108TH CONGRESS, 1st Session | HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES | REPORT 108–91

PROVIDING FOR THE EXPENSES OF CERTAIN COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

MAY 6, 2003.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. NEY, from the Committee on House Administration, submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

[To accompany H. Res. 148]

The Committee on House Administration, to whom was referred the resolution (H. Res. 148) providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Eighth Congress, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the resolution be agreed to.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. COMMITTEE EXPENSES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—With respect to the One Hundred Eighth Congress, there shall be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives, in accordance with this primary expense resolution, not more than the amount specified in subsection (b) for the expenses (including the expenses of all staff salaries) of each committee named in such subsection.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $10,327,531; Committee on Armed Services, $11,931,357; Committee on the Budget, $11,869,572; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $14,673,371; Committee on Energy and Commerce, $18,622,138; Committee on Financial Services, $13,696,487; Committee on Government Reform, $19,614,435; Committee on House Administration, $8,527,057; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $7,809,730; Committee on International Relations, $14,552,695; Committee on the Judiciary, $14,048,616; Committee on Resources, $13,509,424; Committee on Rules, $5,669,311; Committee on Science, $11,690,845; Committee on Small Business, $5,120,301; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $3,071,250; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $16,461,893; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $5,486,795; and Committee on Ways and Means, $15,976,288.

19–008

SEC. 2. FIRST SESSION LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amount provided for in section 1 for each committee named in subsection (b), not more than the amount specified in such subsection shall be available for expenses incurred during the period beginning at noon on January 3, 2003, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 2004.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $5,084,900; Committee on Armed Services, $5,871,876; Committee on the Budget, $5,856,333; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $7,047,896; Committee on Energy and Commerce, $9,101,042; Committee on Financial Services, $6,601,085; Committee on Government Reform, $9,740,963; Committee on House Administration, $4,122,092; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $3,780,487; Committee on International Relations, $6,993,645; Committee on the Judiciary, $6,957,554; Committee on Resources, $6,492,029; Committee on Rules, $2,797,898; Committee on Science, $5,711,401; Committee on Small Business, $2,535,261; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $1,527,825; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $7,982,558; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $2,703,328; and Committee on Ways and Means, $7,828,037.

SEC. 3. SECOND SESSION LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amount provided for in section 1 for each committee named in subsection (b), not more than the amount specified in such subsection shall be available for expenses incurred during the period beginning at noon on January 3, 2004, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 2005.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $5,242,632; Committee on Armed Services, $6,059,481; Committee on the Budget, $6,013,239; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $7,625,475; Committee on Energy and Commerce, $9,521,097; Committee on Financial Services, $7,095,402; Committee on Government Reform, $9,873,472; Committee on House Administration, $4,404,965; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $4,029,243; Committee on International Relations, $7,559,050; Committee on the Judiciary, $7,091,062; Committee on Resources, $7,017,395; Committee on Rules, $2,871,413; Committee on Science, $5,979,444; Committee on Small Business, $2,585,041; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $1,543,425; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $8,479,334; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $2,783,466; and Committee on Ways and Means, $8,148,251.

SEC. 4. VOUCHERS.

Payments under this resolution shall be made on vouchers authorized by the committee involved, signed by the chairman of such committee, and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Administration.

SEC. 5. REGULATIONS.

Amounts made available under this resolution shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Administration.

SEC. 6. ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY.

The Committee on House Administration shall have authority to make adjustments in amounts under section 1, if necessary to comply with an order of the President issued under section 254 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or to conform to any reduction in appropriations for the purposes of such section 1.

COMMITTEE ACTION

On May 6, 2003, by voice vote, a quorum being present, the Committee agreed to an amendment in the nature of a substitute and, by voice vote, a quorum being present, the Committee agreed to a motion to report the resolution, as amended, favorably to the House.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Rep-

resentatives, are incorporated in the descriptive portions of this report.

STATEMENT ON BUDGET AUTHORITY AND RELATED ITEMS

The resolution does not provide new budget authority, new spending authority, new credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures and a statement under clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is not required.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

In compliance with clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states, with respect to the resolution, that the Director of the Congressional Budget Office did not submit a cost estimate and comparison under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Committee states, with respect to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that the general discussion section of this report includes a statement of the general performance goals and objectives, including outcome-related goals and objectives, for which H. Res. 148 authorizes funding.

RECORD VOTES

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, with respect to each record vote on a motion to report the resolution and on any amendment offered to the resolution, there were no record votes on a motion to report the resolution or on any amendment offered to the resolution.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Voice vote

The Committee, by voice vote, with a quorum present, on May 6, 2003, agreed to report H. Res. 148, as amended, favorably to the House.

General discussion

H. Res. 148, as amended, authorizes for standing committees (excluding the Committee on Appropriations) and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence $222,659,096 for the 108th Congress. In a separate Committee resolution, the Committee on House Administration established franked mail allocations for these committees.

The sum total of all budget requests for the 108th Congress was $241,454,078. The $222,659,096 authorized for committees is $18,794,982 or 7.8 percent less than the sum of all amounts requested by committees.

Committee	108th request [1]	H. Res. 148	2003	2004
Agriculture	$10,623,640	$10,327,531	$5,084,900	$5,242,632
Armed Services	12,377,680	11,931,357	5,871,876	6,059,481
Budget	11,869,572	11,869,572	5,856,333	6,013,239

Committee	108th request [1]	H. Res. 148	2003	2004
Education and the Workforce	14,922,183	14,673,371	7,047,896	7,625,475
Energy and Commerce	19,117,623	18,622,138	9,101,042	9,521,097
Financial Services	16,995,487	13,696,487	6,601,085	7,095,402
Government Reform	20,400,000	19,614,435	9,740,963	9,873,472
House Administration	10,374,974	8,527,057	4,122,092	4,404,965
Intelligence	7,809,730	7,809,730	3,780,487	4,029,243
International Relations	16,037,995	14,552,695	6,993,645	7,559,050
Judiciary	17,248,067	14,048,616	6,957,554	7,091,062
Resources	14,910,527	13,509,424	6,492,029	7,017,395
Rules	5,669,311	5,669,311	2,797,898	2,871,413
Science	12,301,690	11,690,845	5,711,401	5,979,444
Small Business	6,372,008	5,120,301	2,535,261	2,585,041
Standards of Official Conduct	3,443,150	3,071,250	1,527,825	1,543,425
Transportation and Infrastructure	17,682,505	16,461,893	7,982,558	8,479,334
Veterans' Affairs	6,776,617	5,486,795	2,703,328	2,783,466
Ways and Means	16,521,319	15,976,288	7,828,037	8,148,251
Total	241,454,078	222,659,096	108,755,239	113,903,858

[1] Amount requested in budget request submitted to Committee on House Administration.

Committee funding process

The 108th Congress is the fifth funding cycle under the biennial funding process instituted in the 104th Congress. At the beginning of the 104th Congress, House Rules were revised changing the committee funding process to a biennial cycle and abolishing the bifurcation of funding under statutory and investigative accounts.

The biennial committee funding process has proven successful. A two-year budget cycle saves time and resources for all committees because the process is undertaken only once per Congress, rather than twice, as was done previously. The biennial funding process facilitates long-term planning and cuts in half the time and resources dedicated to making, defending, and approving budget requests.

Comparison of committee funding resolution

At the beginning of the 104th Congress, three standing committees and 32 subcommittees were abolished. Committee staff was reduced by 33 percent from the 103rd Congress levels and committee funding levels were reduced by a total of 30 percent. In the 108th Congress, funding levels continue to remain well below the 103rd levels.

COMMITTEE FUNDING RESOLUTION COMPARISONS

[Excluding appropriations]

103rd Congress, Democratic Majority: $223.3 million.
104th Congress, Republican Majority: $157.2 million = 70% of 103rd level (reduced 30%).
105th Congress, Republican Majority: $177.9 million = 80% of 103rd level (reduced 20%).
106th Congress, Republican Majority: $183.4 million = 82% of 103rd level (reduced 18%).
107th Congress, Republican Majority: $203.5 million = 91% of 103rd level (reduced 9%).
108th Congress, Republican Majority: $222.7 million = 91% of 103rd level (reduced 0.2%).

The House Administration Committee believes that these comparisons are significant and show a pattern of responsible spending, with substantial savings being passed on to taxpayers. The

108th Congress mark is lower than the overall funding levels in the 103rd Congress in both nominal and real dollars. Under Democrat control, the total committee funding allocation in the 103rd Congress was $223,335,418. Adjusted for inflation, and factoring in a 5 percent per session increase this Congress, the current committee budget would be about $281 million, almost $28 million more than committees have requested in this Congress. This mark, combined with budgets for the four previous Congresses, will have resulted in a savings to taxpayers of at least $344 million over the amount that would have been spent during the same time frame had Democrats retained control of the House.

Hearing room upgrades

The Committee on House Administration has determined, in consultation with the Office of the Speaker of the House, that funds requested for hearing room upgrades by the committees should continue to be removed from the committee funding process and be funded separately. The Committee believes this is necessary so that the omnibus resolution accurately reflects the true base funding levels for each committee. Since much of the work performed in upgrading hearing rooms arises from costs related to infrastructure modifications of House buildings and other services usually performed by the Architect of the Capitol and Chief Administrative Officer under their own budget authority, it is not appropriate to account for these costs within committee's budgets.

Numerous committees requested money in their budgets to fund hearing room upgrades in the 107th Congress. Some committees planning upgrades did not submit requests for funds, on the assumption that such costs would be borne by the Architect of the Capitol and/or the Chief Administrative Officer. Committees were instructed to continue to separate hearing room upgrades from the omnibus funding process. During the 107th Congress the House Administration Committee instituted an organized committee hearing room upgrade process and significant progress has been made. Hearing rooms for Energy and Commerce, Financial Services, Resources, Judiciary, Veterans, Budget, and Education and the Workforce have received major upgrades while additional Committees have installed specific elements. The value of the upgraded rooms underscores the fact that the remaining committee rooms are in serious need of upgrades, as many have not been improved in decades. Even more immediate is the need to complete an across the board upgrade of audio and video capabilities in all hearing rooms. Increased demand by the public to have more access to congressional proceedings is fueling the need for better and more technologically advanced hearing rooms.

The decision to separate hearing room upgrades is part of an overall review of how committee room upgrades are being achieved. It is important to note that the funds requested by committees represent a short term solution to committee room upgrades, providing improvements for general audio and video enhancements in the hearing rooms themselves and to streaming video and/or audio on the Internet in order to provide increased public access. The House Administration Committee has greatly expanded the number of channels available on the House Cable System which can carry committee proceedings to further increase access.

The House Administration Committee believes that a standardized approach is the most logical and efficient solution to dealing with committee room upgrades. It is also critical that minimum technical standards be implemented to ensure the efficient use of resources and the compatibility of equipment and infrastructure. As a result, it is the intention of the House Administration Committee to continue the policy whereby committees are required to submit a plan and receive approval from the Committee before committee rooms can be upgraded.

The Architect of the Capitol and the Chief Administrative Officer have organized a Committee Room Renovation Program to improve audio/visual capacity to a common standard and to accomplish longer-term infrastructure renovations, subject to the oversight of the Committee on House Administration, the House Office Building Commission and the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee. The committee strongly encourages that funding for this purpose is provided to complete the process.

The House Administration Committee is working with the Chief Administrative Officer to establish a centralized control center to control the broadcast functions of hearing rooms. This approach has been taken at the request of several committees with existing control facilities which occupy space assigned to individual committees. Such space can be more effectively used for traditional committee activities, unless this "in-room" capability is deemed absolutely essential by the individual Committee. It should also be noted that the number of hearings conducted simultaneously is much less than the total number of hearing rooms. It is a more effective use of resources and space to build the number of control facilities required by the number of simultaneous hearings and other committee functions rather than build underutilized capabilities into each hearing room. The Committee has also worked with technical experts to delineate the functions of broadcasting from those required to operate in-room multi-media displays. This separation will permit the staff of each committee to control the in-room aspects of a hearing while central staff performs broadcasting functions.

The Chief Administrative Officer is directed to provide support staff to operate the broadcasting functions for each Committee Room that is renovated under the Committee Room Renovation Program. Regulations relating to the operations of Committee broadcasts will be promulgated by the Committee on House Administration. The Chief Administrative Officer is authorized, but not required to provide staff to operate the broadcasting functions of committee rooms that have been renovated prior to implementation of the Committee Room Renovation Program. The Chief Administrative Officer at the request of any such committee shall operate the broadcasting functions in such committee rooms.

Continuity of operations

The Committee on House Administration has determined that the Continuity of Operations of the House of Representatives is best accomplished as part of an overall program that includes specific requirements for House Committees.

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the October 2001 anthrax situation increased funding was provided to ensure

the capability of the House as an institution to continue to function following a variety of situations. The relocation of House staff to other buildings demonstrated a need for centralized and coordinated Business Continuity efforts. The impact of Anthrax on the operations of the Senate further underscored this requirement. The current network of computers that are operated by Members and Committees assumes that each of the House Office Buildings continues to function in a normal fashion. If a building is not operational due to a variety of circumstances the computers that are located therein will not be available to the offices.

The Committee on House Administration has consulted with a number of other agencies to learn about best practices and to better oversee the House's Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Program. While individual efforts provide a measure of protection, a decentralized effort to restore the House's central systems, twenty committees, and the offices of all House Members, Delegates, and the Resident Commissioner can not provide an effective and timely solution.

The Committee on House Administration is working with the Senate, Library of Congress, Government Printing Office, and the Congressional Research Service to enhance Legislative Branch wide programs so that the House of Representatives can continue to function as an institution.

The scope of these efforts requires that committees of the House participate in an overall and coordinated program in order for these efforts to be successful. As with the requests for hearing room upgrades in the 107th Congress, the committee has determined that there is a need to remove requests for disaster recovery equipment and related items and address them in a separate process. It has become obvious that an enterprise system for the recovery of official files is a necessary component for conducting business in the House committees in particular.

In the 108th Congress, committees have submitted requests for disaster recovery equipment and related items totaling approximately $2 million. Although not every committee requested funds for this type of equipment, it is apparent that committees are interested in establishing a system to protect and recover Committee data in the event of a debilitating or catastrophic event.

The House, in conjunction with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), has already begun work on an Alternate Computing Facility (ACF) that will allow committees to store their data in a protected offsite facility outside of the Metropolitan Washington area. This facility is expected to be completely operational in the mid to latter part of this year. In the interim, some committees have used funds to purchase disaster recovery equipment from previous year's funds. The House is also offering committees, and Member offices, the option of having data tapes collected by a courier on a routine basis, where they are delivered to an alternate site for immediate storage.

While some committees have already purchased and installed disaster recovery equipment, the committee has concerns that allowing committees to continue using their funds for the purchase of this equipment would not only burden them unnecessarily with costs associated with the upkeep and maintenance of this equipment, but such a decentralized approach to securing and protecting

the committee data is not consistent with the best interests of the House.

The House Administration Committee understands both the need and urgency that committees have to ensure that their records and work are protected and secure. The committee will continue to work with the proper entities in the House and consult with the other committees to ensure that a secure, standardized enterprise system is instituted that will satisfy the needs of committees, and will be a cost borne by the House and not by committees directly.

The Legislative Branch is preparing to use one or more off-site facilities to ensure the continued availability of key services and information. This capability will provide for House-wide needs as well as define a framework for individual committee and Member office efforts that will allow for recovery of critical information in the event of an emergency. It is also critical that minimum technical standards be implemented to ensure the efficient use of resources and the compatibility of equipment and infrastructure. These standards should result in a minimum number of configurations so that standard operating procedures can be used to restore each of the committees, Members, and administrative offices of the House. As a result, it is the intention of the House Administration Committee to establish a policy whereby committees are required to submit a plan and receive approval from the committee before business continuity services, products, or capabilities are acquired or deployed.

Minority resources

In the 103rd Congress, while still in the minority, Republicans established the goal of providing for a two-thirds/one-third minority resources split. Since becoming the majority party in the 104th Congress, Republicans have continued to make progress on this issue. Through his own leadership, Speaker Hastert has vigorously pursued this goal, advocating that all committees allocate one-third of committee resources to the minority. In the 107th Congress, committees met that goal and in the 108th Congress, this ratio has been sustained. The committee is also pleased with the bi-partisan nature with which this goal has been reached. The House Administration Committee has never mandated that committees reach this goal. However, with the encouragement of leadership and this committee, cooperation between Chairmen and Ranking Members has produced agreements that were mutually acceptable to both the majority and minority members.

Finally, we want to thank Speaker Hastert for the leadership he provided in putting together this resolution. Also, we are very grateful to our new ranking member, John Larson of Connecticut, for his hard work, patience and constructive efforts to produce a resolution that members on both sides of the aisle can feel comfortable in supporting.

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF JOHN LARSON, JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD AND ROBERT BRADY

We support this committee funding resolution, House Resolution 148, as amended, which provides for an overall nominal 9.4 percent increase in funding for the 19 committees under the jurisdiction of the Committee on House Administration from the level set in the 107th Congress.

The process through which this resolution was developed, and the Majority leadership's commitment to ensuring equitable treatment for the Minority, indicate a health respect for the work of this institution and the vital contributions that both sides of the aisle make in enacting and overseeing public policy. Our Committee Chairman, Rep. Bob Ney, and his staff must be commended for their commitment to comity and bipartisanship. His leadership has been critical to the progress toward fairness in the allocation of committee resources between the Majority and Minority which this resolution represents.

House Resolution 148 goes a long way toward achieving the Majority and our long-time goal of ensuring that the Minority receives one-third of each committee's total resources and staff slots, and that the Minority has control over those resources. While the supporting budgets underlying this resolution do not achieve this goal in every case, the Ranking Minority Members of the 19 committees funded by this resolution generally agree that the substantial progress made in the 107th Congress was not an anomaly. Even the handful of committees which had been most visibly deficient in the past in providing for the Minority's legitimate needs, have come a long way. The various accounting artifices used by certain committees during the funding process in earlier years have either been abandoned or are clearly on the wane.

Finally, we are grateful to Chairman Ney and Speaker Hastert for their continuing leadership and support for comity and fairness, and for working with committee chairmen to ensure an equitable distribution and control of staff and budget resources between the Majority and Minority. Chairman Ney, to his enduring credit, has practiced the principle he has espoused, and has set the example for other committees by fully implementing the one third rule. We are committed to applying the one-third rule when we again become the majority party.

In addition to our concern that the resolution fairly allocate resources between the Majority and Minority, our other concern is that the resolution provide adequate resources for the committees to keep pace with inflation, provide their staffs with pay adjustments in line with those provided to Executive Branch employees and Senate committee staff, and also meet the needs of the post September 11, 2001 environment.

In most cases, the resolution accounts for cost-of-living increases since the 107th committee funding resolution, as reflected in the consumer price index and pay adjustments made to employees of the Executive Branch by President Bush late last year that the House would be wise to follow. However, we have some concern that the resolution may not provide sufficient funding for the 19 committees under House Administration's jurisdiction to manage the extraordinary new workload they have assumed since March 2001, when the committee funding resolution for the 107th Congress was adopted.

We need not belabor the fact that much has changed in the past two years, including the expectations on the United States Congress and its committee system. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 cast into sharp relief the need for the U.S. House of Representatives to examine the gaps and deficiencies in this nation's military and security apparatus. While we expect the new House Select Committee on Homeland Security to lead the charge in this area in the 108th, virtually no House committee will be spared responsibilities because the issue of security is a broad one that extends to the jurisdiction of virtually every House committee. The recent military action in Iraq, combined with the immense diplomatic and reconstruction challenges associated with its successful resolution, is certain to impose new oversight and legislative demands on several House committees, particularly the Committees on Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations.

Other significant committee duties that were never contemplated at the beginning of the 107th Congress but will confront the committee system in 108th Congress include heightened policing of the nation's accounting, financial, and pension systems, which will impose new demands on the Committees on Ways and Means, Financial Services, Education and the Workforce, and Energy and Commerce, and investigating the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy, a critical mission that will fall largely to the Science Committee.

At the start of the committee funding process, the committees collectively requested a 24 percent increase in funding over the level set for the 107th Congress—from $203,506,704 to $252,329,070. At first blush, this proposed increase may strike some as excessive. However, we must point out that much of this proposed increase was due to the formation of the new Select Committee on Homeland Security, which did not exist and received no funding during the 107th Congress. No one denies that this new committee must be given ample resources to oversee the most significant restructuring of the Federal government since 1947 and help secure this nation's borders. But for purposes of total committee funding for the 108th Congress, Homeland Security should be treated as a separate committee because it distorts the size of the proposed increase from the 107th Congress to the 108th Congress.

When Homeland Security was taken out of the analysis of the initial funding requests and only those committees that existed in the 107th Congress were considered, the proposed total increase from the 107th to the 108th declined from 24 percent to only 18 percent. It would be unusual for committees to receive everything

they request. However, we believe that increases in committee budgets are justified to meet the following three needs:

(1) *Increased committee workload:* the chairmen and their ranking minority members outlined for us in two days of hearings ambitious oversight and legislative agendas for the 108th Congress, much of which is related to addressing the urgent military, diplomatic, security, and veterans needs of this nation. We were greatly impressed by the strong support Republican chairmen and their senior-most committee Democrats voiced for their respective budget requests, and by the degree to which they were able to justify them.

(2) *Committee staff compensation/cost-of-living adjustments:* we were greatly encouraged that virtually all the committee chairs sought cost-of-living-adjustments for their committee staff personnel on par with COLAs already in place in the U.S. Senate and the executive branch. If House committees are to attract and retain the best and brightest staffers the market has to offer, committees must properly compensate them. The work this institution's employees conduct on behalf of the American people is no less important than the work conducted by their peers in the Senate and executive branch. Their monthly paychecks should reflect that.

(3) *Mission-critical technology upgrades:* virtually every committee chairman and his ranking Democratic member told us that they confront the immediate need of implementing disaster-recovery programs in the event that their committee is unable to conduct regular business in its House office space. Central to meeting this need is developing off-campus computer systems to store mission-critical data—a costly but essential activity. We understand that a separate vehicle may be used to meet this need.

As reported in House Resolution 148, the proposed increase for the 108th Congress—a modest 9.4 percent—is considerably less than the initial total request sought by chairmen and their ranking minority members.

Managed properly by committee chairmen and their ranking minority members, we are confident that the proposed 9.4 percent increase will provide almost all House committees adequate resources over the next two years to match the 4.1 percent pay increase that President Bush has provided to federal employees in the Executive Branch under the Federal Pay Comparability Act of 1990, a decision that the U.S. Senate quickly followed with respect to its committee staff compensation policies. Eighty to 90 percent of a House committee's annual budget is devoted to staff compensation. It is money well-spent, providing House committees with some of the finest experts available on matters ranging from weapons procurement to tax policy.

To prevent these public service professionals from flocking to the Senate, executive branch, or private sector—where the skills are highly sought-after and handsomely remunerated—and causing a concomitant "brain-drain" in the House of Representatives, committees must have the resources to compete in the marketplace for talent and expertise. We are pleased to see that the resolution provides resources to at least keep pace with Executive Branch and the Senate.

We expect that the proposed increases for the committees, modest as they are, will spare them the difficult task of choosing between their compensating their personnel commensurate with the U.S. Senate and Executive Branch or using the increase to pay for costly technology and infrastructure upgrades that are essential to the work and security of House committees. We think that the committees should not have to choose. At a minimum, committees should be able to provide cost-of-living adjustments to current committee professionals without shortcoming other activities.

The big question for us is whether the proposed 9.4 percent is enough to permit the Chairmen and their ranking minority members to carry out the ambitious agendas they described to the Committee of House Administration in March, perform crucial oversight and legislative responsibilities as they relate to the post-September 11 environment, and respond to exigencies that no amount of planning can predict.

Mitigating our concern about the adequacy of the proposed 9.4 percent is the Majority's oft-repeated commitment to the ⅔-⅓ principle. In a previous era, we might have been concerned that in cases where committee resources were just enough to cover basic committee needs, chairmen would be inclined to deprive the Minority of ⅓ of the resources. During the two days of the committee funding hearings, we specifically asked each chairman if he intended to honor this important principle in the event that his budget request was trimmed. The answer, to our satisfaction, was yes. In the spirit of "trust but verify," we will monitor closely the distribution of resources to the Minority of each committee during the 108th.

Although not directly related to the committee funding process, a constant refrain emerged from our Committee's hearings. The constant refrain was that each committee had insufficient and inadequate office space to operate efficiently and that this deficiency in office space was affecting the capacity to recruit and retain professional staff. The effects was particularly hard on the Minority because of overcrowding, multiple offices divided by floors or between buildings, and a lack of storage space. In several instances, we were told that Ranking Minority Members were unable to hire their full staff authorizations because they lack adequate working space in which to put additional personnel. In other instances, we learned that cramped working conditions make it very difficult for Minority staff to accommodate disabled visitors who use wheelchairs. We recognize that the allocation of committee office space is outside this Committee's control. But we are hopeful that the Architect of the Capitol, and the House leadership, will take cognizance of this emerging space crisis, and consider ways to address it, such as by making better and more equitable use of existing space in the Capitol and House office buildings, or by procuring or building such additional space as may be required for the efficient operation of the House and its committees.

JOHN B. LARSON.
JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD.
ROBERT A. BRADY.

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