

**Statement of Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, Committee on Rules**

Before the Committee on House Administration

February 3, 2010

Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Lungren and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on House Administration to provide you with an update on how the Committee on Rules expended funds in the first half of the 111th Congress.

As you know, the Committee on Rules helps set the parameters of debate for specific pieces of legislation. It has the unique role of considering the vast majority of complex legislative initiatives before they ever get to the House Floor. Furthermore, the Committee maintains jurisdiction over many other issues of critical importance to the operations of the House – everything from the opening day Rules package to ensuring the ability of the House to function in times of crisis. This was an extremely busy and productive year for us, as it was for the entire Congress.

Let me give you a few examples: We held 79 hearings in Session One of this Congress, used roughly 400,000 sheets of paper and had almost 600 members testify at our meetings. As always, the

first session of Congress is intense and we were not surprised by this level of activity. Besides moving historic pieces of legislation on issues like financial regulatory reform and health care reform, this committee handled the economic recovery bill. Our expectation is that the heavy workload will continue in the current year with an intensified focus on job creation.

Budget

In light of the economic climate, we have tried to be conservative in our budgeting. We had a modest 1.8 percent increase in 2009 over 2008, in keeping with the belt-tightening elsewhere. Our budget is lean – with just enough in it to keep the committee functioning effectively on behalf of Members, staff and the public.

Part of our spending in this session of Congress will be geared toward making smart technology purchases that will assist staff and conserve resources. For example, as we continue to try and lessen the amount of paper we use, we are considering ways we can put an even greater proportion of our work product into an electronic form.

This makes the process faster and ultimately saves money. Part of that push will be a continued spending on the internal Rules database that we have talked about in previous years called the Committee on Rules Electronic (CORE) database.

Minority Resources

The budget for the last year maintained the Rules Committee's tradition of giving the Minority one-third of the total staff slots allocated to us, along with control over one-third of the Committee's salary funds. The other categories represent joint

funding. We work with the Minority to ensure that the necessary resources are made available to them.

Conclusion

In summary, our budget for the first session of this Congress was put together with care and represents an appropriate level of funding for our activities. We are planning to continue this tradition in the next year with additional investments that will help us better serve the House and the American people.

That concludes my prepared testimony. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have.