

WASHINGTON, DC - Rep. Mike Honda, Ranking Member of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee delivered the following statement at the Subcommittee Markup of the FY2012 Appropriations bill:

"I would like to begin by thanking Chairman Crenshaw, the Appropriations majority staff, and his personal staff for the professionalism shown during this process. While it is not the bill I would have written, it is the process that I would have followed. I hope the other subcommittees function like this one and work together where they can and agree to disagree when they cannot.

"As for the bill, the Legislative Branch minus the Senate is being cut by 6.4 % from FY 2011 and 9% from FY 2010. These cuts are being done while we had to fix a \$13 million hole for the Capitol Police because of their accounting mistake in fiscal year 2010. I believe these cuts are harmful to our ability to serve our constituents and House's responsibility to provide effective oversight.

"I know the Chairman was under pressure from the allocation to ensure that our subcommittee shares in the pain when the majority is also cutting Women and Children's nutrition programs, consumer protection, and other important programs in other bills. This bill has succeeded in joining the other flawed bills by cutting at the expense of jobs, strong oversight, and common-sense efficiencies. Maybe with this bill, the smallest of all 12 and the one that funds our own operations, the majority will see the real life impacts of these cuts, one of which is not real deficit reduction.

"This bill would cut the Library of Congress by 8.5%, including a reduction of over 300 employees, including 50 from our much relied upon Congressional Research Service. Members should ask their staff how often they use CRS staff for research, particularly in responding to questions and concerns from their constituents.

"This bill would cut the Government Printing Office by 16%, an agency already planning to let go of 330 employees. There is language encouraging the privatization of GPO's activities. I would like to see the costs associated with asking a private company to operate on a 24 hour cycle when we work into the early morning hours conducting legislative business. Something tells me we would spend more not less.

"The Government Accountability Office, or GAO, is cut by 6.4%. Every dollar spent at GAO results in 4 dollars in taxpayer savings. Is it the majority's priority to not save taxpayers money? Those who claim to want increased oversight of government programs should reject cuts to GAO. They are known as Congress' watchdog, and that watchdog should have teeth.

"We have heard that some Members offices are furloughing staff to meet the 5% cut to the Members' Representational Allowance (MRA) in 2011. Now this bill will further cut MRA's by 6.4%. Cuts to the MRA means cuts to Members' day-to-day abilities to effectively represent our constituents. From the staff assistant answering calls from our constituents to the caseworker helping grandma recover her lost social security check—all of these services are funded through the MRA.

"In what world does laying people off recover the economy? The cut and grow mantra does not work in the economy as a whole; it certainly will not work in the corridors of Congress. The next time you ask for a service or require assistance from your staff or the staff of the Architect, GAO, or the Library, Members should ask those workers how they will get by with less and what the impact is to the soon to be laid off individuals' economic situation. I hope this Committee will back agencies up when they will have to deny or severely limit services provided to Members offices because there are fewer people to handle requests. Remember the cuts we are making in this bill the next time you have a request of GAO or CBO.

"Beyond that, we are told to increase security in our district offices. But how are we supposed to pay for it? Certainly not out of our office budgets that are being wacked, not from the Police that are flat funded, and not from the Sergeant at Arms whose budget is cut 10 percent.

"I have a great deal of respect for Chairman Crenshaw. There are not many things he could have done differently with the allocation he had to work under.

"I hope we can work together to improve this bill as it goes forward. I also hope reasoned minds rethink trying to balance the budget by cutting services to the people who sent us here—our constituents. We can and must do better."

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