

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET**

January 27, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Lungren, for the chance to testify before this Committee regarding the Budget Committee's funding.

When Congressman Ryan and I appeared before this Committee a year ago, we asked for a funding level for 2009 and for 2010 that was frozen at the same level that we had received for 2008. The committee funding resolution provided us with the requested budgetary freeze.

On both sides of the aisle, we at the Budget Committee have prided ourselves on spending carefully the funds that we have been provided with. As a result, I am pleased that the Budget Committee can report that we have not spent all of the funds that the funding resolution allowed for the first session of the 111th Congress.

A portion of these unused resources reflect some funds that were built into our base budget as part of the funding process for the 110th Congress. At the beginning of the 110th Congress, we also requested a freeze for 2007 and 2008 to keep funding at the same level that the Budget Committee had received not just for 2006, but for 2004 and 2005, as well. As things turned out, the funding resolution for the 110th Congress did not freeze the Budget Committee's level, but provided us with an increase of about 4 percent. Those funds have been carried forward into our budget for the 111th Congress.

The largest area where our spending needs have been lower than anticipated for the first session of the 111th Congress is in the area of personnel, especially on the Majority side. We have experienced some staff turnover, either as the direct or indirect result of jobs opening up in the Administration. In some cases, we have been stretching our existing staff resources to do more with less, and in some cases we may undertake additional hiring in the second session of the 111th Congress. We had hoped, for example, to hire a Policy Director in the first session of the 111th Congress, but have not yet filled that position.

On equipment costs, we have also tried to be frugal. For example, instead of purchasing a new \$25,000 copier to replace an old one, we chose to repair the old one at a much lower cost. But the problem is that because some of our computer equipment, notably monitors, is old and out of warranty, it will be cheaper this year for us to replace rather than repair the ones that break.

Regardless of which party has been in the majority, the Budget Committee has always fostered a collegial bipartisan relationship on the issue of the Committee's budget. For all equipment and other non-personnel expenses, we handle funding for the majority and minority out of a common fund, and both majority and minority receive upgrades on an equal basis in terms of timing and quality. For personnel costs, the majority and minority have long maintained an arrangement wherein the minority fully controls one third of the total budget for personnel, and one third of the available staff slots. I believe that Mr. Ryan's testimony affirms that our colleagues in the minority find this to be an equitable arrangement.