

Written Statement
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House Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Responsiveness and Accountability to Oversight
“Compliance with Committee Oversight”
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Chairman Cline, Ranking Member Swalwell, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Department of State’s commitment to being responsive to congressional oversight. With more than a decade of experience as a staffer in both the House and Senate, I have deep appreciation for Congress’ role in conducting oversight of federal agencies.

My bureau, the State Department’s Bureau of Legislative Affairs, also known as “H”, is the Department’s conduit to Capitol Hill and leads on all congressional engagement. H is your primary resource for all your State Department questions, including constituent passport, visa, and overseas emergency inquiries, congressional delegation travel, and technical assistance on foreign affairs legislation.

In 2022, we conducted a record-breaking 3,431 congressional engagements. In 2021 and 2022, H facilitated 2,710 responses to congressional letters, transmitted 982 congressionally mandated reports, supported 475 CODELs and STAFFDELs, and provided technical assistance on more than 1,000 pieces of legislation. So far in the 118th Congress, H has supported 57 hearings, 1,611 briefings and meetings, responded to 645 letters from Members of Congress, produced 325 reports to Congress, and facilitated 403 CODELs and STAFFDELs.

H is here to ensure you and your staffs have the information you need to serve your constituents, and we pride ourselves on being open and accessible to our colleagues on the Hill.

This approach also extends to congressional oversight. We are just over halfway through 2023 and the Department already has 27 open and wide-ranging investigations from six separate House committees. Across all open House inquiries, the Department has provided more than 16,000 pages in documents and regularly conducts meetings and briefings to help facilitate congressional oversight of complex issues. As Secretary Blinken said during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, no foreign policy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. For this reason, the Secretary and the Department's leadership view Congress as a true partner, and we are committed to working with you in good faith on your oversight priorities.

In response to this Committee's inquiry into the Department's Global Engagement Center, or GEC, we produced more than 1,000 pages in documents and offered to brief Committee staff on the GEC's work. We, in fact, welcome the opportunity to brief all Members on the GEC's important work to counter international and foreign malign influence attacks and strategies overseas. The Department remains committed to engaging in the constitutionally mandated accommodations process with this committee and we will continue to review and produce additional responsive material on a rolling basis.

As we respond to congressional oversight requests, H and the dedicated public servants throughout the State Department must also continue daily work to address complex diplomatic and national security priorities, including Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, global competition with the People's Republic of China, a growing international food security crisis, and root causes of migration in the Western Hemisphere. Recognizing the balance the Department must strike in managing these challenging issues while responding to a growing amount of congressional oversight requests, we work to maintain productive relationships across parties, committees, and chambers of Congress. As such, Chairman Kline, in addition to producing records responsive to your requests, we are in regular communication with your staff on these and other matters.

Once again, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to answering your questions.