

February 24, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chair
Committee on Appropriations United States
Senate

The Honorable Richard Shelby Vice, Chair
Committee on Appropriations United States
Senate

Re: Increasing Legislative Branch Capacity

Dear Chair DeLauro, Chair Leahy, Ranking Member Granger, and Vice Chair Shelby:

We represent three centers of former Members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, located in different states around the country. Our missions vary slightly, but we all hold in common the desire to extend the legacy of our former Members by promoting the importance of Congress as a co-equal branch of government and to advance the goals of a functioning and transparent democracy that inspires the confidence of our citizens.

Because of our deeply held belief in the importance of a strong legislature, we are writing to urge you this year to increase funding for the Legislative Branch. As you know, funding of the Legislative Branch has not kept up with the size of the federal government and the complexity of the issues our country faces. As the Article I branch of our government, it is critical that Congress and its attendant agencies be fully funded and staffed to meet the constitutional demands placed on it. We understand that 38 entities and 27 individuals committed to an effective legislature and functional democracy have recently urged you in a letter dated February 2, 2021, “to increase the 302(b) allocation for the legislative branch by 10 percent as you determine spending levels for FY 2022.” We strongly support that request.

By every measure, Congress and the Legislative Branch have been left behind with respect to funding increases for the rest of the federal government. Such a funding gap inevitably diminishes the power of Congress to carry out its responsibilities relative to the other branches – and to the American people.

We believe it is critically important to increase funding for the Legislative Branch this year by at least 10%. A strong Congress is essential for a strong democracy and a strong America. Thank you for your leadership.

Respectfully,

Jim Townsend, Director
Levin Center at Wayne Law

John Lugar, Executive Director
The Lugar Center

Seth S. Andersen, Director
John C. Culver Public Policy Center at Simpson College