

Statement of the Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Chairman, Committee on the Budget  
November 30, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Brady, for the opportunity to testify concerning the Budget Committee's funding situation for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The Budget Committee has requested a flat budget for the past 8 years and we have kept spending within the levels approved by this Committee. In addition, regardless of which party has been in the Majority, we have always fostered a collegial relationship on the issue of the Committee's budget. I have followed that tradition and am determined to continue to do so as we move forward.

You have asked that we address two questions:

With respect to the impact of this year's 5 percent cut, we have managed our operations to stay within that level. Our personnel costs are the largest part of our budget. We have had an extraordinary year, with enormous demands on the committee's resources. We currently have some vacancies on our staff that we need to fill, particularly before we go into next year's budget cycle. We have avoided any adverse impact on the non-personnel portion of our budget which is comprised mainly of administrative services, equipment, and travel costs.

An additional 6.4 percent reduction for next year could present a more significant challenge for our committee. Under this scenario, it provides us less flexibility to meet our mission going forward but is manageable. It presents a much greater challenge to the minority.

At the beginning of this year, when we moved into the majority, we transitioned into a larger budget. Mr. Van Hollen had to make large reductions to meet their smaller budget. That smaller budget has already been reduced by an additional 5 percent, and this would be the third round of reductions for them from a very tight budget to begin with.

While it is not part of our committee budget that you approve, the sound system in our hearing room is antiquated and expensive to maintain. In addition to the committee's business, we readily make our hearing room available to others, particularly the Joint Economic Committee and for outside events. Transparency is critically important in our deliberations. Increasingly, we and others who use our hearing room are having audio and video equipment troubles and this is something that needs to be addressed at some point.

I appreciate the support this committee has provided to us in the past and I would be happy to answer any questions you have.