

## [H.R. 2250, Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2016](#)

### FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, May 19, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 2250](#), *the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2016*, under a [structured rule](#). The bill was introduced on May 12, 2015, by Rep. Tom Graves (R-GA), Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch. The bill was ordered reported by the Committee on Appropriations, as amended, on April 30, 2015, by voice vote.

### SUMMARY

H.R. 2250 provides \$3.3 billion in discretionary budget authority for the operations of the Legislative Branch of government, excluding Senate-only items. This is the same as the Fiscal Year 2015 level and \$172.3 million below the President's request. Funding for the House of Representatives has been reduced by 14% since Republicans gained the majority in January 2011.<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, the bill provides \$1.2 billion for the operation and maintenance of the House of Representatives during Fiscal Year 2016. This amount is the same as the Fiscal Year 2015 level and as the budget request. If enacted, this would mark the third consecutive year that the budget for the House of Representatives will not have increased.<sup>2</sup> The bill also includes a provision to freeze the pay of Members of Congress, preventing any pay increases in Fiscal Year 2016. A freeze on the salaries of Representatives has been in place since 2010.<sup>3</sup>

Major provisions of note include:

**House Leadership Offices:** The bill provides \$22.3 million for salaries and expenses of staff in House leadership offices for Fiscal Year 2016. This amount is the same as the Fiscal Year 2015 enacted level and is the same as the budget request.

<sup>1</sup> See Committee on Appropriations press release "[Fiscal Year 2016 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill Approved](#)," April 30, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> [House Report 114-110](#) at 4.

<sup>3</sup> See Committee on Appropriations press release "[Fiscal Year 2016 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill Released](#)," April 22, 2015.

Members' Representational Allowances: The bill provides \$554.3 million for the representational allowances of the Members of the House (MRAs). This amount is the same as the Fiscal Year 2015 enacted level and is the same as the budget request. This level of funding will allow the MRAs to operate at current authorized levels as approved by the Committee on House Administration.

House Committees: The bill provides \$147.2 million in total for House Committees. This amount is the same as the current level and the budget request. This account includes funding for staff salaries and official expenses of Committees including equipment, telecommunications, printing, and contract services. Funding is available until December 31, 2016.

Administrative Provisions: The bill provides that unspent amounts remaining in MRA accounts be used for deficit or debt reduction; prohibits the delivery of bills and resolutions; prohibits the delivery of printed copies of the Congressional Record; places a limitation on the amount available to lease vehicles; places a limitation on print copies of the U.S. Code; prohibits the delivery of the report of disbursements; and, prohibits the delivery of the daily calendar.

Joint Items: The Committee recommends \$19.5 million for Fiscal Year 2016 for the various joint committees and activities carried out under this heading. The recommendation is \$413,000 above the Fiscal Year 2015 level and is \$298,100 below the budget request. This includes funding for the Joint Committee on Taxation, Joint Economic Committee, Office of the Attending Physician, and Office of Congressional Accessibility Services.

Capitol Police: The bill provides \$369 million for the U.S. Capitol Police, an increase of \$21 million above the Fiscal Year 2015 enacted level. This will fund critical safety and security functions for all Members, staff, and visitors of the Capitol Complex, and maintain public access to the Capitol and its office buildings.

Office of Compliance: The bill provides \$3.9 million for the Office of Compliance. This amount is the same as the Fiscal Year 2015 level and is \$61,000 below the budget request. The Office of Compliance was established to administer and enforce the Congressional Accountability Act (Public Law 104-091), which applies various employment and workplace safety laws to Congress and certain Legislative Branch entities.

Congressional Budget Office: The bill provides \$47.3 million for the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). This is \$1.6 million above the Fiscal Year 2015 level and is the same as the budget request. CBO provides independent analyses of budgetary and economic issues to support the Congressional budget process.<sup>4</sup>

Architect of the Capitol: The bill provides \$492.0 million for the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), which is \$13.8 million below the Fiscal Year 2015 enacted level and \$85.0 million below the budget request. The legislation will allow the AOC to prioritize essential projects that promote the safety and health of those who visit and work in the Capitol Complex, and address deferred maintenance projects. The bill includes authority for the restoration and renovation of the Cannon House Office Building, but also mandates enhanced oversight of the project.

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<sup>4</sup> See CBO—“[An Introduction to the Congressional Budget Office](#),” April 2015.

Capitol Visitor Center: The bill provides \$20.6 million for the operation of the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC). This amount is \$287,000 below the Fiscal Year 2015 level and \$486,000 below the budget request.

Library of Congress: The bill provides \$591.4 million for the Library of Congress (LOC), an increase of \$510,000 above the Fiscal Year 2015 enacted level and \$33.1 million below the budget request. This funding will allow the Library to continue support functions for Congress and maintain services for the public. Funding in the bill will also help to reduce the Library's processing time for copyright registrations and claims backlog.

Government Publishing Office: The legislation includes \$110 million for the Government Publishing Office (GPO), a decrease of \$9.8 million below the Fiscal Year 2015 enacted level and \$9.8 million below the budget request. The legislation maintains the previous year's level for printing and binding services. GPO is the Federal Government's official, digital, secure resource for producing, procuring, cataloging, indexing, authenticating, disseminating, and preserving the official information products of the U.S. Government.<sup>5</sup>

Government Accountability Office: The bill provides \$522 million in direct appropriations for the Government Accountability Office (GAO), plus \$25.5 million in offsetting collections derived from reimbursements for conducting financial audits of government corporations and rental of space in the GAO building. The total available is an increase of \$1.7 million above the Fiscal Year 2015 level, and is \$31.1 million below the budget request. This funding will allow GAO to continue its critical oversight work, providing Congress with accurate, nonpartisan reporting of federal programs and tracking of how taxpayer dollars are spent.

Open World Leadership Center Trust Fund: The bill provides \$5.7 million for the Open World Leadership Center Trust Fund, which is the same as the Fiscal Year 2015 level and \$2.3 million below the request. The Open World Leadership Center Trust Fund's mission is to enhance understanding and capabilities for cooperation between the United States and the countries of Eurasia by developing a network of leaders in the region who have gained significant, firsthand exposure to America's democratic, accountable government and its free-market system.<sup>6</sup>

John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development: The bill provides \$430,000 for Fiscal Year 2016. This amount is the same as the Fiscal Year 2015 level and is the same as the budget request. The Center's congressional mandate is to attract young people to careers in public service, to provide training for leaders in or likely to be in public service, and to offer training and development opportunities for senior congressional staff, Members of Congress, and other public service leaders.<sup>7</sup>

## **BACKGROUND**

The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act provides funding for the operations of the House of Representatives, joint House-Senate items, and other Legislative Branch entities, such as the Capitol Police; Office of Compliance; Congressional Budget Office; Architect of the Capitol; Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service; Government Publishing Office; and the Government

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/about/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.openworld.gov/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://stennis.gov/about-the-center>

Accountability Office. Conforming to longstanding practice under which each body of Congress determines its own housekeeping requirements and the other concurs without intervention, funds for the Senate are not included in the bill as reported to the House.<sup>8</sup>

## COST

If enacted, H.R. 2250 would result in discretionary budget authority of \$3.3 billion.<sup>9</sup>

## AMENDMENTS

- 1). [Rep. John Ratcliffe \(R-TX\) amendment](#)—The amendment zeros out \$5,700,000 in funding for the Open World Leadership Center and applies the savings to the spending reduction account.
- 2). [Rep. Bill Flores \(R-TX\) amendment](#)—The amendment prohibits any funds for delivering printed copies of the Congressional Pictorial Directory.
- 3). [Rep. Marsha Blackburn \(R-TN\) amendment](#)—The amendment provides for a one percent across the board cut. Exempts Capitol Police, Architect of the Capitol, and the Sergeant at Arms.

## STAFF CONTACT

For questions about amendments or further information on the bill, contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.

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**About the Digest:** *The Legislative Digest summarizes each bill that comes to the House floor, including a procedural description, the legislative background, and a cost estimate. The House Republican Conference produced the digest from 1995 until the House Republican Policy Committee took over production in April of 2015.*

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<sup>8</sup> [House Report 114-110](#) at 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 20.