years since that horrible day and 2 years since the plaque was completed, was done.

This is particularly alarming because many in this campus feel they have ownership, they gloat about the concept that they are deeply more patriotic than anybody else in this universe, and that, in fact, they have also a monopoly on the concept that they support

law and order. But they fail consistently to honor the men and women that stood up to protect all of us in this room.

My question is, what or who is preventing your office from installing the plaque as directed by law honoring the men and women that protected us from a violent, angry, racist mob?

Mr. AUSTIN. When making modifications on the House side of the campus or on the House side of the Capitol Building, past practice is that for modifications are directed by the Office of the Speaker.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Has anybody instructed you in writing to make these modifications or this is something that you took up on your own?

Mr. AUSTIN. We have not received final instructions to install the plaque.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. So you have not received instructions 2 years later to install the plaque. And who would instruct you to do that?

Mr. AUSTIN. Mr. Espailat, again, the past practice is that for any modifications, it would come from the Office of the Speaker.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Austin.

Just for the record, Mr. Chairman, we want to note that Mr. Austin has stated that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has not instructed him, 4 years after this horrible attack and 2 years after we had the plaque, to install a plaque to honor the men and women that put their life in danger. This is outrageous, and we will continue on this side of the aisle to call for that plaque to be installed.

Mr. Austin, last month Mr. Grijalva, Raúl Grijalva, passed away, and he had a long fight with cancer. And as the ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee, he was an effective leader. During his tenure as a public servant, he proudly served the constituents in Arizona.

And to honor his life and legacy, I would like to work with you to plant a cactus tree that was very dear and near to him on the Capitol campus. Do I have your commitment to do that?

Mr. AUSTIN. Sir, we would be honored to work with your office to work on it, just as we are with all Members. We would be honored to.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Austin, for your testimony.

Dr. Hayden, there has been an effort to ban books in America. In fact, we have seen how Defense Secretary Hegseth ordered the removal of almost 400 books from the Naval Academy Nimitz Library because the subject matter was seen as being related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The books banned were the following, some of them: "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou, "Memorializing the Holocaust" by Janet Jacobs. Imagine that, we don't want our new generations to know about the death camps during the Holocaust, Treblinka, Auschwitz, Buchenwald. And another book was "Race, Ethnicity, and Disability: Veterans and Benefits in Post-Civil War America" by Larry Logue and Peter Blanck.

How would this type of policy impact the Library of Congress if you were directed to do the same there? How would it impair your mission to have information to educate children and families across America?

Ms. HAYDEN. As I mentioned earlier, the Library of Congress is unique among libraries because it serves all of Congress and all of the constituents that Congress serves. And so the continued growth of the Library's collections has to reflect the breadth and the depth and the experiences of all of the American people.

And so removing items from the Library of Congress' collection, as you describe, would conflict with that mission and our mandate to provide a universal source of knowledge.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Just for the record, Mr. Chairman, I would like to note that this effort to ban books is nothing more than a modern book-burning exercise.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

And now I will recognize our Representative Maloy for her 5 minutes.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am going to ask Dr. Donfried to come up to the table later in my 5 minutes.

So if you want to take a minute and get yourself settled, I will do a couple of other questions first.

First, Mr. Austin, thank you for the shout-out to the staff when you started. I just thought that was cool that you acknowledged the great work they are doing. I agree with you.

Can you speak to the lessons we have learned from the Cannon Renewal Project that we are going to take into the Rayburn Renewal Project? Because I work in Cannon. My office is beautiful. Our elevators don't always work. It seems like there are probably some things we learned along the way.

Mr. AUSTIN. Ms. Maloy, thank you for the question.

So the Cannon project has been a long project. It is five phases, each for 2 years, so a 10-year project. And any 10-year project you are going to learn some lessons along the way.

The project team after each one of those 2-year phases held an after-action review where we took those lessons learned and we worked with the contractor to apply them going forward.

But your question specifically, what lessons we learned. There were a few.

Number one, that we learned early in the project is we need a better handle on change management. Whether the changes were being directed by Members or staff or at the request of the contractor because of differing site conditions, we needed to have a better oversight on the change management so we didn't have scope creep.

So that was one of the ones we learned, is to put stricter controls in.

We also want to make sure we have better stakeholder coordination to let the Members who were impacted by the other phases that weren't under construction at the time know the impact, whether it be access or noise or dust or something like that, to let them know what was happening and so they would be aware of any interruptions that might happen with, say, water service, electricity, what have you.

But the biggest one we had, which we are going to apply towards future projects, is that we think we did Cannon broken up into too many phases. So we want to do fewer but longer phases.

As you mobilize and demobilize a project, you lose time and it costs money. And so for these larger projects we are looking at, such as Rayburn in the future, we want to do those in fewer but longer phases.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you.

Dr. Donfried, thank you for what you do at CRS. As a former staffer and as a Member, the reports, the research you do is so helpful to our offices. And it is good to know there is a credible source we can go to on all these political issues.

We had a hearing last week with Leg Counsel where they said their workload is drastically increasing because people are introducing more bills. I just want to know if you are seeing the same thing at CRS.

Ms. DONFRIED. Well, first, thank you so much.

I am the new Director of CRS, so I started in September, but I want to say that I began my career as an analyst at CRS. So I spent 10 years at CRS as an analyst, and it is such a pleasure to be back.

And, really, the reason it is not only a pleasure but also a privilege is because of our mission, which is serving every one of you, every committee, every congressional staffer who is involved with Congress, by providing that objective, authoritative, nonpartisan, timely, and confidential research and analysis.

And I will say we are really busy. So I was just looking at this a couple of days ago. And across the service what people are feeling is maybe an increase of about 30 percent or so of requests.

That is not uncommon at the beginning of a new Congress. We see that kind of uptick. And what you see every year is CRS answering about 75,000 requests.

So that is a workload that my 610 colleagues do proudly every day. And it leads me to want to say thank you to this Leg Branch Subcommittee for the enduring support that we receive from you. Thank you.

Ms. MALOY. Well, if it makes you feel any better, I encourage my staff to look for existing reports before they send you a request for a new one.

But in your testimony you talked about AI and how that is impacting what you do. And I know it is really easy right now for staffers to go to AI to try to find answers.

How are you making sure the people on the Hill who should be benefiting from your services know that you are a more credible source than the internet? And I know a lot of the AI searches come back with CRS reports, and I think that is great.

Ms. DONFRIED. It is a wonderful question. And we are right now working on our strategic plan for the coming years. And we are settling on what we are calling a bold goal, which is ensuring that Congress turns to CRS first.

And in many ways it is that competition from AI, because you can just go to your phone and Google something. But you don't know if that is authoritative. You don't know if you can rely on that.

And so I think many staffers understand that and do come to us. But it is a challenge. So there is both a challenge of what are the sources we are competing with, but then also the challenge of how CRS is using AI in its own work, because we want to make sure that everything we provide you is authoritative, so we can't necessarily rely on AI.

And I just want to make a push for the one programmatic increase we are asking you for, which is to help us with quantitative data analysis, which will help you, in turn, understand the policy impact of healthcare increases, of tax policy. And for that there is an AI component, but we need resources to be able to use those tools effectively.

Thanks.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you.

My time is expired, so I am going to yield back. I appreciate it.

Mr. VALADAO. I now recognize Mr. Hoyer for his 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to follow up a little bit on the ranking member's comments. I want to ask you to submit to this committee and to all the members, Mr. Austin, any directions you have received with reference to honoring our police officers who protected the Capitol against an insurrectionist attack, number one.

Number two, I want to ask you where do you believe we are in terms of accomplishing two things: Number one, full accessibility to the Capitol and to our buildings; and secondly, full security requirements having been realized?

Mr. AUSTIN. Thank you for the question.

So taking the first part, the accessibility portion, we do work with the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services for some of the challenges. Obviously, the age of these buildings. They weren't designed back when we had the Americans with Disabilities Act, and so a lot of our buildings are not fully compliant.

As we do major renovations, like we did with Cannon, we go back and we fix those deficiencies, but it usually does take a major renovation in order to do that.

We have put door openers on some of our historic doors to make sure those are accessible, but there is more work to be done in that realm.

And as we go through these projects and we address things with the master plan, we are looking to make sure that they become ADA compliant to the extent possible with historic buildings.

Just the nature of these buildings, we will never get 100 percent the way there, but we are going to do what we can to make sure they are accessible for Members as well as the public.

To speak to where we are with security, I would be happy to provide you with a specific list with numbers, but in general terms, to answer your question right now, is that we did a very extensive doors and windows project where we replaced all the exterior doors around the Capitol Building, with the exception of a couple that we are doing this summer, with new doors that are hardened against intrusion as well as ballistic threats. We also did the same with most of our windows, at least the ones that are accessible from the ground floors.

We have also worked with the Capitol Police and House Sergeant at Arms as well as Senate Sergeant at Arms with additional work as far as installing new conduit for cameras, installing new lighting, things of that nature.

You asked me earlier, sir, about some of the interior doors, so skip ahead to that question. We have replaced the interior doors along the suites, at least the ones to make it secure, for several of the leadership offices, to include the Speaker and the majority and the minority leaders as well.

As far as the whip's office, we are scheduled to do those in April with one exception that is going to be done in August. And for the majority, we are working with a contractor to work on a schedule, but we are looking to do that either at the end of the April recess or into the August one as well.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Austin, we obviously have now had 4 years since the insurrectionist attack on the Capitol and on the Congress.

How would you assess the percentage of projects that you or the previous Architect had determined were necessary to make the Capitol secure? What percentage have we accomplished?

Mr. AUSTIN. I would have to get back with you as far as a specific percentage, but I would say the majority of those projects are complete. So I would say the ones that were identified in the wake of January 6, working off the Honore report and some of the recommendations they have made as far as the physical infrastructure pieces, we are well advanced in that.

I would say the next biggest one that we are doing, at least on the House side, would be the House screening facility, which is going into the Capitol, for personnel screening coming to the Capitol Building. That will begin construction this year.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I would ask the Architect to submit to the committee what has been done and what needs to be done.

Mr. VALADAO. Without objection.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you.

I want to ask Dr. Hayden—who we are very proud of, from Maryland, because she ran the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore prior to her taking this position.

Congratulations to you for what you have done in the past and what you are continuing to do.

Let me join the ranking member. I would like to personally know and have this committee notified whether there are any requests made from any source, either from the executive department or the legislative department, about curtailing the information that is available to Americans.

We live in a democracy where we believe that people having knowledge, the good and the bad, the savory and the unsavory, is absolutely essential if our democracy is to operate correctly.

But let me ask you both, not in that context, but let me ask you both a question. You are frozen at fiscal year 2024. If you do not receive the funds that are necessary or that you have asked for in fiscal year 2026, what would be the largest consequence?

Dr. Hayden.

Ms. HAYDEN. For the Library, immediate reduction in our buying power for the materials that we need, and because we would have to absorb the mandatory pay and the price level adjustments.

And then we would definitely want to focus on preserving our staff with their experience. In fact, today is National Library Workers Day, part of National Library Week.

And so we would definitely look at those programmatic increases that would go unfunded, and that includes the modernization efforts that we have discussed, including CRS and the data analytics to serve Congress.

The one thing that we could not afford to reduce would be our cybersecurity efforts. So we would try to do whatever we could to make sure that that would not be reduced.

But staffing, all of the development and efforts that we have achieved in modernization, would have to be reduced and sometimes, in fact, stopped.

Mr. AUSTIN. From the position of the Architect of the Capitol, from the fiscal year 2024 budget request being frozen at the personnel levels that we are right now, we have enough vacancies that we are having trouble filling versus the ones we are trying to bring on that we have been able to make some adjustments. And we appreciate the flexibility that the Appropriations Committee has given us in that realm.

Where it comes to the biggest impacts, it would come with our deferred maintenance. Fiscal year 2024 we had about a \$200 million decrement to our budget request. And then in the fiscal year 2025 CR, there was an additional 12 percent that was added on top of that.

So those projects, because the needed repairs to the Capitol don't go away, the Capitol campus don't go away, they get deferred to future years.

And so that is one of the reasons our budget request is what it is in fiscal year 2026, is because of those decrements we have taken in fiscal year 2024 and then the small reduction in fiscal year 2025 in the CR. And so those projects build up.

Now, when you try to say what is the impact, it really kind of depends on what building and what facility we are talking about. But, in general, Congressman, the more we defer our maintenance, the greater risk we are taking with our Capitol campus that we will have a system failure that could impact the functionality of the buildings and impact the ability of Congress to perform their mission.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you.

Ms. Donfried, I will have questions for you in the second round.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Now I would like to recognize Mr. Moore for his 5 minutes.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here today. Appreciate it.

So as we work to do a better job to support families across the country, I also believe that it is important that this committee needs to do more to make the Capitol complex more friendly for expected Members and staff as well as for those with young kids.

Speaker Johnson just announced his intention to find ways to allow new moms to have access to lactation rooms close to the House floor, which is an effort that I certainly fully support.

Mr. Austin, can you tell me about the existing status of the lactation rooms on campus for expectant mothers? How many do we have compared to how many the Senate has? What additional resources would your office need to expand access if there is a need for more spaces?

Mr. AUSTIN. Sir, thank you for the question.

The overall status is we have 17 lactation suites across the campus entirely. Each one of those suites varies. They have as low as one seat to as many as eight seats. So they vary about three to four per suite, would be the average associated with that.

There is one suite in each one of the House office buildings as well as two inside the Capitol. In the House office buildings, there are 27 seats total; and in the Capitol there is a total of 6 seats in the Capitol Building for lactation rooms.

I would have to get back to you as far as how that compares to the Senate, but, again, there are ones across the campus.

We are working with the Office of the Attending Physician for what are the requirements for additional ones. There was a study that was funded in a previous year that was executed in fiscal year 2024 to look at the needs of lactation rooms across the campus as well as if there are any modifications to the existing lactation rooms that need to be made.

We expect to get those results this year, and we will look to work with your committee if we need additional funding to make any modifications or additions.

Mr. MOORE. And then specifically the ones that would be out off the House floor, is that in process currently?

Mr. AUSTIN. Well, there are two in the Capitol Building itself. I can't speak to you right now exactly how close they are to the House floor itself, but pretty much anything was in about a 2-minute walk from the House floor to any spot inside the Capitol, at least the level we are talking about, which are the lower levels.

Mr. MOORE. Okay. And then how about reserved parking spots near entrances and elevators available for expectant mothers, is that something you all are working on as well?

Mr. AUSTIN. Unfortunately, I would have to defer to the House Sergeant at Arms, because they control parking on the House side of the campus and the allocation of parking spots.

Mr. MOORE. Okay. And then are there additional opportunities that this committee should consider funding to make the complex more family-friendly for Members or staff or visitors that we are currently not contemplating?

Mr. AUSTIN. We do work with the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services for some of the requests. To the previous question, we are looking to make it more ADA as well as family-friendly.

We have, if you look in the Capitol Visitor Center, all the family changing rooms, the single-stall restrooms, and things of that nature that are available.

But, unfortunately, because of the historic nature of the campus when they weren't quite as focused on those accessibility issues, we do have some work to do in the rest of the campus. And that is always that balance between the historic nature of the buildings versus the modern requirements to facilitate access.

Mr. MOORE. Alright.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. I appreciate that.

Now I recognize Mr. Strong for his 5 minutes.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member.

I want to begin by thanking each of the witnesses and their staff for being here, your hard work and dedication for the U.S. House of Representatives.

All of your efforts are critical to ensuring the smooth operation of our historic institutions and safeguarding Americans' history for future generations.

Mr. Austin, could you please provide us with a status update on the Cannon House Office Building Renewal Project and its projected completion, and are there penalties if not completed on time?

Mr. AUSTIN. Sir, thank you for the question.

So I know Cannon has been a long road to get to where we are today. We spoke earlier about it being a 10-year project.

The good news on that is that all the hard hats and major construction will be off campus by the end of this calendar year.

So we have already seen some of that demobilization that is happening with the removal of some of the scaffolding in the courtyard of Cannon as well as the retrograde of some of the equipment that has been stored there essentially since the beginning of this project.

So there will still be some punch list items, maybe some warranty items that might be happening at the end of this year, but we believe that the project will be complete by the end of this calendar year.

As far as your second point as far as penalties, that is written into the contract. We have not had to exercise that to this date, but we are actively working with the contractor and are willing and ready to enforce liquidated damages, if needed.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

We have elevators and escalators that are frequently out of service. Do we have a service contract or is this handled in-house? How are elevators and escalators handled in our facilities?

Mr. AUSTIN. The answer to your question, sir, is it is both. We have a dedicated elevator and a vertical conveyance team that works on escalators and elevators that work throughout on the House side and the Capitol as well as the Senate side.

For repairs that require more technical expertise, more equipment, we do have a service contract with several contractors, and we are working to expand that to have additional CLINs on the contract so it can be utilized by different jurisdictions.

Overall, as of today, I am happy to say on the House side 84 of the 85 elevators on the House side are fully operational. There is one down in the Ford right now.

And I know every escalator and elevator when it goes out is an impact to the staff and it is very visible. But we are working, with the support of Congress, to get proactive with our maintenance on these elevators. We are looking for a 20-year round-robin project to replace every elevator over the next 20 years. We have new ones, obviously, with Cannon that came with a different mechanical system that will be a part of that, but those are the new ones.

But we also are funded for a system that will provide real-time monitoring of those elevators so that we don't have to wait for the phone call when one of those goes out.

Mr. STRONG. Well, I can tell you the escalators don't work like they ought to work in here, and I think that we need to put a special focus on it. Coming to this committee meeting, I took about 27 steps up an escalator that hadn't worked for a while, and it needs to be addressed. I am not sure who is over escalators and elevators, but in my 2 years in Congress, I will tell you, we need to put a better focus on it.

Mr. Austin, security is clearly a priority in your fiscal year 2026 request. Can you provide more details on how the requested funds will support the United States Capitol Police and the House/Senate Sergeant at Arms, particularly in terms of infrastructure and upgrades on system replacements?

Mr. AUSTIN. So this is probably a longer response I could give you in this forum, sir, and I would be happy to work with your staff and provide specifics to it, especially ones that probably aren't best discussed in an open forum.

We are continuing the door replacement program, as I alluded to earlier. There is additional conduit being put in for more security cameras, and we are looking for opportunities for additional lighting on the Capitol campus, especially on the south side of campus, for some of those spaces that require more active monitoring.

And the biggest one, of course, is going to be the House screening facility, which will be going on the south side of the Capitol Building, and we will be doing pedestrian screening. That project will begin later this year and will be complete before fiscal year 2029.

Mr. STRONG. When construction is completed in Cannon, do you anticipate any other doors being opened for ingress and egress for staff?

Mr. AUSTIN. Outside of the ones that have been closed for construction, not at this time, but I can take that question to U.S. Capitol Police and see if they have any requests to open those.

There is certainly capability to do so, but some of that goes towards the availability of officers to man those screening checkpoints and the magnetometers and things of that nature.

Mr. STRONG. The doors closest to public transportation are obviously the ones that are utilized the most, and especially when it was 8 degrees I do know that that right there was a situation that we saw and hope that that will be corrected whenever the construction is completed.

Switching to you, Dr. Hayden, your fiscal year 2026 budget lists three new requests alongside the resubmission of three fiscal year 2025 requests.

How does the Library plan to balance funding and resources for these requests to make sure both sets are successfully implemented?

Ms. HAYDEN. As I mentioned earlier with the three new requests, they, in fact, do not require FTEs. And so we will be able to use contractual services that are needed to fulfill what we are trying to accomplish.

And with the re-requests, we reduced the number of staff that would be required and we looked at those re-requests very carefully to make sure that we adjusted for the current economic conditions.

Mr. STRONG. The Library's staffing levels have remained largely unchanged since fiscal year 2015, yet the scope of programs and services has grown significantly.

Dr. Hayden, how do you ensure this expansion does not over-extend staff or compromise the Library's core mission, particularly its service to Congress and the American people?

Ms. HAYDEN. As you just heard—and we are very pleased to have the new Director of CRS here, because that is our primary mission.

And so the focus has been on making sure that as that level has been reduced since the 1990s, which was the Library's highest level of staffing, that we carefully looked at workflows, we looked at how we could make sure that there is talent that is coming in, but also retaining a very high level of staff expertise and experience. So we have to balance those two.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

I would like to thank Dr. Hayden, Mr. Austin, Ms. Donfried, Ms. Perlmutter, all for being here today.

Members may submit any additional questions for the record.

This committee now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:57 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

Shira Perlmutter

Register of Copyrights and Director, U.S. Copyright Office



Shira Perlmutter is the Register of Copyrights and Director of the U.S. Copyright Office. She was appointed to the position effective October 25, 2020. Perlmutter leads a workforce of over 450 employees, advises Congress on copyright policy, and directs the administration of important provisions of the United States Copyright Act, Title 17.

Prior to her appointment as Register, Perlmutter had served since 2012 as Chief Policy Officer and Director for International Affairs at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). In that position, Perlmutter was a policy advisor to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and oversaw the USPTO's domestic and international IP policy activities; legislative engagement, through the Office of Governmental Affairs; education and training, through the Global Intellectual Property Academy (GIPA); global advocacy, through the IP Attaché Program; and economic analysis, through the Office of the Chief Economist.

Before joining the USPTO, Perlmutter was Executive Vice President for Global Legal Policy at the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). Prior to that, she held the position of Vice President and Associate General Counsel for Intellectual Property Policy at Time Warner.

Perlmutter previously worked at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva as a consultant on copyright and electronic commerce. In 1995, she was appointed as the first Associate Register for Policy and International Affairs at the U.S. Copyright Office. She was the copyright consultant to the Clinton Administration's Advisory Council on the National Information Infrastructure in 1994 and 1995.

Perlmutter is a research fellow at the Oxford Intellectual Property Research Centre at Oxford University. From 1990 through 1995, she was a law professor at The Catholic University of America, teaching copyright law, trademark and unfair competition law, and international intellectual property law. Previously, she practiced law in New York City, specializing in copyright and trademark counseling and litigation. She is a co-author of a leading casebook on international intellectual property law and policy and has published numerous articles on copyright issues. Perlmutter received her AB from Harvard University and her JD from the University of Pennsylvania.

Written Statement of
Shira Perlmutter
Register of Copyrights and Director, U.S. Copyright Office
Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
April 8, 2025

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the U.S. Copyright Office's fiscal 2026 budget request. The Copyright Office is charged with overseeing the national copyright registration and recordation systems, advising Congress on copyright policy and legislation, working with the Department of Justice and other federal agencies on copyright litigation and international matters, conducting targeted regulatory activity, administering certain statutory licenses, and educating the public about copyright.¹ With approximately 470 full time staff and a modest budget, we have provided these valuable services for over 125 years since Congress recognized the Office as a separate organization in the Library.

Processing times for our core services of registration and recordation stand at historic lows. We continue to make significant progress on IT modernization of our new Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), with three of the four components already in production and used by the public and our staff. We are nearing the three-year anniversary of the new small claims tribunal created by Congress. We are actively engaged in administrative oversight of the designation of the entities established by the Music Modernization Act (MMA). In the past year, we completed the ninth triennial Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) Section 1201 rulemaking and issued two reports on artificial intelligence and copyright. We have expanded our public outreach through educational events and other programs for a variety of audiences.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

Administration of the Copyright Act: The Office is charged with administering the Copyright Act, which involves providing several core services to the public. Much of this work is involved in our ongoing IT modernization initiative, discussed further below.

Registration: In fiscal 2024, we registered 424,155 copyright claims involving millions of works. Over the past three years, we have markedly improved registration processing times: the average time for examining all copyright claims stands at 1.9 months for the second half of fiscal 2024. For fully electronic claims that do not require correspondence, the average is just 1.2 months.² Electronic applications with physical deposits without correspondence average 2.6 months, while paper applications have remained at

¹ 17 U.S.C. § 701 (general responsibilities and organization), § 702 (authority to establish regulations).

² Registration processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/registration/docs/processing-times-faqs.pdf>. For the April 1, 2024 to September 30, 2024 timeframe, 85% of all registration claims were eService claims (online claims and electronic deposits); 14% were deposit ticket claims (online claims with separately mailed physical deposit materials); and about 1% were mail claims (paper claim forms and physical deposits).

an average of 4.1 months for claims without correspondence. Approximately 99% of all applications are now submitted electronically through our electronic Copyright Office (eCO) portal, which we are in the process of replacing as part of our modernization.

Recordation: In fiscal 2024, the Office recorded 16,971 documents containing titles of 1,738,530 works.³ Our online recordation pilot, launched in April 2020, has significantly shortened processing times, with the average time from submission to generation of the public record now measured in weeks rather than months. On August 1, 2022, we opened the pilot to all members of the public and have seen an increase in users; nearly 90% of all recordations now come in electronically.⁴

Public Records: The Office is the custodian of records related to registration and recordation, many going back more than a hundred years, which we are working to make available online. In fiscal 2024, we continued development of the new Copyright Public Records System (CPRS) (which includes both recordation and registration records). To date, 3.5 million physical records have been made available in CPRS.

Licensing: The Office maintained our effective stewardship of \$1.6 billion in statutory licensing funds as of the end of fiscal 2024.⁵ For the seventh consecutive year, we received an unmodified or “clean” audit opinion of the fiscal 2023 statutory licensing fiduciary asset financial statements.

Additional Major Activities: The Copyright Office is engaged in other significant activities, such as implementing legislation, issuing rulemakings, and conducting economic research and public outreach.

Copyright Claims Board (CCB): This June, the CCB will complete three years of operations. By the end of February 2025, 1,186 claims had been filed, and the CCB had issued 33 final determinations. As of February 2025, CCB officers have successfully facilitated 92 agreements by holding settlement conferences. Staff have participated in scores of public events to promote the CCB’s use and have reached nationwide audiences in-person and virtually.⁶ Claims have come from forty-seven states and thirty-nine countries. As required by the Copyright Alternative in Small Claims Enforcement (CASE) Act of 2020, the Office has begun a review of the CCB’s operations to be completed in February 2026.

DMCA Section 1201 and the Music Modernization Act (MMA): Over the past few years, the Office has conducted numerous rulemakings,⁷ two of them mandated by law. In October 2024, we completed

³ There are three primary types of documents that may be submitted for recordation: transfers of copyright ownership, other documents pertaining to a copyright, and notices of termination. The pilot and newly released system are currently focused on the first category (section 205 documents).

⁴ Recordation processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/recordation/>. Regardless of the processing time, the effective date of recordation is the date the Copyright Office receives the complete submission in acceptable form.

⁵ The Licensing Section is responsible for helping to administer the Copyright Act’s various statutory licenses, including secondary transmissions of radio and television programs by cable and satellite systems; and from digital audio recording devices or media. The Licensing Section collects and distributes royalties to copyright holders based on orders from the Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJ), a three-judge board which is part of the Library of Congress, not located in the Copyright Office.

⁶ For more details on the work of the CCB, see Nora Scheland, “How the Copyright Claims Board Can Lighten the Federal Court Docket,” Blog: Creativity At Work (Dec. 20, 2024), at <https://blogs.loc.gov/copyright/2024/12/how-the-copyright-claims-board-can-lighten-the-federal-court-docket/>.

⁷ U.S. Copyright Office, Rulemakings webpage, <https://copyright.gov/rulemaking>.

the ninth triennial proceeding under section 1201 of the DMCA regarding temporary exemptions to section 1201's prohibition against the circumvention of technological measures that control access to copyrighted works. Under the MMA, the Office maintains an oversight role as directed by the statute and engages in education and outreach activities. In January 2024, we issued a notice of inquiry seeking public comments regarding the periodic review of our designations of the mechanical licensing collective (MLC) and digital licensee coordinator (DLC).

Additional Regulatory Work: The Office's additional MMA regulatory work includes a rulemaking to provide a group registration for frequently updated news websites. Last September, we issued clarifications to regulations involving termination rights and the MMA's blanket license. We have several rulemakings underway, including a proposed group registration option for two-dimensional artwork and an update to our existing regulation regarding the selection of electronic deposits of published works for addition to the collections of the Library of Congress.

Initiative on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence: The Copyright Office also provides impartial advice and expertise to Congress, the courts, and government agencies, and information to the public. For example, the Office has been active in taking forward a comprehensive initiative to examine the copyright law and policy issues raised by generative AI. We issued initial registration guidance for applicants in March 2023. In 2024, we reviewed the 10,000 comments received in response to a public notice of inquiry. We are issuing our Report in several parts, with *Part 1: Digital Replicas* published on July 31, 2024, and *Part 2: Copyrightability* on January 29, 2025. The next Part will address the legal implications of training AI models on copyrighted works, including licensing considerations.⁸ This year, we plan to update the March 2023 Registration Guidance and initiate a request for public comments on relevant revisions to the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*. The Office recognizes that Congress continues to consider multiple important issues related to AI, and we are available to provide technical assistance.

Working with Other Agencies: The Office regularly provides legal advice and assistance across the government regarding complex areas of copyright law and policy. We participate in Supreme Court and appellate litigation with the Department of Justice, and engage in interagency collaboration and consultation on international matters and trade that impact copyright.

Economic Work: The Office's first Chief Economist has released several economic reports, including two in the past year, with additional research projects underway.⁹ The economic team also has worked to provide easy public access to decades of copyright registration and recordation data in bulk format.

Public Outreach and Education: The Office engages in numerous outreach activities to provide information on copyright law and to raise awareness of the CCB and other Office resources and programs. In fiscal 2024, we hosted or participated in 209 public events and speaking engagements, continuing an

⁸ For more information on our AI initiative, visit www.copyright.gov/ai.

⁹ U.S. Copyright Office, Economic Research webpage, at <https://copyright.gov/economic-research/>, which also points to the reports, *The Geography of Copyright Registrations* (September 2024), *The Resilience of Creativity: An Examination of the COVID-19 Impact on Copyright-Reliant Industries and Their Subsequent Recovery* (May 2024). In 2024, our team also convened a group of academic scholars to discuss economic issues related to copyright and AI and published a document summarizing a structured framework for evaluating relevant economic evidence. See Lutes, Brent A. ed., *Identifying the Economic Implications of Artificial Intelligence for Copyright Policy: Context and Direction for Economic Research*, U.S. Copyright Office (Feb. 2025).

upward trend. We engaged with many audiences, from stakeholders to lawyers to academics, including well-attended public webinars for users of our systems to gather feedback. Our Public Information Office and our new reading room provide in-person services by appointment.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The modernization of the Office's information technology (IT) continues to be a top priority as well as a strategic goal. We are, however, facing an uncertain fiscal environment as we plan for fiscal 2026, which may impact the timeline for this work. The Office is committed to making regular updates and improvements to avoid repeating the experience of having to overhaul severely outdated legacy systems.¹⁰ Our Enterprise Copyright System development includes four main components (registration, recordation, public records, and licensing). We also collaborate with OCIO on other business priorities enabled by technology, such as improving online access to historical public records and the operation of our new Contact Center.

Recordation: Our online recordation system was the first ECS component to be released to the public, enabling recordation of documents under section 205 of Title 17. In August 2022, full access was provided to all members of the public. We are now incorporating user feedback to make iterative improvements and to build new functionality for processing notices of termination.

Copyright Public Records System (CPRS): The second ECS component to be publicly released was a pilot for the new CPRS, which provides access to registration and recordation data with advanced search capabilities, filters, and improved interfaces. The CPRS has expanded online access and research options by adding 3,539,247 card catalog records. It will become the Office's sole source of authoritative online copyright information by summer 2025.

Licensing: The Office completed the development and design of the licensing component and initial automated workflows to replace outdated systems and processes. We implemented the statement of account examination processes in ECS and transitioned royalty accounting processes onto the Library's Financial System to streamline and enhance operations. On March 13, 2025, we activated this component into production.

Registration: Registration is the largest and most complex of the Office's services and the focus of the greatest public attention. In response to strong demand from stakeholders, the current focus of ECS development is on accelerating the replacement of the existing online system, which is almost 20 years old. We have expanded the staff working on ECS Registration to comprise three teams: one dedicated to the external (public facing) component, one to the internal (staff) component, and one to electronic deposit (eDeposit) development (which will provide enhanced upload and rendering capabilities to support the

¹⁰ Under the Library of Congress's centralized IT structure, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is leading work on user experience design and platform services—that is, the design and architecture capabilities underpinning the ECS. Years ago, the Library transitioned to an agile IT development model that emphasizes continuous development as well as rapid delivery of new functions and features that optimize the stakeholder experience. We have seen the benefits of this model for meeting evolving changes in technology, providing secure and interconnected systems, and managing contract cost increases.

submission of large numbers of files in one group application, such as photographs, and very large files, such as feature-length motion pictures and television episodes).

In late 2024, we initiated a limited pilot of both the eDeposit upload functionality and the new interface and functionality of the most commonly used registration form, the Standard Application (currently representing approximately 72% of all claims). During January and February 2025, we conducted 50 in-depth pilot test sessions with 57 participants representing individual and organizational users. The reaction has been uniformly positive, with comments noting that the difference between our current eCO system and the proposed model is “like night and day.” This feedback will inform future development steps and functionalities.

Historical Public Records: As part of the Office’s commitment to the preservation of and access to historical records, we are digitizing print and microfilm records and making them available online.¹¹ This includes the old card catalog, the Catalog of Copyright Entries (CCEs), microfilm, and the internal record books.¹² Digitization is the first step, to be followed by metadata capture to enhance searchability, with all records eventually available through the new CPRS. Great progress has been made to digitize and make available the Office’s record books: the first 500 were published on the Library’s website in February 2022,¹³ and now 16,763 books – well over half of the 26,142 total – are available online.

New Contact Center: The Office’s modernization of customer contact routing and reporting recently achieved a major milestone. Working with the GSA Centers of Excellence, we implemented a best-in-class customer relationship management (CRM) solution. This CRM enhances the public’s experience, enables robust data analytics, and provides centralized knowledge management capabilities to track and route customers’ calls and emails more effectively.

Copyright Public Modernization Committee: In January 2021, the Librarian of Congress appointed a Copyright Public Modernization Committee (CPMC) to enhance communication with external stakeholders about the technology-related aspects of the ECS. The CPMC was originally established for a three-year term, with thirteen members from a range of interested sectors; it held public online meetings twice a year with hundreds of virtual attendees, as well as several informal briefings.¹⁴ Last year, the Librarian reauthorized the CPMC for another three-year term, and a new set of thirteen members were selected (including some returning members).¹⁵ The first public meeting of the new CPMC was held online on October 10, 2024, and the most recent one was held on April 3, 2025.

¹¹ For details on our Historical Public Records program, visit <https://www.copyright.gov/historic-records/>.

¹² The Office already digitized and made available online our physical card catalog, which is available in the Virtual Card Catalog (VCC), as well as the CCEs. See <https://copyright.gov/vcc/>.

¹³ See U.S. Copyright Office, NewsNet 947, Copyright Office Launches Digitized Copyright Historical Record Books Collection (Feb. 7, 2022), <https://www.copyright.gov/newsnet/2022/947.html>. The scans are posted at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/copyright-historical-record-books-1870-to-1977/about-this-collection/>.

¹⁴ Video and related material from CPMC public meetings can be found on the U.S. Copyright Office webpage at <https://www.copyright.gov/copyright-modernization/#modernization-committee>.

¹⁵ Library of Congress, Library of Congress Announces New Members of Copyright Public Modernization Committee, Sept. 24, 2024, at <https://newsroom.loc.gov/news/library-of-congress-announces-new-members-of-copyright-public-modernization-committee/s/2d289494-93b4-4404-98a1-452cb791571d>.

FUNDING AND UPDATE TO THE FISCAL 2026 BUDGET REQUEST

The Copyright Office performs all of its work on a modest budget, composed of three separate budgets allocated by program areas:

- (1) Basic Budget. This funds most of the Office's operations and initiatives, including the majority of payroll and related expenses and the operations of the CCB. Historically, the Basic Budget has been composed of a combination of appropriated dollars and offsetting fee collection authority, with fees constituting less than one half of the total.
- (2) Licensing Division Budget. This is derived entirely from collections of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licensees pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office.
- (3) Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJ) Budget. Although the CRJ program is not part of the Office, we provide it with budget, financial management, and administrative support on behalf of the Library. CRJ appropriated funding supports payroll and partially funds other expenses not supported by fees and royalty payments.

Request in Fiscal 2025: For fiscal 2025, the Office requested an overall budget of \$107 million in funding and 478 FTEs, of which \$45.9 million would be funded through offsetting fees collected in fiscal 2023 and prior years. That budget request would have covered mandatory pay increases, price level increases, and nothing more. We did not request additional appropriations for IT development, as we are now completing the last year of prior Congressional funding. With the fiscal 2025 basic budget now final, the impact of a full year Continuing Resolution on the Office's programs amounted to an effective \$4 million reduction.

Request for Fiscal 2026: Given that work to modernize our IT systems and services is still underway and accelerating, further support through appropriated funds will be needed. In our fiscal 2025 budget statement, we previewed that both the Copyright Office and OCIO anticipated the need for greater financial resources for IT modernization in fiscal 2026.¹⁶ The requested fiscal 2026 funds will support work on IT-related initiatives to meet user demands for ECS functionality and continuous development for components already in public release. Stakeholders have praised the work we have done so far on modernizing IT systems, and maintaining momentum is essential to deliver a timely ECS Registration component. To summarize, our fiscal 2026 requests are as follows:

- **Basic Budget:** \$92.972 million and 445 FTEs, to include a net \$4.791 for mandatory pay-related and price level increases, a program decrease for non-recurring Searchable Historic Records costs, and a program increase for Continuous Development of the ECS. This budget comprises \$37.025 million in offsetting fee collections (40%) and \$60.738 million (60%) in appropriated dollars.

¹⁶ Statement of Register of Copyrights Shira Perlmutter Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch of the Committee on Appropriations of the U.S. Senate, May 15, 2024, at page 6, at <https://www.copyright.gov/laws/hearings/USCO-Senate-FY25-Appropriations-Testimony-May-16-2024.pdf>. Recall that the initial financial support for our modernization initiative, funded for five years as part of the fiscal 2019 budget, ended in fiscal 2023. The other segment of authorized Historical Public Records funding from fiscal 2019 was provided for seven years and ends in fiscal 2025.

- **Licensing Division Budget:** \$6.712 million and 26 FTEs, all of which are to be funded from collection of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licenses pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office. The net mandatory pay-related and price level increases of \$0.251 include an adjustment for the Copyright Royalty Judges.
- **Copyright Royalty Judges Budget:** \$3.801 million and 7 FTEs include the mandatory pay-related and price level increase and a net program increase of \$0.608 million from Copyright Licensing. Of this total, royalties and participation fees offset \$1.112 million (for non-personnel-related expenses). The remainder, \$2.689 million in appropriated dollars, is to cover the personnel and other related expenses of the three judges and their staff.

For fiscal 2026, the Office is requesting an appropriation increase of \$6.8 million for three years to accelerate development and delivery to the public of the Registration component of ECS. This will allow increased IT development team capacity and meet sharply rising costs within the industry. In fiscal 2029, \$4.1 million will non-recur, leaving base funding of \$2.7 million for ongoing continuous development.

Drawing on the feedback from the limited pilot described above, the Copyright Office and OCIO plan to deliver the full ECS Registration component in fiscal 2028 and then transition to continuous development in fiscal 2029. Between now and then, planned steps include the following. In fiscal 2026, we will continue work on the Standard Application and the integration of the ECS Registration applicant-facing module, the examination module, the eDeposit uploader and examination renderer, and the message center. In fiscal 2027, we aim to complete the development of the group applications and digital registration certificates. In fiscal 2028, we will focus on integration with financial systems, including unified deposit accounts, and the workflow for physical deposits. Throughout, the Office will conduct user pilots to validate the system's evolving functionality.

Without the three years of proposed funding in our fiscal 2026 request, our plans to accelerate the ECS Registration system are at risk. That risk will likely escalate over time, as funds will have to be used to operate and maintain existing systems that are already beyond their useful life. The delivery timeline will significantly increase for the fully operational registration system demanded by stakeholders with the required components, workflows, and integrations. Looking ahead, after ECS Registration is made available to the public, the Copyright Office anticipates submitting a fiscal 2029 request to fund the necessary integration with other copyright functions (such as APIs, service request processing, content management capabilities, and a warehouse and records management system for copyright records and deposits that are submitted as part of registration).

In conclusion, the Copyright Office appreciates the Subcommittee's and Committee's continued support of our work to benefit the users of our services and the public, and to further our Constitutional mission of "promot[ing] the progress of science and useful arts."¹⁷

¹⁷ U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 8.

Karen Donfried

Director of Congressional Research Service



Dr. Karen Donfried was appointed as Director of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in September 2024. A noted foreign policy expert, she was a Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government prior to joining CRS. She served as Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs from 2021 to 2023; in that role, she developed and implemented U.S. foreign policy for 50 countries in the region.

From 2014 to 2021, Donfried was the president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening transatlantic cooperation. Prior to that, she served on the National Security Council at the White House, and as a member of the Department of

State's Policy Planning Staff.

Donfried started her career at CRS, covering European affairs for 10 years. She earned a bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University, a Magister from the University of Munich, and a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy and a Ph.D from the Fletcher School at Tufts University.

**Statement of Karen Donfried
Director, Congressional Research Service
Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
April 8, 2025**

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the fiscal 2026 budget request on behalf of the Congressional Research Service (CRS). In addition to outlining CRS's budget requirements for the upcoming fiscal year, my testimony will provide an overview of CRS's work in support of Congress during fiscal 2024, and bring you up to date on the Service's progress with respect to several strategic initiatives.

Fiscal 2024 marked a period of transition for CRS. After his appointment as Interim Director, my predecessor, Robert Newlen, embarked upon a number of initiatives to improve internal and external communication, explore technology-based solutions to strengthen the Service's research and analytic capacity, facilitate a modernized workforce management system, and foster innovation in the delivery of products and services to Congress. I began my term as CRS Director in September of 2024, and as I complete the first six months of my tenure, I am committed to building upon the momentum and accomplishments of Director Newlen.

FISCAL 2026 BUDGET REQUEST AND PROGRAM INCREASES

CRS's budget request for fiscal 2026 is 144.568 million dollars, an increase of 8.488 million dollars (or 6.2 percent) over the amount appropriated in the Full Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025. The requested increase includes 5.013 million dollars for mandatory pay related and price level increases and a programmatic increase of 3.475 million dollars to support continued enhancement of CRS's data analytic and artificial intelligence capabilities. As in previous fiscal years, staff pay and benefits account for approximately 90 percent of CRS's budget request. Thus, operating under the appropriated fiscal 2024 level in fiscal 2025 has led to significant cuts to research materials and training, as we preserve our most important asset, our people.

CRS's priorities for fiscal 2026 include preparation for the New Members Seminar for the incoming 120th Congress; maximizing the use of text analytics and related functionality to enhance access to products on CRS.gov; and continued enhancement of the Service's IT infrastructure and quantitative data analytic capability. Underlying each of these initiatives will be CRS's focus on the delivery of timely, authoritative, nonpartisan, and objective products and services tailored to meet the needs of Congress.

Strengthening Data Analysis Capabilities and Exploring Artificial Intelligence Applications

CRS's requested program increase for fiscal 2026 includes approximately 3.5 million dollars to continue enhancement of the Service's capacity to perform quantitative data analysis and policy

simulation, including the modeling of “big data” sets, for congressional clients. In recent years, CRS has observed an increasing demand from Members and committees, to provide this type of analytical support. While CRS has conducted some limited quantitative analysis and policy simulation, currently it lacks the capacity to provide this service on a broader scale.

In the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Congress encouraged CRS *“to explore ways to expand its ability to perform quantitative analysis of research data....”* and directed the Service to *“engage with an external entity to produce a report detailing the feasibility of CRS engaging in the analysis and modeling of big data sets by highlighting the information technology infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain such a capability.”* In response to the direction provided in the Joint Statement, CRS contracted with a company in fiscal 2022, to conduct a study identifying the IT infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain a greater data analytics capability. In September 2023, CRS procured a vendor to pilot a small set of cloud based quantitative data models consistent with the recommendations in the study. Additional resources are required to continue supporting these and future data models in the cloud.

Enhancing its ability to perform quantitative data analysis would enable CRS to more precisely assess, and communicate to congressional requestors, the impact of legislative proposals on various demographic groups, as well as the interaction of such policies with other programs.

CRS is also exploring opportunities to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) applications into its workflow. In fiscal 2023, the Service established an Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG), which continues to make recommendations to CRS leadership on best practices and operational processes necessary for the adoption of AI technologies. The adoption of any AI technology at CRS must enable adherence to CRS core values, and deliver on the potential to create efficiencies in the development and publication of products for Congress and in the accessibility and utility of data.

CRS would allocate 1.076 million dollars of the requested amount to contract two teams of data personnel (data scientists, programmers, and digital interface designers) in its research divisions, to develop and maintain data models and projects in a cloud-based environment. An additional 1.466 million dollars would be invested in the tools required to setup and maintain a secure cloud computing environment and the datasets necessary to expand CRS’s data analytic capacity. In addition, CRS would utilize 560,000 dollars to acquire modeling tools, AI software and associated user training resources. The remaining 373,000 dollars would be expended on training and contractual support for IT security services to support Security Assessment & Authorization (SA&A) efforts, to obtain/maintain system Authority-To-Operate (ATO), and to support system development and operations through designing, testing, and deploying cloud native software.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The program increases requested by CRS illustrate its continuing commitment to explore opportunities to enhance its products, services, and operational capabilities to meet the needs of an evolving Congress. Of note recently, in April 2025, CRS is implementing a realignment of several offices and sections that will optimize the use of resources and staff expertise. These

changes, which are focused on the infrastructure side of CRS, will increase synergies throughout the Service, improve efficiency, and buttress CRS staff's many efforts to provide excellent products and services to Congress. The following is a brief summary of CRS's progress with respect to other initiatives focused on achieving this important objective.

Product Innovation: Interactive Graphics and Other Visually-Based Products

CRS continues to focus on the development of new, visually-based products through the efforts of its Visualization and GIS Section. This past year, CRS has worked to streamline the production of interactive graphics within written products, address technical issues that arise, including through the use of an AI coding tool, facilitate innovation in interactive displays, and expand interactive visual options. In addition, CRS has explored adaptation of content into interactive infographics within short reports; assessed additional chart options for creating interactive graphic formats; and worked closely with OCIO to ensure that CRS's IT infrastructure is more compatible with its interactive graphic needs.

As of March 2025, CRS's product line includes 71 infographics and 79 interactive graphics. CRS is also piloting and has published a new interactive report product (also known as "storymap"), a next-generation platform that integrates interactive, multimedia, and visual elements to create a narrative. These innovative products represent CRS's forward-thinking focus on presenting its research, analysis, and information to Congress in new, accessible, and user-friendly formats.

Recruitment and Retention of a Skilled and Productive Workforce

CRS continued its efforts to recruit, retain, and professionally develop a highly skilled and collaborative workforce. During fiscal 2024, the Service submitted postings for 62 merit selection positions and attended 10 recruiting events. Attendance at these events provided an opportunity to engage with a variety of prospective candidates, to increase awareness of CRS's brand as well as available employment and internship opportunities. These efforts were part of a broader multi-year recruiting campaign which has succeeded in returning CRS staffing to pre-pandemic levels.

CRS offered training opportunities for leadership, writing, and presentation skills and to support a variety of other activities to enhance staff professional development. Staff attended sessions on technology topics including: statistics and visualization in excel; R programming; data management; and a series of forums discussing various artificial intelligence applications. Further, CRS has encouraged staff engagement through a series of listening sessions and expanded training.

Exploring Artificial Intelligence Applications

CRS continues to evaluate the potential of AI technologies to enhance support for Congress consistent with the Service's mission and core values. Under the guidance of the CRS Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG), CRS has tested and evaluated a number of AI tools and models for legal research and analysis, editing and writing assistance, and drafting CRS bill summaries. In the case of bill summaries, CRS, in collaboration with OCIO, tested multiple AI approaches using six different Large Language Models (LLMs) and, unfortunately these

summaries failed to meet CRS standards for accuracy, coherence, relevance, and objectivity (less than 3% of 3000 summaries were acceptable). These results have identified some opportunities to explore the use of AI at different stages of the bill summary workflow (research, analysis, and writing and review).

Evaluation of AI tools for use in various parts of the CRS workflow involves assessment of their relative utility in assisting CRS staff in providing timely support for Congress and the extent to which adequate safeguards are present to ensure the authoritativeness or confidentiality CRS's work product. Notably, as a product of ongoing efforts to evaluate AI tools and models, CRS has approved its first AI tool for use by CRS staff. The tool is a commercial subscription product that provides java script coding assistance to CRS Visual Information Specialists to assist them with the production of interactive graphics in CRS products.

CRS is actively engaging with AI developers, legislative and parliamentary research organizations, and national libraries to share information and identify additional AI technologies for potential CRS use cases. CRS's requested program increase (outlined above) reflects the Service's anticipated need for additional resources to support the further evaluation and deployment of AI tools and models to assist with various CRS workflows. In the first instance, these AI tools or software would support data analysis, but CRS would look for these tools to be as flexible as possible to enable us to address a range of use cases and maximize the impact of our investment.

IT Modernization

CRS continues to work closely with the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to modernize its core IT systems and move toward full migration into the cloud-based M365 platform. In partnership with OCIO, the Service has implemented more than 100 improvements to its congressional relationship management system ("Minerva") since initial deployment in 2023; many suggested by CRS staff, as part of the continuous development approach implemented by OCIO. In addition, CRS continued the migration of its authoring and publishing and content management systems into the M365 environment.

In fiscal 2024, CRS accomplished the rollout of a new and improved Text Analysis Program (TAP 2.0) that uses Natural Language Processing to research, analyze, compare, and summarize bills and supports the "Related Bills" feature on Congress.gov. In addition, CRS anticipates the release of the newly redesigned CRS.gov website that will include an enhanced taxonomy and a new search capability later this month.

Congress.gov

CRS continues to actively engage with House, Senate, and GPO data partners in support of multiple initiatives to improve the interoperability of data sources aggregated by Congress.gov. Fiscal year 2024 marked an historic, behind-the-scenes accomplishment for authoritative information produced by our House and Senate data partners. House and Senate data partners collaborated with the Library to retire first generation, 30–40-year-old out-of-date data sources for Congress.gov. Modernizing behind-the-scenes workflows advances our legislative data

partnerships, to support better tracking of legislative information and Member contributions through Congress.gov.

CRS is deeply appreciative for our data partners' efforts to improve data quality by standardizing formats for legislative documents. The United States Legislative Markup, or USLM, is a legislative branch-wide standard that is integral to future editing and publishing interoperability within the legislative ecosystem. We look forward to integrating USLM into Congress.gov which will improve the user experience.

Continuous engagement with users, and continuous collaboration among specialized staff across all legislative branch data partners is key to our collective progress. During fiscal 2025, we continue to deliver user-focused enhancements, including the recent release of HTML for CRS products in Congress.gov and through the Congress.gov API (Application Programming Interface). We are also working with House Clerk colleagues to provide House vote data through the Congress.gov API and to feature "exchange of letters" data regarding jurisdictional interests between House committees.

To date, researchers can access more than 3.5 million historical and contemporary items from Congress.gov. We remain committed to working with our data partners, including House Clerk and House Digital Services partners, to continually improve accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of legislative information available from Congress.gov—the official website for U.S. federal legislative information.

(CONAN) Modernization

Known officially as the "Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation," CONAN serves as the official record of the U.S. Constitution for Congress. In 2019, CRS collaborated with OCIO and the Law Library to introduce a website for CONAN: constitution.congress.gov. This site features hundreds of pages of updated constitutional analysis and content. During fiscal 2024, CRS's CONAN attorneys continued to provide comprehensive analysis of the Supreme Court's jurisprudence as it relates to every provision of the U.S. Constitution, including the implications of recently decided cases. To make CONAN more accessible to online users, content has been drafted and revised in the form of short, granular essays that focus on specific, discrete topics. CRS has also been preparing the printed pocket part to the decennial 2022 edition of CONAN. Since the launch of the public website in 2019, CONAN has received more than seventy million views and remains the most up-to-date source of constitutional analysis.

As part of the Library of Congress's Legislative and Appropriations Request to the 118th Congress, CRS requested elimination of the statutory requirement to publish CONAN and its supplements in hardbound copy. On March 8, 2024, Representative Bice introduced H.R. 7592, a bill "To direct the Librarian of Congress to promote the more cost-effective, efficient, and expanded availability of the Annotated Constitution and pocket-part supplements by replacing the hardbound versions with digital versions." The bill was approved by the House on September 9, 2024 and referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration on September 10th. In the 119th Congress,

similar legislation, H.R. 1234, was introduced by Representative Bice on February 12, 2025 and referred to the Committee on House Administration.

Outreach to Members and Committees

In fiscal 2024, CRS engaged in a variety of efforts to target its outreach to Member and Committee offices. The Service offered twice monthly introductory briefings to congressional staff, as well as a series of congressional programs to highlight the legislative research and analysis that CRS provides to all Members. CRS contacted Chiefs of Staff and state and district directors to offer briefings on the products and services available to DC and district offices. In addition, CRS's research divisions engaged with the relevant committees of jurisdiction to inform Members and staff of the products and expertise available to support their legislative and oversight activities. Interim Director Newlen also personally engaged Members of Congress at Library events and solicited direct feedback regarding CRS service, which I have continued in fiscal 2025.

In addition, CRS worked closely with the Committee on House Administration to plan the New Members Seminar for the incoming class of the 119th Congress. Held in January 2025, the Seminar included over 20 sessions on a variety of topics, and provided newly elected Members an opportunity to learn about the range of products, services, and expertise that CRS has to offer. The program was attended by 39 Members of the House.

Knowledge Management

CRS continues to develop and implement strategies to capture, manage, preserve, and distribute institutional knowledge that it relies upon to provide exceptional service to Congress. Utilizing robust cloud-based environments that foster better knowledge sharing with colleagues, CRS staff leverage a unique collection of resources, leading to greater efficiencies in everyday work, as well as employee on- and offboarding. At the end of fiscal 2024, the Service maintained 54 research portal sites and collaborative online spaces that contained topical content curated by experts across disciplines. CRS fosters collaboration by sharing knowledge and best practices through monthly meetings for communities of practice, a quarterly Knowledge Café, and an annual Summer Series on emerging technologies. For fiscal 2024, the summer series focused on knowledge management fundamentals and featured speakers from across the Library of Congress.

In February 2024, CRS began staffing its space in the Agency Connection Center (ACC). To consolidate services, the Knowledge Services Group will transfer its in-person reference and research support services from the La Follette Congressional Reading Room (LCRR) to the ACC effective November 1st, 2025. In partnership with the Committee on House Administration and the other liaisons sharing the space, CRS participated in the ACC Swear-In Day event on January 3, 2025. This event provided CRS staff an opportunity to promote its services to House staff.

FISCAL 2024 IN BRIEF

In fiscal 2024, CRS continued to fulfill its mission “to serve Congress with the highest quality of research, analysis, information, and confidential consultation, to support the exercise of its legislative, representational, and oversight duties....” In the past fiscal year, Congress called upon

CRS research and analytical expertise at every stage of the legislative process and across all public policy issues on its agenda. CRS experts handled over 75,000 congressional requests, published over 1,000 new products, and updated over 1,700 existing products. In addition, the Service bolstered its growing library of multimedia products, posting 146 new videos and podcasts to CRS.gov on a variety of topics including: gene editing in agriculture, organized retail crime, expiring tax provisions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, artificial intelligence regulation, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) legislative process, the Baltimore bridge collapse, and discussion of recent Supreme Court opinions and other legal developments. As in previous years, CRS provided support to virtually every Member and committee office.

Service to Congress

CRS experts provided research, analytical and consultative support to Members, committees and congressional staff on a wide range of public policy issues including: the impact of low-income assistance programs, competition with China, economic and tax policy, federal emergency management assistance, the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, and reauthorization of the farm bill. CRS legislative attorneys advised on federal criminal law, legal questions associated with the statutory Tik-Tok ban, tribal issues, and the implications of recent Supreme Court opinions, including the Court's decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* which overturned the *Chevron* doctrine requiring judicial deference to administrative agency interpretations. In addition, CRS analysts and attorneys provided testimony before congressional committees on issues related to the continuity of Congress; social security; regulation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as hazardous substances; servicemember access to safe, high-quality pharmaceuticals; and U.S. Coast Guard involvement in drug enforcement, illegal migration and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. CRS also continued to provide guidance on questions regarding legislative and budget process, congressional oversight, and the annual appropriations bills.

CRS hosted over 12,500 congressional attendees at its 350 programs and institutes in fiscal 2024. The Service conducted seminar series on topics including: financial services, disruptive technology, and immigration. In addition, CRS held its annual Issues and Policies seminar; the Legislative and Budget Process Institute; the semiannually scheduled Federal Law Update series; as well as several CRS Defense Institute sessions throughout the year.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of my colleagues at CRS, I would like to express my appreciation to the Committee for its continued support. CRS greatly values its role as a trusted source of research, analysis and information for the Congress. As we begin this 119th Congress, I look forward to the Committee's input on how CRS can improve its products and services and strengthen operational capabilities. I thank you again for your consideration of our fiscal 2026 request.



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS HEARING

AOC OVERVIEW

Who We Are

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) traces its beginnings to 1793 with the laying of the Capitol cornerstone. Today, the AOC is responsible for the care and operation of the Capitol campus, which includes more than 18.5 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds and thousands of works of art. The AOC's 2,500 employees work behind the scenes day and night to provide Congress and the Supreme Court with facilities and infrastructure to conduct their business.

Our Mission

Serve Congress and the Supreme Court, *preserve* America's Capitol and *inspire* memorable experiences.

Our Vision

Working together, we strengthen and showcase the foundation, facilities and functions supporting American democracy.





ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026 BUDGET REQUEST AND BUDGET HISTORY SUMMARY

FY 2021

AOC Budget Request: \$798.1M
Enacted Level: \$684.1M
Full Time Employees: 2,310

FY 2022

AOC Budget Request: \$865.5M
Enacted Level: 782.9M
Full Time Employees: 2,358

FY 2023

AOC Budget Request: \$1,673.4M
Enacted Level: \$1,319.0M
Full Time Employees: 2,415

FY 2024

AOC Budget Request: \$1,128.1M
Enacted Level: \$947.3M
Full Time Employees: 2,428

FY 2025

AOC Budget Request: \$1,020.6M
Enacted Level: \$830.3M
Full Time Employees: 2,442

AOC APPROPRIATIONS						
Appropriation	FY 2021 Enacted	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2025 Full Year CR	FY 2026 Request
AOC Construction and Operations	\$127.5M	\$139.1M	\$145.8M	\$152.5M	\$152.5M	\$176.2M
Capitol Building	\$34.7M	\$42.6M	\$80.6M	\$95.7M	\$48.7M	\$83.7M
Capitol Grounds and Arboretum	\$20.6M	\$15.2M	\$16.4M	\$16.6M	\$21.6M	\$36.5M
House Office Buildings	\$138.8M	\$212.4M	\$126.3M	\$166.4M	\$146.2M	\$186.3M
Senate Office Buildings	\$89.6M	\$82.0M	\$184.6M	\$138.8M	\$138.8M	\$223.3M
Capitol Power Plant	\$97.8M	\$114.6M	\$167M	\$148.7M	\$123.9M	\$142.8M
Library Buildings and Grounds	\$83.4M	\$64.5M	\$144.2M	\$95.0M	\$65.0M	\$137.9M
U.S. Botanic Garden	\$21.0M	\$24.5M	\$23.6M	\$20.5M	\$20.5M	\$206.4M
Capitol Visitor Center	\$24.8M	\$25.6M	\$27.7M	\$28.0M	\$28.0M	\$30.5M
Capitol Police Buildings, Grounds and Security	\$46.0M	\$62.4M	\$402.9M	\$85.2M	\$85.2M	\$112.9M
Totals	\$684.1M	\$782.9M	\$1,319.0M	\$947.3M	\$830.3M	\$1,336.5M
% Change from Previous FY	-1.7%	14.4%	68.5%	-28.2%	-12.4%	61.0%

Note: FY 2026 Budget Request includes 57 new FTEs = \$9.38M

Library of Congress Mission Statement

Our Mission

The mission of the Library of Congress is to **engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.**

Service to Congress is the foundation for the Library's mission. We engage, inspire, and inform Congress through our collections, services, and experiences, including on-demand analysis, policy consultations, briefings, events, programs, and constituent engagement.

Service to the American people requires a user-centered approach for ever-growing, ever-changing communities, to welcome those visiting and interacting with the Library in person and the many more interacting with us online.

Within our walls, the U.S. Copyright Office promotes creativity and knowledge by administering the nation's copyright system for the benefit of all.

Engage

Congress and users from across the globe, including researchers, learners, and creators, turn to the Library for our unparalleled source materials. Drawing knowledge and inspiration from the Library's extensive collections of manuscripts, maps, rare books, photographs, films, and sound recordings, our users produce fresh works that will in turn benefit future generations.

Among the Library's most engaging programs, our National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled provides life-enhancing service to millions of Americans with blindness and other print disabilities through a national network of libraries that distribute the latest contemporary literature in a variety of accessible formats.

Inspire

Conceived as a monumental temple to knowledge, the soaring frescoed spaces and gilded halls of the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building draws visitors from far and wide. Every day that the Library opens its doors to researchers and the public, thousands of visitors are inspired by the building, our collections, and our staff. Beyond the Library's physical spaces, exciting digital experiences and a wealth of content awaits our virtual visitors. Regardless of where they are, people can connect with the Library of Congress.

A variety of in-person programs, exhibitions, and events such as the National Book Festival, the Treasures Gallery, and Live at the Library are enhancing the in-person experience and engaging new audiences. As well, the crowdsourcing platform By the People and livestreams of the Library's unparalleled literary content do the same in our digital space.

Inform

For users in the legislative, judicial, and executive branches, our scholars and specialists from the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. Copyright Office, the Law Library of Congress, our reading rooms, the Kluge Center and our Federal Research Division provide authoritative information via our collections and through direct consultation.

We make our collections, records, and products as widely accessible as possible. Students can reference our collection items in their school papers, hobbyists can access materials related to their interests, and academic researchers can embark on their next projects, all from their schools, homes, or offices. Whether they need on-site or online access to our resources, our expert staff is here to help them.

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Total Library Budget Authority amounts displayed include spending authority derived from off-setting collections

During Dr. Hayden's tenure, the Library embarked on a strategy of modernization in almost every area in the Library to continue to lead the world's libraries and achieve the strategic goals of greater access and customer service for all Americans.

Budget Change from 2020 to 2021 (+3.5%). In 2021 modernization continued with \$16.2M of new initiatives enacted, including: Science & Technology Research Capacity; Law Library Replacement Shelving; eAcquisition and Contract Management; Cybersecurity, Automated Records Management and Personnel Security Case Management System. The Library also received directed funding to support Little Scholars operational costs.

Change from 2021 to 2022 (+4.6%)

With Copyright ECS, CRS IRIS and OCIO Modernization efforts already underway, \$26.5M of new modernization initiatives were enacted in 2022, including: Library Collections Access Platform (L-CAP), Integrated Electronic Security System (IESS), Microsoft 365; Cellular Upgrade, and Copyright CASE Act. The Library also received funding for the Congressional Legal Education Forum.

Change from 2022 to 2023 (+4.3%)

The modernization sequencing continues in 2023 with \$22.0M of initiatives reacted, including: OCIO Cloud Hosting Office, Optimization of Financial Infrastructure; Legislative Branch Financial Management System; Enterprise Planning and Management; Strengthening IT Planning and Project Management; and OCIO Data Center Modernization. In 2023 HUS had a negative change due to the non-recur of \$4.86M of the Management Information Systems (MIS) program. The Library also received direct funding for Lewis Houghton, Mass D, COVID-19, Little Scholars senior staff salary reimbursement and continued support for Congressional Legal Education Forum.

Change from 2023 to 2024 (+2.5%)

The 2024 enactment continues the adoption of the IT Continuous Development strategy that began in 2023 with CRS IRIS. Funding received in 2024 supported some infractionary costs, Copyright ECS Continuous Development, and NLS Devices. Funding was provided for support of NLS continuous development and to OCO for centralized support of IT initiatives. The Library also received directed funding towards the Data Storage and Migration Method Pilot and continued support of the Congressional Legal Education Forum.

Change from 2024 to 2025 (+0.0%)

The 2025 Full-Year Continuing Resolution Appropriations Extension enacts funding at the fiscal 2024 level.

Change from 2025 to 2026 Request (+5.4%)

The 2026 request is based on the full-year Continuing Resolution. The funding requested includes mandatory pay and price level inflationary costs, and is offset by non-recurring funding. The programmatic increases include six initiatives, three new requests: Preservation Object Storage, Web Application Delivery and Management Improvements, and Continuous Development of the ECS, and three re-requests: 2025: Ensuring Access through a Digital Accessibility Program, Data AnalysisPlot, and Digital Collections Processing Capabilities and Infrastructure.

April 3, 2025



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

**Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Hearing
Questions for the Record**

May 16, 2025

Chairman Valadao

Question 1: In your opening statement before this Subcommittee, you highlighted your agency's prioritization of physical security and life safety projects for funding and noted the alignment of the budget to address these security projects to support the United States Capitol Police and House and Senate Sergeant at Arms' missions. Please provide an itemized list of these physical security priority projects, distinguishing them from those projects across the Capitol campus that address important aging, system replacements.

Answer:

The Office of the Chief Security Officer is currently overseeing 33 distinct physical security projects across the campus, each at different stages of development. These initiatives encompass various phases, including eight in design-only, four in design/construction, three in assessment, six in planning, and twelve in construction. This diverse portfolio highlights the varying scopes and progress levels of our projects.

Projects in the design-only phase have been awarded to a design contractor and are poised for construction, while design/construction projects have already received construction estimates. Projects in the assessment phase focus on scope development, and planning projects are in the requirements development stage, where we work closely with clients to advance their requests. Lastly, construction projects are currently awarded to a general contractor for execution.

We are actively collaborating with United States Capitol Police, House Sergeant at Arms, the Senate Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper to create a comprehensive plan that aligns with budgetary constraints while our team engages with the Capitol Police Board to prioritize project importance. We aim to finalize the specific scopes of each project to ensure clarity and successful execution. We have provided an enclosure with a list and briefing slides detailing these projects.

Ranking Member Espallat

Question 2: How will the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) be impacted by the recent change in tariff policies? Please explain any current or potential impacts in detail including how AOC plans to adjust for additional expenses

Answer: There are currently no impacts to the AOC resulting from recent changes in tariff policies, as existing contracts were established prior to implementation. We are not aware of any immediate impacts on future contracts.

(Questions 3 and 4) Several projects remain unfunded due to the full-year continuing resolution including an ever-growing campus-wide deferred maintenance list.

Question 3: What is the current estimate for deferred maintenance across campus?

Answer: The AOC's Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) program identifies and tracks the deferred maintenance and capital renewal backlog, defined as the accumulated cost of necessary and uncompleted maintenance and repairs, across the Capitol campus. The AOC's 2024 Performance and Accountability Report has identified backlog as a Tier 1 risk that may have a significant impact on the AOC and its ability to perform its mission. At the end of Fiscal Year 2024, backlog is estimated at \$2.7 billion.

Definitions:

- **Deferred Maintenance:** is defined as maintenance, repair or replacement work on existing facilities and infrastructure that is past due causing failure or partial failure.
- **Capital Renewal:** is defined as making replacements in kind to correct unacceptable conditions caused by aged building components prior to failure.
- **Backlog:** equals total Deferred Maintenance plus Capital Renewal expected to become Deferred Maintenance within a five-year window.

Question 4: Please provide your long-term plans for deferred maintenance projects and especially address the impact on the Capitol campus if we don't continue making the necessary investments now.

Answer: Today, the AOC faces a backlog exceeding \$2.7 billion in deferred maintenance and capital renewal crucial to keeping historic facilities operational and enabling the performance of vital constitutional functions. The demands on the campus continue to grow-- from enhancing security and safety for daily users to accommodating millions of visitors each year and supporting the needs of Congress and the Supreme Court. The AOC's 2025 Capitol Complex Master Plan employs best stewardship practices through a Total Cost of Ownership model, considering the full lifecycle of acquisition, construction, operations, maintenance, and future renewals. For example, one of the most pressing challenges is renewing the Rayburn House Office Building. Rayburn has a backlog exceeding \$560 million--an amount projected to reach the billions over the next two decades. In addition, the Senate also faces increasing demands for space to support vital governmental functions. We must also address campus security and strained infrastructure. The Capitol Complex Master Plan establishes clear priorities and strategic capital investments based on aging infrastructure and Congressional input. It outlines funding options that consider total ownership costs ensuring that the Capitol campus is prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next 20 to 50 years. Failure to address this backlog will lead to accelerated deterioration of historic structures. Delays in upgrading infrastructure risk disrupting critical Congressional functions and compromising security. Timely investment is necessary to prevent catastrophic and much more costly issues in the future.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY

THE HONORABLE David Valadao
Robert Newlen, Acting, Librarian of Congress
The Library of Congress
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
The Library of Congress Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request

Question: The budget request includes a number of priorities for the Office of the Chief Information Officer, including the continued implementation of the Library's Cloud Smart Strategy. What is the status of this strategy and what percentage of the Library's resources are being protected with backup data storage systems?

Answer:

The Library of Congress Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) continues to implement and mature the agency's Cloud Smart Strategy, which was published in September 2022. Drawing on the federal Cloud Smart Strategy, the Library's Cloud Smart approach enables the agency to utilize cloud-based processing, networking, storage, and application services while maintaining Library on-premises data center capability to support technology operations where appropriate.

Currently, 100% of the IT systems and applications in the Library's production environment are protected with backup storage. Backups are implemented for servers, databases, and applications in Library on-premise data centers in addition to the cloud.

The Library stores preservation collection data according to a 3:2:1 strategy, which calls for three copies of the data to exist on two storage technologies with one copy geographically dispersed from the others. In addition to cloud storage, the Library stores at least one copy of preservation collection data in a Library on-premise data center.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY

THE HONORABLE Adriano Espaillat
Robert Newlen, Acting, Librarian of Congress
The Library of Congress
 Committee on Appropriations
 Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
The Library of Congress Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request

Background: There seems to be a lot of buzz related to the intersection of copyright and artificial intelligence (AI), particularly regarding the copyrightability of AI-generated works and the use of copyrighted materials in AI training.

Question: Please provide details regarding the initiative on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence?

Answer:

In early 2023, the Copyright Office launched an initiative to examine the copyright law and policy issues raised by generative AI. Its work and related documentation on copyright and AI matters is posted at www.copyright.gov/ai. A brief overview of the two years of work on this initiative is provided in the written testimony to this Committee by Shira Perlmuter, Register of Copyrights. Below are some additional details.

In March 2023, the Office issued guidance to applicants on how to register works incorporating AI-generated content. After convening public listening sessions and hosting webinars to gather information about the technology and its uses for several months, the Office published a notice of inquiry in August 2023 that elicited over 10,000 public comments by the December 2023 deadline. The Office decided to issue its Report in multiple parts.

On July 31, 2024, the Office issued Part One: Digital Replicas, where it describes the widespread availability of generative AI tools that make it easy to create digital replicas of individuals' images and voices as well as the gaps in existing laws. It recommends that Congress establish a federal right that protects all individuals from the knowing distribution of their unauthorized digital replicas. The Office also made recommendations as to the appropriate contours of such a right, including First Amendment accommodations and limitations on transferability.

On January 29, 2025, the Office published Part Two: Copyrightability, which addresses the copyrightability of outputs created by using generative AI. There the Office affirms that existing principles of copyright law are flexible enough to apply to this new technology, as they have applied to technological innovations in the past. It concludes that the outputs of generative AI can be protected by copyright only where a human author has determined sufficient expressive elements. This can include situations where a human-authored work is perceptible in an AI output, or a human makes creative arrangements or modifications of the output, but not the mere provision of prompts. The Office confirms that the use of AI to assist in the process of creation or the inclusion of AI-generated material in a larger human-generated work does not bar copyrightability. It also finds that the case has not been made for changes to existing law to provide additional protection for AI-generated outputs.

On May 9, 2025, the Office released a pre-publication version Part 3 in response to congressional inquiries and expressions of interest from stakeholders. Part 3: Generative AI Training addresses the use of copyrighted works in the development of generative AI systems. It examines where the uses of works for AI training may implicate copyright owners' exclusive rights, how the fair use doctrine may apply, and the feasibility of various licensing options. (We anticipate a final version of Part 3 will be published in the near future, without any substantive changes expected in the analysis or conclusions.)

As you know, the Copyright Office is responsible for administering the copyright registration system. To date, approximately 2,000 registrations have been issued for works that contain AI-generated materials, in accordance with our guidance. Relatively speaking, this is still a small number of registrations, compared to the almost 500,000 registrations (covering millions of works) the Office issues each year. As noted in its [Part 2](#) publication, the Office plans to issue updated guidance to help the public register claims in works that might contain AI-generated materials. It also plans to start the process to update its Compendium of Copyright Office Practices later this year.

And the Office continues to work on its Report on copyright and AI. Forthcoming Parts will address the legal implication of training AI models on copyrighted works, licensing considerations, and the allocation of any potential liability.

Question: How does the Library's budget request address these needs?

Answer:

We understand this question about needs is directed at the Copyright Office's work on matters related to artificial intelligence, and how this work is affected by the budgetary considerations.

The fiscal 2026 budget does not request separate funds to support the AI initiative. The Office's budget request does take into account needed funds to address personnel pay increases as well as request funding over the next three years to accelerate the IT development of the Registration component of the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS).

The Copyright Office's legal and policy work on its AI initiative is undertaken by current personnel, including lawyers and staff in the Office of Policy and International Affairs, the Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of Registration Policy and Practice, with production and other support from specialists in the Office of Public Information and Education. This initiative involves about two dozen lawyers and another dozen specialists and administrative staff. There is no single staffer whose full-time job focuses solely on this initiative.

The Copyright Office uses its existing budget for personnel matters to pay the salaries of the staff working on this initiative. While our AI initiative is a priority project, at the same time, all staff who work on the AI initiative also have other projects and tasks as part of their regular duties. The legal, policy and public information work that the Copyright Office is doing in its AI initiative is performed solely by Copyright Office personnel, under the leadership of the Register of Copyrights. Registration claims are handled by the Registration Program.

Question: Most important, what are the impacts to the Copyright Office and stakeholders if these needs are not met?

Answer:

On information technology matters, without the annual increase of funding over the next three years as proposed in our fiscal 2026 request, the Office's and Library's plans to accelerate the ECS Registration system are at risk. That risk will likely escalate over time, as funds will have to be used to operate and maintain existing systems that are already beyond their useful life. The delivery timeline will significantly increase for the fully operational registration system demanded by stakeholders with the required components, workflows, and integrations.

Right now, it is premature to conclude if we need to expand legal staffing, for example, to handle future additional work related to legal and policy matters on copyright and AI. If registration claims filed for works containing AI-generated works grow considerably, that too could have a staffing impact on our Registration Program.

If the Copyright Office's budget remains static or the fiscal 2026 appropriated budget is less than the request to continue its progress on developing the Enterprise Copyright System, there are a number of risks that would adversely harm the entire Copyright Office.

In such a case, the Office would have to make critical personnel decisions concerning all priorities and staffing across the entire Office. To the extent that might involve fewer staff, that could impact our ability to continue to provide the excellent service to the public, as well as to Congress, the courts and other executive agencies.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2025.

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

WITNESS

MR. J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF, UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. VALADAO. The subcommittee will come to order.

I would like to thank Ranking Member Espaillat and our subcommittee members for being here today.

Chief Manger, welcome back.

Chief MANGER. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. And while we know you are looking forward to retirement, we appreciate your willingness to extend your time with us while we search for your successor. We look forward to your testimony today.

The purpose of today's hearing is to review the United States Capitol Police fiscal year 2026 budget request, which is \$967 million, a 20 percent increase over the enacted fiscal year 2025 CR.

The requested funding supports continued growth to both sworn and civilian personnel, nearly 14 percent over fiscal year 2025 levels and an increase of nearly 26 percent in general expenses.

While I intend to keep my comments brief, I want to thank you again for this opportunity to express our continued gratitude to our officers of the United States Capitol Police. Thank you for all you do to keep our campus safe for all those who visit and work here.

I now yield to Ranking Member Espaillat for his opening remarks.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Chief Manger. Again, congratulations on your retirement. You are always welcome to come back to each and every one of our sessions if you like.

Chief MANGER. Thank you.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. You don't even have to come in uniform, Chief.

But I hope you do enjoy your retirement. And thank you for securing the Capitol and making a priority of the men and women in your force.

I know that for fiscal year 2026, the Capitol Police has requested \$967 million, which is an increase of \$176 million or 22 percent over the frozen 2024 enacted level provided in the full-year continuing resolution.

This is a big ask, and it seems that much of this increase was compounded by the unfortunate enactment of a full-year continuing resolution.

I am interested to hear on the impacts of the CR on your request. I do recognize that you need more to keep us safe, and I commend you for your commitment to do that.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. Chief Manger, your full testimony has been submitted for the record and you are now recognized to provide a summary of your written testimony.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF J. THOMAS MANGER

Chief MANGER. Thank you. Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, the members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the United States Capitol Police fiscal year 2026 budget.

Over the past 4 years, the USCP has experienced tremendous growth. Since 2021 there have been significant changes to increase the department's staffing levels and our security posture and to modernize technology.

So I need to acknowledge at the outset that the department's fiscal year 2026 budget request is substantial. It is close to \$1 billion.

I recognize that there are other police departments of a similar size whose budget is not as large as ours, but we are not an ordinary law enforcement agency. The USCP is unlike any traditional police department. In fact, our mission incorporates elements similar to the FBI, the U.S. Secret Service, and the Federal Protective Services.

Moreover, while the officers that you see on and around the Capitol complex represent a large portion of the department's workforce, the full scope of our duties far exceeds that of the officers and agents stationed at physical posts. Much of the work performed by the department staff, both sworn and civilian, goes well beyond the Capitol Grounds.

Significantly, much of our mission requirements simply did not exist 4 years ago. I cannot sufficiently emphasize that point. Following nearly 20 after-action reports and 140 total recommendations, the department's mission expanded exponentially and continues to expand.

As a result of the 103 recommendations issued by the U.S. Capitol Police Inspector General, the department had to respond to and implement recommendations that spanned the gamut in complexity from equipping every officer with riot gear to developing the department-wide policies and expanding operational planning to strengthen the department's training functions.

As a result of these recommendations, the department has taken on new responsibilities and created new divisions and teams that did not previously exist in the department.

Member security concerns and major operational planning have driven the need for additional resources and staffing. The increased threat climate is perhaps one of the biggest drivers of the department's continuing need for additional resources. This past year alone saw threats against Members increase to a staggering 9,400 in 1 year.

The current threat environment has resulted in additional Member protective responsibilities, which have increased by 27 percent since 2023.

This includes the continuation of sunset details and the addition of short-term threat-based details; increased requests for Member escorts and security monitoring at regional airports; additional technical surveillance countermeasure inspections, which have in-

creased by nearly 400 percent since 2021; Member residential and Capitol complex security assessments, which have almost doubled since 2021; and the request for law enforcement coordination assessments, which have increased by 159 percent since 2022.

The department created a new standalone Intelligence Services Bureau, which did not exist 4 years ago. Our reorganization also created the Office of Standards and Training Operations, which allows the department to centralize its training, policy development, and inspections and controls functions, all recommendations issued by the OIG.

The department also created additional operational components, such as a Rapid Response Team that can be deployed to support events and demonstrations, disruptions at hearings, critical incidents, or calls for service.

And, significantly, the Protective Intelligence Operations Center, or PIOC, is a state-of-the-art fusion center for the intake and coordination of Member threats, related investigations, and the newly established residential security program.

None of these components existed 4 years ago. They are all new. They are all must-haves in our current threat environment.

The department's fiscal year 2026 budget request builds upon the accomplishments achieved over the past 4 years. It includes \$687 million to fund salaries and benefits, \$255 million to fund general expenses, and \$25 million in multiyear funding to support the continuation of the department's mutual aid program.

Over the past 4 years other workload demands have skyrocketed, including security assessment briefings to Member offices, criminal investigations, the execution of search and arrest warrants nationwide, technical surveillance countermeasure inspections, residential security, committee hearing security coverage, deployment of threat-based protection details, and other operational mission requirements to keep Members, their families, and staff out of harm's way.

I can't stress strongly enough that the department's protection responsibilities do not end at the Capitol campus borders. The department is statutorily entrusted with nationwide protection responsibilities of Members, requirements that it cannot undertake without the support and resources of partner law enforcement agencies. Thus, the department is asking Congress to renew the mutual aid funding.

The mutual aid program also provides additional protective detail coverage to enhance Member security in their home districts by coordinating with State and local law enforcement to provide residential security and support events.

The department expects to reach approximately 2,530 sworn personnel by the end of fiscal year 2026. While this represents optimal staffing levels, the department needs to continue efforts to balance its workload, specifically between uniformed operations and protective intelligence operations.

By the end of fiscal year 2027, I feel confident that the department will reach target sworn staffing levels across its organizational entities.

The department is tasked with ensuring that Members, the Capitol complex staff and visitors remain safe and secure and must do

so on a campus that is entirely open and accessible to all. There is no other Federal Government building with a comparable public access policy.

I recognize the fiscal environment that we are in, but the department cannot provide all of the services requested and required if it is not sufficiently funded.

I want to thank the members of this committee for your trust and support. It is through our joint partnership that the department has achieved such transformational change.

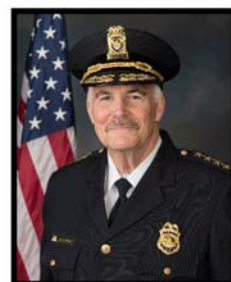
Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The information follows:]



UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

J. Thomas Manger, Chief of Police



Chief J. Thomas Manger was appointed as the Chief of the United States Capitol Police in July 2021. Chief Manger has served 45 years in the policing profession, including more than two decades as chief of police for three of the largest police agencies in the National Capital Region. He was chief of police in Montgomery County, Maryland from 2004 to 2019 and previously served as the police chief in Fairfax County, Virginia from 1998 to 2004. His leadership in regional law enforcement initiatives is extensive.

After graduating from the University of Maryland, Manger began his law enforcement career in January 1977, when he was sworn in as a Fairfax County police officer. He rose through the ranks to become chief of police. He received numerous awards in Fairfax County, including the Silver Medal of Valor in 1993.

During his time as a police chief, Manger received several national awards, including the 2007 Law Enforcement Award from the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, the 2016 Gorowitz Institute Service Award from the Anti-Defamation League, the 2018 FBI National Executive Institute Associates Penrith Award, the 2019 Major Cities Chiefs Leadership Award, and the 2022 William H. Webster Profiles in Leadership Award for Federal Law Enforcement. Manger was also inducted into the Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame in 2012.

In 2018, Washingtonian magazine recognized Manger as one of the Washingtonians of the Year. He also serves on the Cardinal's Child Safety Advisory Board for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

Elected by his peers to national leadership positions, Manger served from 2014 to 2018 as President of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), and from 2013 to 2017 as Vice President of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).

Chief Manger and his wife, Jacqueline, have two children.

**Formal Statement of J. Thomas Manger,
Chief, United States Capitol Police**

before the

**Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
of the
United States House of Representatives**

April 8, 2025

HEARING:

U.S. Capitol Police FY 2026 Budget Hearing

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the United States Capitol Police (USCP or Department) budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Subcommittee for its consistent support of the women and men of the U.S. Capitol Police. They courageously carry out their duties of protecting the Members of Congress, the Capitol Complex, and the legislative process day in and day out. I am proud of the work they do.

Over the past four years, the USCP has experienced tremendous growth. Since joining the Department in 2021, there have been significant changes to increase the Department's staffing levels, enhance its security posture, modernize technology, streamline administrative processes, and boost employee morale. This transformation has taken time because the changes have been significant. But we are not done yet.

I need to acknowledge, at the outset, that the Department's FY 2026 budget request is substantial – it is close to one billion dollars. I recognize there are other police departments of a similar size whose budget is not as large as ours, but we are not an ordinary law enforcement agency. The USCP is not like traditional police departments. In fact, our mission incorporates elements of many federal law enforcement agencies. We are part FBI, U.S. Secret Service, and Federal Protective Services. Moreover, while the officers that you see on and around the Capitol Complex represent a large portion of the Department's workforce, the full scope of our duties far exceeds that of the officers and agents stationed at physical posts. Much of the work performed by the Department's staff – both sworn and civilian – goes beyond Capitol Grounds. The Department's responsibilities to Members and the Congressional community include protective details nation-wide and abroad, threat investigations, criminal investigations, campus-wide physical and technical security measures, intelligence analysis and reporting, canine security, offsite delivery screening, and hazardous incident response, among others.

This work is further supported by the vast array of administrative duties that are the foundation of the Department's workforce – to include training and wellness programs, policy development and implementation, inspections and internal controls, IT services, facilities and logistics, fleet management and maintenance, financial management, procurement, human resources, and background investigations. This work is critical to the Department's functioning but is often not seen or appreciated.

Significantly, much of these mission requirements simply did not exist prior to January 6, 2021. I cannot sufficiently emphasize that point. Following the events of that day, the Department's mission expanded exponentially and continues to expand. As a result of the 103 recommendations issued by the U.S. Capitol Police Inspector General (OIG), the Department had to respond to and implement recommendations that spanned the gamut in complexity, from equipping every officer with riot gear, to developing Department-wide policies, to expanding event planning and coordination efforts, to strengthening the Department's training functions. As a result of these recommendations, the Department has taken on new responsibilities, and created new divisions and teams, that did not previously exist in the Department. Recommendations of this scope and magnitude typically take years and years to implement; the Department did so on an expedited timeline.

Other factors have also contributed – and continue to contribute – to the Department’s expanding mission set. Congress requested that the Department undertake a top-to-bottom survey of its operations, and as result, the Department commissioned the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) assessment, which issued recommendations in three key areas – staffing, technology, and training. The Department responded in record time with an implementation strategy to make those recommendations a reality.

Member security concerns and major operational planning have driven the need for additional resources and staffing. The increased threat climate is perhaps one of the biggest drivers of the Department’s continuing need for additional resources. The past year alone saw threats against Members increase to a staggering 9,400 in one year – more than double over the past ten years. That is a huge increase, and given the current political climate, one that is likely to continue an upward trend. The current threat environment has resulted in additional Member protective responsibilities, which have increased by 27 percent since 2023; continuation of sunset details and the addition of short-term threat-based details; increased requests for Member escorts and security monitoring at regional airports; additional Technical Surveillance Countermeasures inspections, which have increased by nearly 400 percent since 2021; Member Residential and Capitol Complex security assessments, which have almost doubled since 2021; and requests for law enforcement coordination assessments, which have increased by 159 percent since FY 2022.

The Department’s reorganization, another OIG recommendation, created a new, stand-alone Intelligence Services Bureau, which collects and analyzes all sources of intelligence to identify domestic and international threats, and coordinates information sharing with the intelligence community. The reorganization also created a third office – the Office of Standards and Training Operations – which allows the Department to centralize its training, policy development, and inspections and controls functions, all recommendations issued by the OIG.

The Department also created additional operational components, such as the Rapid Response Team, which provides a dedicated patrol team that can be rapidly deployed to support events and demonstrations, critical incidents, or calls for service; additional civil disturbance units that allow for increased activations to enhance our security posture; and significantly, the Protective Intelligence Operations Center (PIOC), a state-of-the art fusion center for the intake and coordination of Member threats, related investigations, and the newly established residential security program.

None of these components existed four years ago – they are all new. And the implementation of each new program required staffing, research and analysis, IT support, procurement, budgeting, and where appropriate, new equipment, vehicle fleet, and other support services, both on the sworn and civilian sides of the Department. All these actions were necessary, but not always seen.

I. Background

To properly evaluate the Department’s FY 2026 request, it is important to conduct a brief retrospective of the Department’s evolution these past four years. In 2021, the Department faced

a trifecta of significant challenges: critically low sworn staffing levels, the need to re-open the Capitol campus post-pandemic, and remediating over one hundred audit recommendations issued by the OIG and other oversight entities following the events of January 6. These were large-scale challenges the Department had to confront simultaneously and within a compressed timeframe, significantly taxing a workforce already severely understaffed. Morale and work-life balance suffered significantly.

Recognizing the need to prioritize staffing, in FY 2022, the Department launched a comprehensive sworn hiring strategy to increase its sworn bench strength. The plan evolved into a multi-year hiring and training strategy that established a hiring target of 288 new sworn recruits each fiscal year that is designed to take into account the lag time between recruit hiring and full utility, which is approximately ten months. An integral part of the strategy is creating and developing a “pipeline” of uniformed officers to support operational requirements to allow more experienced officers to qualify for internal, specialized positions throughout the Department.

The impact of this hiring strategy started to yield results in FY 2022 when sworn hiring began to outpace attrition. However, an additional challenge emerged that further impacted Department staffing: the expanding threat environment. This dynamic called for enhancements to the Department’s security posture, and by extension, the need for increased staffing in the Department’s protective operations. In response, the Department expanded its hiring strategy to include 63 additional, external positions to directly support the Protective and Intelligence Operations (P&IO) Office. These positions form part of the Department’s current FY 2026 budget request and focus on the onboarding of entry-level agents to support, primarily, dignitary protection and investigations.

II. Department’s FY2026 Budget Request

The Department’s FY 2026 budget request builds upon the accomplishments achieved over the past four years. It includes \$687 million to fund salaries and benefits, \$255 million to fund general expenses, and \$25 million in multi-year funding to support the continuation of the Department’s mutual aid program. This budget request reflects the Department’s priorities in three critical areas: 1) Advancing Member Protection, 2) Optimizing the Workforce, and 3) Modernizing USCP Security and Technology.

a. Advancing Member Protection

The current climate of threats has reached alarming levels – in FY 2024 alone, the number of threats launched against Members of Congress exceeded 9,400. Members of Congress, their families, and staff face a range of threats, both on the Capitol campus and in their home districts, and the Department must be prepared to anticipate, mitigate, and respond. Social media and the internet provide a breeding ground for threats that, regardless of their nature, the Department must investigate. That effort requires human resources, which if the current trend continues, will only add to the need for staffing. This is a mission requirement of the highest priority. To maintain a posture of optimum readiness, the Department deploys resources that cast a wide protective net and requires staffing for: 1) Congressional delegations and other special events inside and outside the continental United States; 2) security awareness briefings to

Member offices; 3) criminal investigations; 4) execution of search and arrest warrants nationwide; 5) Technical Surveillance Countermeasures inspections; 6) residential security; 7) committee hearing security coverage; 8) deployment of threat-based protective details; and other operational mission requirements to keep Members, family, and staff out of harm's way.

The Department must continue to adapt and take proactive measures to stay one step ahead of criminal actors. A significant step in that direction was the establishment of the PIOC. It serves as a centralized command center for Member protection, integrating intelligence, threat assessment, and other related protective operations. The FY 2026 budget seeks funding to continue PIOC operations and provide comprehensive and effective security measures in response to the current and future threat environment.

The Department's Member protection responsibilities, however, do not end at the Capitol campus' borders. The Department is statutorily entrusted with nation-wide protective responsibilities, requirements that it cannot undertake without the support and resources of partner law enforcement agencies. Thus, the Department is asking Congress to renew the mutual aid funding it extended in the Emergency Security Supplemental Appropriations Act¹ to reimburse law enforcement partners for providing mutual aid. The Prime Minister of Israel's visit in July 2024 illustrated the effectiveness of this program, when hundreds of officers from ten different law enforcement agencies joined with the USCP to secure the Joint Meeting of Congress. The mutual aid program also provides additional protective detail coverage to enhance Members' security in their home districts by coordinating with state and local law enforcement to provide residential security and support events.

b. Optimizing the Workforce

The Department has made unprecedented efforts to increase its sworn workforce, and we are extremely grateful to Congress for the support that made it possible. But if the Department is to perform the vast range of services the Congress rightfully expects, the Department needs the resources to properly do the job. Thus, the Department can only carry out its 24/7, no-fail mission through the dedicated commitment of *all* Department employees – sworn and civilian. The Department's civilian workforce supports not only administrative functions, including procurement, budget and financial management, logistics and fleet management, human resources, background investigations, information technology, policy, internal controls, and training, but also fills critical operational functions within the Department, including roles that support the Command Center, event planning and emergency response, hazardous incident response, vehicle screening, training, physical security and technical countermeasures, threat assessments, and intelligence and investigative analysis. Although rarely seen, the civilian workforce is the invisible hand that supports every aspect of the Department's operations.

The Department has made tremendous strides in hiring, and it was accomplished through your direct support. As a result of this hiring strategy, the Department has hired over 900 officers, resulting in a net increase of approximately 360 sworn personnel after factoring in attrition. By continuing this strategy, the Department expects to reach approximately 2,530 sworn personnel by the end of FY 2026. While this represents optimal staffing levels, the

¹ P.L. 117-31

Department needs to continue efforts to balance its workload, specifically between Uniformed Operations and Protective and Intelligence Operations. By the end of FY 2027, I feel confident that the Department will reach target sworn staffing levels across its organizational entities.

c. Modernizing USCP Security and Technology

The FY 2026 budget seeks fundings for the continued maintenance of existing security systems, investment in new technologies, cybersecurity, and stakeholder priorities. The demand for security measures across the Capitol Complex has increased and requires funding to ensure access controls, video surveillance, intrusion alarms, duress, and other systems are effectively designed, installed, and maintained. The increasingly complex and dynamic nature of the Department's physical and technical security program requires the Department to conduct research into new technologies, including the appropriate use of artificial intelligence to enhance security capabilities across the Capitol Complex. The FY 2026 budget request seeks funding to continue these critical modernization initiatives.

III. Conclusion

The Department is tasked with ensuring that Members, the Capitol Complex, staff, and visitors remain safe and secure, and must do so on a campus that is entirely open and accessible to all. There is no other federal government building with a comparable public access policy. The Department must be positioned to respond to the needs of Members and the security of the Capitol Complex on a no-fail basis. I recognize the fiscal environment we are in, but the Department cannot provide all the services requested and required if it is not sufficiently funded.

In just a few years, the Department will celebrate its 200th anniversary, and I have every confidence that, with continued commitment, planning, strategic vision, and Congressional support, the Department will continue its upward trajectory of excellence in the fulfillment of its protective mission over Congress, Members, staff, visitors, and the legislative process.

I want to sincerely thank the Members of this Committee for your trust and support these past four years. It is through our joint partnership that the Department has achieved such transformational change.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Chief Manger, for your testimony.

Now we will enter the question-and-answer portion. I will call on members based on seniority of those present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority, and then we will call on members in order of their arrival. Each member will have 5 minutes.

I will first recognize myself for my 5 minutes.

Chief Manger, as you mentioned in your statement, the department is asking for almost a billion dollars in funding for your fiscal year 2026 request.

I appreciate the points you have shared with us to justify a significant request, especially the data regarding the increase in number of threats to Members of Congress.

However, I understand that you first assessed these potential threats into categories, depending upon their risk level, as a direction of interest or a direct threat.

Can you share the number of credible threats to Members during fiscal year 2024 that actually required a significant level investigation by your officers?

Chief MANGER. Well, I don't have the exact number. I can get it for you. But it is hundreds, hundreds of investigations that we undertake that meet that level of being a criminal threat against a Member.

Mr. VALADAO. As you know, when you were appointed chief of the Capitol Police we were experiencing a shortage of sworn officers from fiscal year 2021 to current pay period in fiscal year 2025. Three hundred and forty-eight officers have joined the force. Your fiscal year 2026 budget proposes, after accounting for the expected attrition, a request to add another 187 officers.

Can you please share what the current 348 officers have been assigned to do, and why, with the assumption of 187 new officers coming on board, you are still requesting \$9.8 million in overtime in fiscal year 2026?

Chief MANGER. Yes. So we have the optimal staffing levels for our Uniformed Services. That is around 1,600. We have optimal staffing for our dignitary protection, which is 530 agents. We also have assorted people in special operations, specialty assignments, canine, bomb squad, CERT, those kinds of operational entities.

So the additional people will go toward getting those operational entities up to their optimal staffing level, a real focus on dignitary protection, because that is where our overtime and the hitting against the maximum allowable pay rate is the biggest issue.

The overtime in the Uniformed Services, much of that goes toward the big events, and we had over 200 big events last year where it required deployment of our Civil Disturbance folks and other special teams.

We have opened up additional mags and screening portals to try and cut down on some of the lines as well. That has been done on overtime.

So we still have a number of things. And training is actually the biggest overtime driver. We have got to do a better job in terms of training. That is one of the areas where we have really improved. But every time you take an officer off their post, off the line, out

of their assignment for training, you have got to backfill it with overtime.

So until we get staffing levels up to where we hope to get them, to the optimum levels that I discussed, we are still going to be paying every time. We just will have no reserves for when people go to training or when we have to support a large event.

Mr. VALADAO. Appreciate that.

What is the correct number of officers to properly execute the U.S. Capitol Police mission to be responsive to the security needs of the Capitol campus?

Chief MANGER. So right now, I think it is 2,530 sworn officers. That obviously does not include civilians. It is about 1,600 USB, 530 DPD, and then 400 other, which are mostly special operations, but there are a lot of specialty assignments and training and that sort of thing where we have sworn officers as well.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. In the full-year enacted fiscal year 2025 CR, the committee continued to provide funding specifically for the officer retention and student loan repayment plan.

Are these measures helping you retain officers? Have you seen attrition numbers decrease?

Chief MANGER. We have not seen attrition numbers increase. We have seen them decrease. And they absolutely have assisted us in keeping officers. Not only they wait till they hit the age limit to retire, but we have got folks that don't even think about going to another agency because of the retention bonus. So it has had a very, very positive impact on our attrition rate.

Mr. VALADAO. All right. Well, thank you, Chief.

I am now going to recognize Mr. Espaillet for his 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLET. Thank you, Chairman.

As I stated in my opening statement, this is a significant increase. But given the needs of your department, I think it is one that is a warranted one.

But what I do want to find out is if in any way, shape, or form this increase was compounded by the enactment of a full-year continuing resolution. I am interested in knowing the kinds of impact that it had on your ask, the fact that we recently passed a CR for a year.

Chief MANGER. So there are certain responsibilities that we have that we cannot shirk. And certainly I think overtime was impacted in terms of making sure we had enough people for the day-to-day activities, making sure we had people at every post, and making sure people engaged in the required training that they had to go to.

There were other things that we could just sort of postpone, whether it is equipment, whether it is vehicles, whether it is some of the things that we said, okay, we are going to wait for a year. But that has an impact and it is not a good one. I mean, we don't want to get in a situation, as we were in 4 years ago, where we had equipment that was not up to date.

Just the screening equipment, there are always improvements that we can make. We want to use the state-of-the-art equipment. And if we have to postpone getting that state-of-the-art equipment, making the improvements to the screening process, that has an impact as well.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you. Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Espailat.

Now I will recognize Mr. Strong for his 5 minutes.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member.

Chief Manger, it is great to see you again. Thank you for making yourself accessible to the subcommittee as we continue to examine the important work of the U.S. Capitol Police.

Your leadership and commitment to the safety of our Capitol complex and its people are truly appreciated. As you mentioned in your testimony, the mutual aid program has been key in enhancing the security of the Capitol complex and Members' residences.

Could you discuss your plan to further strengthen these partnerships with local and State law enforcement, given the growing need for protective detail and special security events?

Chief MANGER. So just in the last couple of years, if you look at the number of memorandums of understanding that we have with State and local law enforcement agencies, that number is just going up exponentially.

And I thank Chief Mitchell, who is sitting behind me. Her work has been—she has been all over that and is going to continue to ensure that those number of agreements that we have with those agencies continues to grow.

Frankly, we could have and should have hundreds of them, maybe even over 500 of them, for every Member, at whatever jurisdiction they live in, to have that agreement just in case.

So I think eventually you will see that number grow into the hundreds.

Mr. STRONG. On the topic of collaboration, what are some ways that Capitol Police coordinates with other law enforcement and intelligence agencies to identify and mitigate threats before they escalate?

Chief MANGER. Well, I appreciate you mentioning the intelligence component of that, I mean, because 4 years ago that was one of the criticisms of this department, was our intelligence operation.

Today, I believe that we have a world class intelligence operation. We are a very active member of the intelligence community not only in the Washington, D.C., area but nationwide.

So the intelligence information that we gather, that we analyze, that we share with not only other agencies but with certainly all of our personnel as well, is I think working at an amazing level.

But the cooperation that we have with law enforcement agencies around the country continues to allow us to do our job much, much better when we can call anywhere in the country and talk to a law enforcement agency to get their assistance if a Member has an event in their home State or if something is occurring at that Member's residence.

We have got the trend that you are seeing, of course, and have been seeing, is these demonstrations and disruptions at not only events but at people's residence. Those are the kind of things that we need to respond to very effectively so that that doesn't continue.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. And we are all thankful for the local law enforcement, what they do to protect us all.

Now let's focus on staffing for a moment. We talked about right at a billion-dollar budget, talking about a 20 percent increase, and you are managing some 2,530 sworn officers.

While there has been a significant focus on increasing sworn officer numbers, the civilian workforce is equally critical to the department's operation.

Chief Manger, can you elaborate on the role civilian staff play within the department and how you are planning to continue utilizing the workforce as the mission expands?

Chief MANGER. Thank you for bringing that up as well.

I mean, the sworn component of our department is really the backbone of what we do. It touches every aspect of our operations, because you have got to have people that are ensuring that logistics, ensuring equipment, ensuring the hiring that goes on, just the budget, the procurement, all of those things are handled by our civilian workforce, and I can't say enough good things about them. They truly make sure that our operations are as effective as they can be.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

As the Capitol Police's mission continues to evolve, the growing emphasis on specialized roles in areas such as protective operations and intelligence analysis underscores the need for the advanced training.

How does the department ensure it has the right expertise and staffing in these areas? And are there any new training initiatives or programs planned to emphasize these specialized capabilities?

Chief MANGER. The answer to that question is yes. We just have finished a learning needs assessment of our training division and it has identified a number of areas that we need to improve, not the least of which is you have in-service training, which is required for every single police officer, any sworn officer every year. We are doing the minimum that we have to do, and we do it most—and it is at the minimum level because of the impacts on overtime and staffing and everywhere else.

We have got to have a better in-service training program that does more than just the minimum that is required. So that is one area where we are going to see improvement.

Leadership development and career enhancement opportunities, that kind of training for all of our staff, and leadership development for our executive and command staff, are also areas that we want to focus on.

It also identified the fact that our training facility is deficient. We need more space. And our training staff needs to grow. Again, whether it is the recruit training, the in-service training, the specialized training, we are doing it with a bare-bones staff.

In answer to part of your question, we do hire some outside experts to come in as contractors to instruct our folks, but, in my opinion, it is better to have that expertise in-house. And we developed that, and we also are able to hire some folks to come in to help us train as well.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Chief Manger. I also commend you for the dedication of your life to public safety, and I wish you nothing but the very best in your retirement.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you, Mr. Strong.

I now yield 5 minutes to Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join Mr. Strong and I know all the members of this committee on thanking you for your service, not only to the Capitol Police and the United States Capitol and the citizens of the United States, but also your experience in Fairfax County, where you rose to be chief, and Montgomery County, where you were chief. And it has just been an extraordinary career. And president of the Chiefs of Major Cities. So you are really one of the best of the best. So thank you very much for your service.

Let me ask you a question, Chief. You have been in three departments. Morale is an important facet of any department. Tell me, if you can, the impact of the—because you mentioned 4 years, you have had a lot of changes in what needed to be done—the ramifications of the pardons given to those who committed the insurrection in January of 2021 and the ramifications of those pardons to the morale of the Capitol Police.

Chief MANGER. I think there was an impact not only to the Capitol Police but an impact nationwide when you see folks that are pardoned. And I am really referring to the ones that were convicted of assaulting police officers. I think that is what bothered most cops.

And it did certainly have an impact on the USCP. We have got so much change that the officers are experiencing over the last 4 years. So I am trying to keep them focused on moving forward.

But it certainly did have a negative impact for cops all over this country when you wonder, you put your life on the line every day, and does it matter?

Mr. HOYER. Yeah. How has it impacted retention and recruitment? I know we are at 2,350. You need more. You are asking for a budget to create more to solve some of the problems we have. And I have heard from a lot of officers on the overtime. That is a real challenge to families as well as to the officers themselves.

Can you comment on the retention and recruitment impact?

Chief MANGER. Well, yeah. The retention bonus that we have been able to give to our officers over the last 3 years has really made a significant difference in getting the attrition level decreased. And so you have got more officers staying.

It has certainly been a help in terms of recruiting as well. I mean, the changes this committee has approved over the 4 years I have been here, to increase the starting salary, increase the pay for the Capitol Police, along with the retention bonus, along with the student loan repayment program, all of those things, you add that to what we describe to these young folks that are looking for a career in law enforcement is having a front row seat to history when you join the Capitol Police, it has all been a very successful endeavor in terms of allowing us to recruit and retain officers.

Mr. HOYER. Well, that is good. And, hopefully, we will continue to support that effort because that is critical, obviously, to having not only the personnel numbers but also the quality of people that we can recruit and retain.

The last question I want to ask you is, during the January 6 insurrection we had real problems with chain of command for those

of us who were involved in the leadership. Senator McConnell and others had real discussions about what the chain of command is under those circumstances, who is in charge.

Can you tell me how well you think we have arrived at an understanding of how that response to an effort like that—hopefully, we won't have another one but if we had one—how the chain of command works with respect to Federal Armed Forces, police, Metropolitan and surrounding jurisdictions?

Chief MANGER. So one of the things that Congress did right after the events of January 6, 2021, was to give the Capitol Police Chief the authority to directly contact National Guard and request assistance.

That was a great step forward, and, in fact, I have in the time that I have been here always maintained a very close relationship with the general in charge of the National Guard. We have a great relationship, and, in fact, have utilized their services on a number of occasions for different types of events. And it is a great relationship, and it allows for very orderly request and deployment if we need that.

The relationship between the Capitol Police and the surrounding law enforcement agencies, both Federal and local, is I think at a level where it needs to be. I mean, we have a great relationship and with a phone call we can get whatever resources that we need.

And then, finally, part of the improvements that were made was the operational planning that we did, which was certainly lacking prior. But the operational planning we do for big events, for just routine events, is at a level that it should be.

It is formal. It is written. And people can look at this plan. And we did this kind of plan for over 200 events last year. And you can see who is in charge, who is assigned to do what.

And so certainly within the Capitol Police, there is no question about the chain of command and who has responsibility for what.

Mr. HOYER. Great. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. VALADAO. I now recognize Ms. Maloy for her 5 minutes.

Ms. MALOY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hi. It is good to see you again. Thank you for what you have done.

And I just want to follow up on what my colleague just said about hoping that you feel like it is worth it that you all show up at work every day and put your lives on the line for us. Thank you for that.

We work side by side with you every day, and I recognize that we are probably a fairly difficult clientele. Thank you for the professionalism that you and your officers show with us and with the public.

You said earlier that you are fully confident that by fiscal year 2027 you will be fully staffed. And we had another hearing right before this where my colleague Mr. Strong asked if we are going to get more entrances and exits open to the buildings, and they said that is a question for Capitol Police.

Does fully staffed mean more entrances and exits open?

Chief MANGER. I think most of them are open. I mean, there may be a couple here or there.

One of the keys for us is to try and maximize the space we have. And that is one of the problems, that so many of the screening areas, so many of the doors, so to speak, they are not really ideally suited to be a screening area.

And so if you could put a second X-ray machine, a second mag in there, put the better equipment, the more state-of-the-art equipment, which requires a little bit more room.

Look at the CVC. I mean, that is really designed nicely. It would be great if every entrance that we had where we were screening people was like that, and that would cut down on the lines.

And so the additional staffing would get us to a point where we could do this without paying overtime. Right now we are doing it with overtime. But there are other things too that are more physical limitations that we need to look at as well.

Ms. MALOY. Okay. Thank you.

Over the past few years it seems like the department is using perimeter fencing a lot more, the anti-scale fencing, parade fencing.

What is the decision process to determine when that is required?

Chief MANGER. So it depends on the event. It depends on the level of risk. And we have got criteria that are standard.

I would say that typically we only use it once or twice a year. Now, I know for the State of the Union address we use it. For me, the justification is you have got every branch of government, all three branches of government, most of the people in one place.

We certainly have been in a heightened threat environment for the last few years. And I think it is prudent. We put it up one day and then we take it down the next. So it is not as obtrusive as it was.

And believe me, I get that nobody likes the fence up. I don't either. But I think for big events like that where we had the Prime Minister of Israel last summer, we had thousands and thousands of people show up and it was about the angriest crowd that I have seen here in my 4 years here. And we had some episodes of violence. We certainly had arrests.

And with the intelligence that we had about what some of the protesters had—there was chatter about in terms of doing harm to the Prime Minister—I think, again, it was prudent to take the measures that we took.

Ms. MALOY. So when you do take the measures, you put up fence, take it down efficiently, that is true. Whose budget does that come out of?

Chief MANGER. Well, typically, it is the Secret Service's budget if they are recommending. For the State of the Union, it is my understanding that the Secret Service pays for that.

Ms. MALOY. Okay. And in your testimony—you have kind of answered this already, I just want to give you a chance to fully answer it—you talked about the problems in 2021 that made it hard to recruit and retain officers.

Do you feel like those problems have been solved? I know you have more FTEs now than you did then.

Chief MANGER. I think—well, look, we had 103 IG recommendations. Every one of those recommendations has been implemented and resolved.

If you were to ask—I got thousands of cops, a couple thousand cops. If you would ask them, “Have all the problems been solved?” you would get a variety of answers, everything from, “Yeah, everything is fine,” to folks who would say, “No, nothing is fine.”

But I would say that the big issues that we face where the rank-and-file lost confidence in this department because they felt the department let them down—and, in fact, it did in many ways—I don’t think you hear the same concerns about their equipment, do we have enough people, our training, all those things.

So, in large measure, those, the big issues that were identified, have been resolved, in my view.

Ms. MALOY. Okay. Thank you. My time is expired. I will just end with thank you again for the time you spent here. Wishing you luck in retirement.

Chief MANGER. Thank you.

Mr. VALADAO. Thank you.

I now recognize Mr. LaLota for 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you, Chairman.

Over the last several years, the Capitol Police have undergone a dramatic transformation, growing in size, complexity, and responsibility.

What was once a force primarily focused on the Capitol Grounds now operates with a nationwide scope, navigating a heightened threat landscape, expanding protective operations, and embracing new technologies to secure both people and infrastructure.

At the heart of this transformation is a workforce expected to do more with urgency and precision, often under immense pressure.

As the department prepares for its next phase of growth, the path forward raises critical considerations about readiness, morale, modernization, and how to responsibly manage nearly a billion-dollar budget.

Chief Manger, good to see you again today, sir. Thank you for your four and a half decades of service. I am not sure if this is going to be our last meeting or not, but it is good to interact with you.

I want to ask you, sir, how does the department determine priorities for physical security upgrades with respect to budgeting? How does the department determine priorities for that budgeting for physical security upgrades across the Capitol complex?

Chief MANGER. We have a team of folks that will visit the Pentagon, visit TSA and the White House, and look at what other agencies are doing in terms of screening and to make sure that we have got the right equipment, that advances that are made that we are all sort of on the same page, and that we keep current with what is the best practice.

Mr. LALOTA. My colleague from Utah asked about the cost of temporary fencing or at least the issue of temporary fencing.

Has anybody considered the cost as it relates to doing temporary fencing for one event versus creating some low-profile, more permanent structures? Would it take two, three, four events? Does the cost of those number of events equal the cost of a more permanent, lower-profile fencing?

Chief MANGER. I know those discussions have occurred, and I know that the folks that do that kind of security work within my

agency have met, have had meetings with vendors and with the Sergeant at Arms—and this has been now a couple years ago—looking at those kinds of options.

So I know that those discussions have been had and those opportunities, I guess, for a different sort of countermeasure, a different sort of security fencing, a little lower profile, have been discussed and looked at.

Mr. LALOTA. I have been led to believe that the cost of three events, the temporary structures for three events would equal what it would cost for a more permanent, the low profile. And I think everybody who supports a permanent solution also wants it to be low profile. I have been led to believe that the cost of three temporary structures is equal to one permanent one.

Can you get back to us, Chief, at some time about your estimates on one versus the other?

Chief MANGER. Yes, absolutely.

Mr. LALOTA. I also want to ask you, Chief, what role do emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, play in your modernization plan?

Chief MANGER. You know, artificial intelligence, probably the biggest area where that is assisting us is in the screening process, where you have X-ray machines that can identify prohibited items when they come through.

And that technology is improving every single day. And so we certainly stay in touch with the vendor that we use for our machines to make sure that we have the latest upgrades from that vendor.

You know, it is not perfect. You are always going to need to have human eyes on those screens and human interactions with those individuals that have been identified as to having some prohibited item.

But the AI helps us avoid those what we call single points of failure, where you can have one person miss something and then you could have a problem. AI can give us that backup, which is better for our security campus-wide.

Mr. LALOTA. With about the 30 seconds I have remaining, Chief, I want to switch gears just a little bit and hone in on your specific budget request.

And we are all under a microscope and we appreciate that dollars are limited, and certainly acknowledging the issue of the size and scope of the job is rightfully expanding. You have many new threats and you are not just here in D.C., you have to deal with those threats off campus.

But can you give the committee a sense of how, Chief, you are ensuring that taxpayer dollars are being spent efficiently and aligned with operational priorities?

Chief MANGER. Well, we certainly have internal budget controls. And one of the new teams that has been created is our inspections unit, which are going to, in addition to what the Inspector General does, take a look agency-wide for opportunities for efficiencies and to ensure compliance in terms of how we administer our budget.

Mr. LALOTA. Thank you, Chief.

I yield.

Mr. VALADAO. Well, if there are no further questions, I would like to thank Chief Manger and your team and the entire Capitol Police force for everything they do and for your service.

Members may submit any additional questions for the record.

The subcommittee now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

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United States Capitol Police

Mission Summary

The United States Capitol Police (USCP or Department) is unique among federal law enforcement agencies. It protects the U.S. Capitol, Members of Congress (internationally and domestically), their staff, visitors, dignitaries, and the legislative process. This requires USCP officers working in and around the Capitol Complex to secure doors, respond to unlawful activities and hundreds of demonstrations, and patrol a campus that is open to the public and is visited by approximately eight million visitors from around the globe every year.

The mission of the USCP extends beyond this important and highly visible function. The Department's responsibilities to Members and the Congressional community include protective details nation-wide and abroad, threat investigations, criminal investigations, campus-wide physical and technical security measures, intelligence analysis and reporting, canine security, offsite delivery screening, event and large-scale event planning and coordination, and hazardous incident response, among others. The Department also maintains a robust infrastructure to enhance this mission set, including training and development, employee wellness and resiliency, policy, and internal controls, as well as comprehensive administrative support, including procurement, budget and financial management, facilities and logistics, information technology, and human resources.

Over the past four years, the Department has experienced tremendous growth and transformation. As a result of various recommendations by the Office of Inspector General (OIG), congressional, and third-party audits of the organization, the Department instituted measures that have bolstered its security posture and reinforced integrated planning. With the support of Congress, the Department has implemented enhanced planning efforts to support coordination and communication of large and high-profile events; expanded intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination to mitigate increasingly sophisticated threats; published new policies and standard operating procedures to enhance internal controls; established a new organizational structure to ensure operational efficiency throughout the Department; and expanded protective service capabilities. The successful execution of the January 2025 presidential inauguration and the 2024 Republican and Democratic political party conventions, high-profile events conducted without incident, stands as a testament to the Department's enhanced preparedness and the efficacy of the implemented reforms, proving our ability to safeguard critical democratic processes.

The Department's recently published [Concept of Operations Strategic Plan](#) (COSP) prioritizes efforts that advance the USCP mission, optimize strategic workforce planning, develop the workforce for the future, and modernize USCP technology and tools. The Department's FY 2026 budget request reflects these priorities by investing in resources needed to meet the demands of the current threat environment and to reinforce its security posture.



UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

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United States Capitol Police					
Five Year Budget Summary					
\$ in Millions	FY2022 Enacted	FY2023 Enacted	FY2024 Enacted	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Request
Salaries and Benefits	468,861	538,280	588,627	603,627	687,355
General Expenses	133,648	186,818	202,846	202,846	255,404
Total Annual*	\$ 602,509	\$ 725,098	\$ 791,473	\$ 806,473	\$ 942,759
% change	18%	20%	9%	2%	17%
Multi-Year Salary		\$ 3,450			
Multi-Year GE		\$ 6,028			\$ 25,000
No-Year					
Grand Total	\$ 602,509	\$ 734,576	\$ 791,473	\$ 806,473	\$ 967,759
% change	18%	22%	8%	2%	20%
FTE (authorized)	2,624	2,693	2,771	2,917	3,104
% change	2%	3%	3%	5%	6%
*Annual Appropriation (excludes multi-year/no year)					

Budget Drivers:

Salaries and Benefits:

The Department's Salaries and Benefits makes up approximately 75 percent of the total annual budget. This category funds personnel salaries and benefits, along with overtime and workers compensation, and is the primary driver of the Department's increased budget request. Cost increases year-over-year are attributed to cost of living pay adjustments, OPM benefits adjustments, within-grade increases and promotions, and overtime.

In FY 2026, the Department's budget supports efforts to continue to increase sworn and civilian staffing levels. The Department uses a zero-base budget approach and hiring / training capacity to establish the annual funding requirements included in the budget request. This ensures funding is not overstated. For the FY 2026 Salaries and Benefits request, the Department used FY 2024 end-of-year actual onboard levels as a baseline to establish its FY 2026 request. The request reflects increases associated with continuation of the Department's sworn hiring strategy (288 new recruits and 63 external hires to support protective services), and steady growth within the civilian workforce.

General Expenses:

The FY 2026 annual General Expense budget request reflects an increase above FY 2025 enacted funding levels, primarily due to enhanced technology and physical security programs, including the continuation of the Department's recently implemented Protective Intelligence Operations Center (PIOC).

In addition, the Department requested \$25 million in multi-year funding to support the Mutual Aid Program. The Emergency Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 117-31) authorized \$35 million for the reimbursement of mutual aid and related training, of which \$9 million was used to reimburse the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) for mutual aid provided in response to the events of January 6, 2021. As such, the Department's request for additional funding reflects an adjustment for this one-time cost.

U.S. House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch

April 8, 2025

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request for the United States Capitol Police

Questions for the Record

U.S. Capitol Police

Mr. J. Thomas Manger, Chief of Police

Chairman Valadao

1. Reliable communications are essential for public safety operations. I understand there's a current effort underway to increase FirstNet wireless coverage and network capacity around the U.S. Capitol Complex and along the National Mall. Unfortunately, the difficulty getting permits and leases approved by the federal agencies overseeing the building and lands on the National Mall has created delays.

Can you describe the importance of FirstNet to your operations and the need for this connectivity on and surrounding the U.S. Capitol Complex and National Mall?

Answer: AT&T FirstNet, or simply FirstNet, is a public safety network solution that provides priority to USCP communications traffic during emergencies and critical events. This fills an important role in the Department's approach to communications in conjunction with our Verizon and Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems. FirstNet goes beyond our current capabilities with additional system diversity and interoperability services.

The Department depends on cellular services for communications, information sharing, and location tracking in support of our mission. As events occur on or near the Capitol Complex, the increased bandwidth provided by FirstNet directly supports USCP operational needs.

The Department continues to work with all communications vendors to improve coverage and availability throughout the Capitol Complex, both inside and outside. The vendors have a variety of projects across multiple buildings in the Capitol Complex intended to improve coverage and capacity through new and updated rooftop installations on buildings, including Rayburn. These installations provide increased bandwidth and capacity across the Capitol Complex, which benefits the USCP and the public.

Additionally, there are other efforts underway beyond the Capitol Complex along the National Mall. These include updated antennas and associated equipment on building rooftops that will provide capacity increases and additional bandwidth. Included are proposals for deployment of new technologies including millimeter wave. This technology is much smaller and can be deployed in many locations that are currently underserved along the National Mall and adjacent areas. These projects along the National Mall will deliver

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benefits to the Department through improved capacity and capability in areas frequented by the Department.

2. Are there opportunities to expand training efficiencies for Capitol Police officers through the use of less destructive ammunition that would allow for the training to take place in locations beyond the current limited facilities?

Answer: Yes, there are opportunities to expand training efficiencies for Capitol Police officers using less destructive ammunition and advanced training weapon platforms. While live fire remains an essential component of firearms proficiency—covering familiarization, qualification, and application—it alone cannot fully prepare officers for the complex decision-making required in tactical situations. However, current limitations in available facilities often result in officers only engaging in minimal live fire qualification, which maintains basic marksmanship but does not address contextual or deadly force decision-making.

To bridge this gap, law enforcement agencies, including the Capitol Police, have incorporated tools such as simulators (e.g., VirTra) and force-on-force training using marking rounds (e.g., Simunitions or UTM). These methods provide valuable scenario-based training, but they come with logistical and environmental constraints—such as the need for dedicated facilities, cleanup, weapon maintenance, and protective gear—which can limit their accessibility and realism.

Emerging training platforms offer a promising advancement. These systems replicate the full functionality and feel of live fire weapons (e.g., M4 and handgun platforms) without requiring protective gear or specialized facilities. This flexibility could allow training to take place in a wider variety of locations, reducing facility dependency while maintaining a high level of realism and tactical relevance.

While no single training tool can fully replicate the experience of live fire or tactical operations, integrating these new solutions would greatly enhance training opportunities. A comprehensive firearms training program should continue to incorporate all available methods—live fire, simulators, force-on-target, and force-on-force scenarios—to ensure Capitol Police officers develop and maintain high-level tactical proficiency.

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