

**Testimony of the Honorable Jennifer A. Hemingway
Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate
before the
Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
April 22, 2026**

Chairman Fischer, Ranking Member Heinrich, and members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of the office of the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) fiscal year (FY) 2027 budget request.

The Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper serves as the Senate's chief law enforcement and protocol officer and is responsible for the physical security, cybersecurity, and emergency preparedness of the Senate. In addition, the SAA provides a wide range of support to Senate offices, such as risk-assessed technology, printing and graphic design offerings, broadcast and audio services, and furniture.

I want to start today by thanking the Senate Appropriations Committee (Committee) for the resources you provided for FY 2026. Thanks to you, we are making a number of improvements for the Senate.

In our hearing last year, then-Chairman Mullin asked for my top three priorities for FY 2026 funding. As I said then, my first priority was to effectively address threats against Senators. This Committee provided \$75,000,000 for Senators to pay for the cost of necessary security enhancements and services and \$5,000,000 for the SAA to coordinate and support Member security programs. We are using that funding to establish the SAA Member Protection Program to assist Senators in procuring services from security providers across the country.

Through this SAA program, we help Senators in three ways. First, we can consult with Senators and their staffs to assess security needs, navigate available security services, and assist in developing security plans. Second, we can coordinate services by acting as a liaison to private security partners, lead Senator security planning, and coordinate law enforcement services. Lastly, we can facilitate contracts on behalf of Senators and assist with evaluating vendor proposals. Thus far, the SAA Member Protection Program has been able to assist 37 Senators in procuring security services.

We are requesting additional funding for the Member Protection Program this year because Member security continues to be a critical issue. In FY 2025, the U.S. Capitol Police investigated 14,938 concerning statements, behaviors, and communications directed against Members of Congress, their families, staff, and the Capitol complex. That is a significant increase from the 9,474 threat assessment cases Capitol Police investigated in FY 2024. Over the past year there have also been assassinations of state legislators and a political activist; Capitol Police recently arrested an individual running towards the Capitol with a loaded shotgun; and we continue to face threats from abroad.

My second priority last year was increasing the Economic Allocation Fund and providing Microsoft Enterprise licenses to Senate offices. This Committee funded both requests, so Senate offices have more funding for their technology needs. Ensuring that offices have the funds

necessary to purchase increasingly costly technology remains a priority, so we are requesting funding this year to provide artificial intelligence (AI) licenses to Senate offices.

My third priority last year was a new State Office Operations Fund to allow us to pay state office leases during a lapse in appropriations and to make leasehold improvements in state offices when the General Services Administration (GSA) does not have the funding or bandwidth to make those changes in a timely manner. The flexibility to support our state offices in this way remains a focus for me, so we are requesting additional funding for the State Office Operations Fund for FY 2027.

Our total request for the year is \$400,606,000, which is an increase of \$21,908,000 over the FY 2026 enacted level.

Our request includes \$138,177,000 for salaries, an increase of \$7,824,000 above the FY 2026 enacted level, and 44 new full-time equivalents (FTE). We seek \$236,033,000 for our five-year expenses, an increase of \$16,688,000 above the FY 2026 enacted level, and \$19,000,000 for our no-year funds, a decrease of \$10,000,000 below the FY 2026 enacted level. In addition, we request \$1,332,000 to replenish the Business Continuity Disaster Recovery Fund and \$6,064,000 to support the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program.

Of the increases we are seeking, \$5,800,000 will help us develop a western data center to augment our distributed resiliency strategy. This facility will operate independently of existing eastern sites, drawing power from a separate electric grid. Establishing this location will add critical redundancy and enhance the Senate's ability to operate during disruptions. The addition of a western facility will also improve Senate network performance for Senate offices in western states, which can sometimes experience network delays because an office's geographic distance from our data centers directly impacts lag time. We have begun our search for our western data center and have identified several providers in our preferred locations. We hope to complete the selection process by the end of this calendar year.

An increase of \$2,800,000 will fund AI licenses for Senate users beyond FY 2026. At the beginning of this fiscal year, we issued an AI policy for the Senate and established an AI Governance Board to provide structured oversight, strategic direction, and risk management for emerging AI technologies. With the Board's support, we approved three generative AI platforms for use with Senate data. Microsoft Copilot Chat is integrated into the Senate's Microsoft 365 contract and is available to all Senate users at no cost. In addition, we are offering each Senate user a license for either Google Workspace with Gemini Chat or OpenAI ChatGPT Enterprise at no cost to offices. As I mentioned earlier, this request will free up Senate office funds for other needs.

To improve the Senate community's understanding of these generative AI tools, we restarted our AI working group, which is open to all Senate staff. The group includes more than 300 members representing 78 Senate offices and meets virtually to discuss, document, and coordinate AI needs; share successes and challenges; and explore evolving AI technologies. The Joint Office of Training and Development also offers training to help staff develop AI literacy as well as a self-paced e-learning course.

In FY 2027 we will continue our review of additional AI tools for potential use with Senate data – more than 40 such reviews are currently in progress. We also plan to evaluate on-site AI models that allow Senate offices to use AI without having to access the cloud. We will review agentic AI

capabilities that can perform tasks, such as booking plane tickets, for users across existing platforms. We will evaluate AI capabilities that have been added to existing supported software solutions, as well.

We are requesting a \$1,000,000 increase to assume the cost of virtual servers for Senate offices and committees. This permanent increase will cover the underlying hardware and Windows operating system licenses we need to provide virtual machines for file, print, and application services to the Senate. This will ensure resiliency for Senate data by using enterprise systems hosted in Senate data centers instead of physical servers located in Senate offices. This also frees up funds for Senate offices to use for other technology needs. We estimate offices will save an average of \$24,000 per term thanks to this initiative.

Our requested increase of \$750,000 will fund an internal human resources software application to allow for efficient personnel processing with minimal human error, improve the user experience, and provide better data for decision making.

We seek a \$616,000 increase for enterprise database systems. As part of the request, \$447,000 will support upgrade, replacement, and consolidation of legacy Oracle Database hardware and software to support Constituent Services Systems as well as the Senate financial and payroll systems. The remaining \$169,000 of the request will support the hardware lifecycle refresh for SQL Server, which provides database services for enterprise applications such as privileged access management, authentication, and mobile device management.

This year we plan to acquire Appian software to help us build applications, integrate systems, and digitize processes. We will initially use Appian to develop an application for Senate Page enrollment. Our application will replace the current enrollment system with a streamlined process that allows incoming Pages and their parents or guardians to complete required paperwork electronically, track submission status, and communicate with Page Program staff, while allowing SAA staff to efficiently review, manage, and retain registration records.

An increased appropriation of \$300,000 will fund the annual Appian software licensing fee in FY 2027. In addition to supporting the Page Program enrollment application, Appian will serve as a foundational tool that we plan to use to accelerate the modernization of Legislative Information Systems. Beyond these initial use cases, we will leverage Appian for development of additional Senate applications. Areas being proposed are constituent and case management, executive dashboards, and decision support, along with workflows across applications.

Also this year, we have coordinated with Senate offices on the addition of secondary internet circuits to improve internet service in 21 state office locations. We are seeking a funding increase of \$240,000 to continue this effort to ensure redundancy if a primary internet connection goes down.

On March 1, we completed our transition to a new vendor for our Information Technology (IT) Support Contract. This vendor provides IT support services for Senate offices, including acquisition and support for workstations, laptops, servers, scanners, printers, videoconferencing equipment, televisions, wireless mobile technology, operating system software, application software, and support hardware. The vendor also provides IT Help Desk services and on-site maintenance for common IT equipment.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my testimony, we seek \$5,500,000 in no-year funds for the State Office Contingency Fund, which is the same amount appropriated in FY 2026. This fund was established by the Committee last year and enables us to provide critical support for state offices when circumstances warrant.

I also told you we are requesting continued funding for the Member Protection Program. We seek \$5,000,000 in no-year funds for that program, which is the same amount appropriated in FY 2026. These funds will facilitate continued physical security support for Senators.

As part of our security and readiness efforts in FY 2027, we will leverage GPS technology to locate fleet vehicles during an emergency event to ensure the safe transport of Senate staff and assets during normal operations and unplanned incidents. Additionally, we will conduct two major functional relocation exercises requiring deployment of personnel and equipment to remote locations, as well as multiple local exercises designed to test, train, and validate personnel readiness and operational procedures.

Consistent with recent years, we request \$5,000,000 in no-year funds to continue to upgrade the audio-visual equipment and systems that have or will soon exceed their useful life in Senate hearing rooms. To date, we have replaced end of life equipment in 13 committee hearing rooms, including targeted renovations in six hearing rooms in calendar year (CY) 2025. Working with the Architect of the Capitol, we also implemented technology upgrades in one hearing room as part of a full renovation. Upgrades included new microphone and speaker systems, timer and control systems, broadcast camera systems, and, in some cases, video display systems. This year's request will allow us to partially or fully renovate four to six hearing rooms in FY 2027.

We are also requesting \$3,500,000 in no-year funds for the Residential Security System Program (RSSP). This is the same amount as was appropriated in FY 2026 and will allow us to continue to strengthen the home security of Senators. Twenty-six Senators joined the RSSP in CY 2025, bringing the total number of participants to 67 sitting Senators. We are updating the Committee quarterly on this program and will provide additional information in those updates.

In addition to the above, we request no-year funding in the amount of \$1,332,000 for the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Fund. The fund was established in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 to help the SAA address the Senate's business continuity and disaster recovery needs. The Committee appropriated \$25,000,000 for the fund in FY 2022 and, since then, we have been transferring unobligated balances of expired discretionary appropriations into the fund. To date, we have allocated \$9,731,023 from the fund and transferred \$8,400,000 to the fund, leaving a remaining available balance of \$23,668,977 in the fund. Our request this year would bring the fund back to just over the \$25,000,000 initial appropriation.

We also seek \$6,064,000 in no-year funding to support the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 established an account for the costs of compensation of fellows and for administration of the program, and this Committee appropriated \$6,277,000 for that account in the same year.

With support and guidance from the Committee on Rules and Administration and this Committee, we launched the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program in October 2024 and welcomed the first fellow in February 2025. We completed our initial program outreach to Senate offices this

February, and 40 Senators have committed to the program. We have processed more than 1,000 applications for fellowships and onboarded 18 fellows who serve in Senate offices in Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin. Additional funding in FY 2027 will allow us to continue the program.

Our request also includes \$4,669,000 for 44 new FTE positions, which would bring the total number of authorized SAA FTE positions to 1,094.

We request two FTE positions for Risk and Threat Management (RTM) Analysts and two FTE positions for RTM Program Managers to help improve our security posture. The RTM Analysts will focus on protective intelligence in support of the Capitol Police's Protective Intelligence Operations Center as well as open-source threat discovery, monitoring, and intelligence gathering. These positions will allow the SAA to improve outreach and engagement with Senate offices as well as expand open-source monitoring. The RTM Program Managers will provide quality control and will coordinate outreach, training, and support initiatives. Once these vacancies are filled, the SAA will have the capacity to resume weekend coverage and extend weekday coverage to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time.

An FTE position for a Data Scientist will help make sense of large volumes of data, transforming them into actionable insights. This role will lead the development of an on-site Large Language Model AI capability for the Senate while advancing data science efforts to facilitate better informed decision-making, more efficient use of resources, and more transparent technology operations.

Our work to modernize Senate Recording Studio infrastructure will continue with the replacement of critical switching, routing, and mixing systems that were installed when the Recording Studio moved to the Capitol Visitor Center almost two decades ago. As we continue this modernization, we request an FTE position for a System Solutions Architect to provide expertise regarding the new broadcast standard, SMPTE 2110. This position will be key in configuring and maintaining systems that support the low-latency, high-quality transmission of media across the network, including maintaining existing streaming capabilities. We also request an FTE position for a Principal Systems Engineer to provide expert-level technical support to vendors on the Recording Studio's hardware, software, storage solutions, and network systems.

The Joint Office of Training and Development has moved to a more agile, programmatic training model, replacing longer, outdated classes with shorter, focused learning that is immediately applicable and aligned with the pace and priorities of the Senate. For example, Capitol Chats is a weekly 30-minute conversation in which participants are taught a basic principle of professional or leadership competency then build their skills and understanding through discussion and real-time practice. In addition, we have created a new comprehensive professional writing program that provides skills workshops, individualized coaching, and practical resources to Senate staff.

To improve communication and engagement with the Senate community, the Joint Office of Training and Development also launched *The Learning Curve*, a weekly newsletter featuring a brief professional skill lesson along with training highlights and upcoming opportunities. Almost 600 individuals have subscribed to that newsletter.

Our work to build out our training and development capabilities will include efforts to generate a tool that provides a comprehensive overview of all training and development opportunities throughout the Senate. This will make it easier for Senate staff to find the opportunities they are looking for, regardless of which Senate partner offers the training.

To support these efforts, we seek an FTE position for an Organizational Development Senate Outreach Manager. This team member will increase our engagement with Senate offices to enhance the Joint Office of Training and Development's ability to improve the culture of ongoing learning and development in the Senate. In addition, an FTE position for a Technical/Programmatic Manager will help align the Training and Development team that is responsible for complex technical development projects and specific programmatic requests. Three FTE positions for Senate Community Specialists will enhance the capacity of the Joint Office of Training and Development to meet the developmental needs of the Senate and help the office create new training modules and tailored services.

As a result of the growth of the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program, we seek an FTE position for a Program Coordinator. This team member will provide recruitment and general administrative support for the program.

Our request also includes 10 FTE positions to hire Member Protection Consultants. These consultants will help implement the Member Protection Program.

Additionally, we seek an FTE position for an HR Business Partner III. This hire will help ensure SAA managers receive support and training to lead a variety of positions and personnel.

I am pleased to report that we have a fully executed lease and statement of work for swing space that our Page Program will use at Thompson-Markward Hall during the Webster Hall renovation. Design work and coordination of resources for buildouts have begun and are expected to carry through FY 2026. Because of the large layout of Thompson-Markward Hall, we request an FTE position for a Proctor to provide Page supervision and support during the relocation of the residence and school.

An FTE position for a State Office Senior Program Manager will serve as the primary point of contact with each Senator's leadership team and ensure the Senate's security services for state offices are applied consistently. The FTE will also support management of our event notification process and alert and notification service, as well as administration of the Temporary Armed Guard Service (TAGS) program. We also request an FTE position for a State Office Program Manager to support the logistical, scheduling, and coordination efforts associated with the increasing number of requests we receive for security improvements at state offices.

Seventeen of our FTE requests will fully fund authorized patronage positions in the SAA. We seek eight Mail Carrier – Patronage FTEs because, while we are authorized for 12 patronage mail carriers, only four of those positions are currently funded. We seek nine Doorkeeper – Patronage FTEs because, while we are authorized for 43 patronage doorkeepers, only 34 of those positions are currently funded.

Today I also want to take an opportunity to provide an update on some of the other work we are doing with resources provided by this Committee.

To improve Member security, we have broadened our efforts to coordinate law enforcement support when Senators are traveling, at events, and at their homes. In CY 2025, we supported more than 1,800 requests for law enforcement coordination and more than 3,200 requests for travel security. We have also increased our engagement on Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with state and local law enforcement, and the Capitol Police report the number of MOUs with our partner agencies tripled in FY 2025 – from agreements with roughly 115 departments to MOUs with more than 350 departments across all 50 states.

This Committee funded security-related activities for state offices that help ensure safer staff and constituent engagements. Enhanced secure reception areas are now installed at 121 state offices, with dozens more offices in the queue for construction. We have expanded our construction management and security teams to address this work.

Through a strong partnership with the Federal Protective Service (FPS), we deploy protective security officers to state offices in commercial buildings that experience threats, disruptive demonstrations, or special events. Since the MOU with FPS was signed in 2022, participation in this important state security program has steadily increased. Of the 92 sitting Senators who have offices in commercial buildings and are eligible for TAGS, 77 have enrolled a total of 216 offices in the program. Deployments also continue to increase. In CY 2025 and the first three months of this year, we have used TAGS for 18 deployments, up from nine deployments in CY 2024.

In CY 2025, we also provided security equipment installations and upgrades to 78 Senate state offices. These installations include full security systems for new state offices, lifecycle upgrades for offices with aging equipment, and the installation of additional security devices in offices that did not previously have full systems. Maintaining this security equipment continues to be a critical area of focus and, in CY 2025, we completed more than 600 on-site service calls to resolve equipment issues, perform inspections and testing, and provide staff training.

We are using FY 2026 funding to offer a digital privacy protection service to Senators, their spouses, family members living at the same address as the Senator or their spouse, and Senate staff. This program scans data broker sites, people-search platforms, search engine results, and breach indicators to identify where personal information such as home addresses, phone numbers, family details, and background data appears online. When exposures are identified, the service submits removal and opt-out requests then conducts ongoing monitoring to help prevent reappearance. Reducing publicly accessible personal information in this way makes it more difficult for malicious actors to conduct harassment, impersonation, or social engineering attacks. Additional protections this service offers include an option to blur residences on street-view mapping services, which helps limit casual reconnaissance of homes.

Senators and their spouses are also able to select an enhanced service that provides dedicated U.S.-based analyst support and expedited escalation pathways for urgent situations. We have allocated both standard and enhanced licenses for this service, with 44 standard licenses and 68 enhanced licenses currently assigned to Senators and spouses.

Another service this Committee funds allows Senators, spouses, and state staff to receive customized emergency notifications. More than 1,200 users across 64 Senate offices are enrolled in this service and, in CY 2025, Senate users received more than 11,000 notifications relating to severe weather, civil unrest, and major crime events.

In addition, we are developing the Senate Awareness for Events and Emergencies (SAFE) Map program this year. The SAA will use SAFE Map to streamline real-time event feeds into the platform, quickly identify threats and hazards, and send watch reports and additional details to Senate staff. This map-style visual overview of incidents with an actual or potential impact on Senate operations will increase situational awareness for Washington, D.C. and state offices.

This year, we also plan to offer two mobile duress options for Senators and their spouses. One is a mobile duress system that includes options for a physical panic button that can be discreetly carried as well as a phone application-based mobile duress button. The other is a mobile duress alarm that can be added as a feature to the existing threat intelligence application we offer.

With our Legislative Branch partners, we activated the Joint Audible Warning System (JAWS) earlier this month. JAWS strengthens communications with Senate offices during emergency events in Washington, D.C. by eliminating single points of failure in the legacy wireless emergency annunciator system. JAWS also enhances network-level redundancy and ensures the secure and reliable delivery of encrypted mission-critical information. The system enhances operational resilience by enabling the SAA to remotely manage user devices. More than 1,500 JAWS alert receivers have been distributed across the Senate.

An effective security countermeasure is a well-prepared staff, and in CY 2025, we led 278 emergency preparedness training sessions in Washington, D.C. that reached 3,331 attendees. We also partnered with the Capitol Police to conduct 19 Security Awareness Briefings in Washington, D.C. that reached 1,118 participants. This work is important in state offices as well, and we visited 106 state offices to provide security training, consultation, and technical assistance. We also partnered with the Capitol Police to provide Stop the Bleed certification, fire extinguisher training, CPR and Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) instruction, and emergency planning support to hundreds of state staff.

Last September, 76 staff attended our first-ever Office Emergency Coordinator Conference. We also worked with the Senate Employees' Child Care Center to implement a quarterly student preparedness training curriculum.

In CY 2025, we made both fire extinguishers and AEDs available to commercial state offices. While this equipment has long been available in federal buildings, state staff in commercial buildings can now request these lifesaving devices and the accompanying training needed to operate them effectively.

At the request of Senators, we provide offices with a weekly overview of emerging threats, relevant incidents, and current trends. These reports include security recommendations and information about relevant SAA resources. We also introduced a threat evaluation and reporting training program to help Senate staff identify and report potential threats targeting the Senate.

This Committee has also funded efforts that provide for the cyber and technology needs of the Senate, as well as a variety of other services.

We have deployed new cybersecurity tools to all Senate computers and servers that provide comprehensive endpoint security monitoring. These tools strengthen our defenses, enhance our proactive protection, and improve our threat detection and hunting capabilities. Our work in this area continues to be crucial, as threat actors have successfully targeted some Legislative Branch organizations over the past year. When those incidents occurred, we quickly reviewed Senate logs to identify any impacted offices, notified those offices of the compromise and, when appropriate, provided guidance about the need for vigilance relating to the incident. When necessary, we also developed custom detections and validated our monitoring and alerting systems to ensure they were properly configured to identify any related activity.

We continue to develop and refine the ServiceNow platform. In CY 2025 we launched an engagement dashboard to track interactions with Senate offices. We also implemented centralized monitoring and change management to improve our awareness of operational issues and reduce unplanned outages of Senate technology services. We have transitioned additional TranSAAct services to the platform, including communication services requests, ID services requests, floor privileges requests, photo and recording studio authorizations, and parking services requests.

This change has not been without challenges, but we are working to address them. In February we met with the Administrative Directors Steering Committee to hear their feedback and concerns about ServiceNow. We are working to respond to the issues they raised.

We have also migrated Senate users to a new email platform. We have received positive feedback from users, especially those with large mailboxes who have reported faster access to older email data.

Our eGallery pilot allows visitors to use electronic tickets to access the Senate Galleries. All international visitor requests for Gallery tickets are now fully managed digitally, and six Senate offices initially used the pilot program for their constituents. Through mid-April, 8,224 users have registered for the eGallery program, and we have welcomed 20,984 visitors through the system. Thanks to the success we have seen thus far, we are expanding the program to additional Senate offices upon request, and 14 offices are now using or preparing to use eGallery.

We are improving wireless coverage across the Senate campus and, in CY 2025, we installed approximately 100 additional wireless access points, including within the Senate Cloakrooms. We also began expanding the wireless network in the Senate Chamber to allow Senate-managed mobile devices to provide closed captioning services for hearing-impaired visitors in the Senate Galleries. We provided hundreds of closed-captioning services to Senate committees in FY 2025, as well.

We now offer braille signage through Printing, Graphics, and Direct Mail (PGDM), and our Digital Graphic Design team has completed courses to provide offices with digital and printed publications that are accessible for people with disabilities. The Joint Office of Training and Development technical trainers have also completed training to help offices create Word and PDF documents consistent with Section 508 accessibility standards.

We have resumed credentialing of Capitol Hill periodical correspondents. This function mirrors the process for our other Media Galleries.

Internally, we are developing a records schedule as part of a comprehensive records management program. This will ensure that the SAA effectively manages the records that we create in support of Senate office operations. Our schedule will centralize records and information management activities while also identifying information sensitivities so that information is properly safeguarded across SAA offices. When implemented, the schedule will ensure that records with historical value are sent to the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives and Records Administration after the conclusion of the 119th Congress.

In FY 2025, Senate Photographic Services covered 3,820 photographic assignments, photographing over 77,859 images and producing more than 34,567 prints. Recognizing the way many constituents get information, we have expanded our Photographic Services team to also offer short form videos designed for social media platforms and websites.

Last year we supported Senate Floor operations on 202 days, up from 176 days in 2024, including the longest in-session stretch in more than 15 years. That work led to the Senate Recording Studio broadcasting 1,495 hours of Senate Floor proceedings in CY 2025.

In FY 2025, PGDM processed 3,394 digital mail requests. In addition, the Senate Post Office processed more than 4.1 million pieces of U.S. Postal Service mail, 69,506 packages, and 984,088 internal and government mail items. Our Mail Specialists identified 3,823 pieces of mail that required a supervisor's inspection and 25 pieces of mail that required the Capitol Police's review. The community used our self-service postal kiosk 1,311 times, and we notarized 388 documents. In partnership with the Department of State, we also processed 194 passport applications during the Passport Day on the Hill event in February 2025.

We welcomed 12 new Senators for Senator-elect Orientation in the fall of 2024, then helped close 15 Senate offices and 20 state offices as part of the Congressional transition. We assisted with 30 Senate office building moves during suite selection, transferred 47 existing state offices to new Senators, and supported 52 Capitol office moves. We also helped open or relocate 29 state offices.

We look forward to working with our partners across the Senate to prepare for the next Congressional transition, including coordinating with the Secretary of the Senate for the next orientation at the beginning of FY 2027. We will also support the Senators-elect in the New Member Suites and equip those spaces, help to organize the 120th Congress swearing-in ceremonies, and work with the Architect of the Capitol and the Committee on Rules and Administration to facilitate office moves in the Senate office buildings and the Capitol. In addition, we will support new and returning Senators with any requested state office moves.

During CY 2025, the Joint Office of Training and Development hosted a spring state staff conference for 64 staff, a state directors conference for 36 staff, and a fall state staff conference for 62 staff. These conferences provided an opportunity for state staff to improve their safety, security, and emergency preparedness skills, expand their networks to colleagues from across the country, and connect with federal agency representatives who support constituent work. Each conference included a State Services Fair showcasing a variety of tools and support available to state staff.

In February we hosted a similar Services Fair for D.C.-based staff in coordination with the Architect of the Capitol, the Capitol Police, the Secretary of the Senate, the Senate Federal Credit Union, and the U.S. Botanic Garden. More than 200 attendees had the opportunity to learn about the services, tools, and programs available to them from 38 teams.

More than 1,100 individuals participated in the Senate Wellness Fair hosted by the Joint Office of Training and Development and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) last July, and participants gave 109 pints of blood during the FY 2025 Senate blood drives.

The EAP provided direct support to 97 percent of Senate personal, committee, and support offices in CY 2025, and about 84 percent of Senate employees engaged in some type of EAP service.

We will continue to develop and deliver mental health and wellness programs and initiatives to best support the Senate community. These initiatives include implementing and deploying an enterprise-wide, customizable whole-health wellness application that is designed to conveniently engage employees and provide health education and resources while improving team collaboration through group challenges.

Senate Hair Care provided more than 8,500 hair care services during the last fiscal year and, a few months ago, we established a small sundry location within the hair care salon so Senators and staff may purchase items they need during the workday.

While working to meet the Senate's needs, the SAA strives to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. Last year we formalized a plan with the GSA that allows us to access excess furniture sourced through federal building closures and downsizing federal agencies. Since initiating this effort in the summer of 2025, we have procured nearly 400 pieces of quality used furniture for Senate state offices and our Capitol Police partners at no charge to the taxpayer. We estimate the savings to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. For state offices in the area, we also deliver this furniture ourselves to reduce shipping and receiving fees and, when possible, we store the furniture at our Senate Support Facility until delivery to reduce storage fees.

We work to take advantage of potential savings offered in our vendor contracts as well. For example, when we procured new escape hoods, we took possession of the hoods early, which saved the Senate more than \$141,000. We adjusted a contract supporting the Residential Security System Program to align the contract scope with our operational needs, which provided over \$622,000 in savings. In addition, we re-evaluated our EAP and Wellbeing contracts based on need and utilization and determined that shifting some contracts from "always available" to "as needed" would save money while allowing us to ramp up emergency services when necessary.

As part of our work for the 119th Congressional transition, our State Office Liaisons met with each Senator-elect to review their options for state offices. We provide the Senators-elect with a comprehensive list of considerations to use in selecting their state offices that highlights the timeframes for construction and the installation of security improvements, telecommunications and networking services, and other equipment. These consultations led to the Senators-elect choosing to stay in the majority of their predecessors' spaces, which were generally transitioned to the new occupant in just a few days. This has the added benefit of incoming Senators taking advantage of security improvements made for departing Senators.

When possible, we refurbish and re-use costly items. The desktop containment units that we offer state offices to reduce the release of harmful particles that might be sent in the mail are operationally effective for ten years. If an office uses a unit for less than a decade, we refurbish the device and provide it to another office for the life of the equipment. During the seven years that this program has been in place, we have saved about \$60,000 through this refurbishment initiative. Similarly, we examined two Senate desk chairs that were not purchased at the end of the 118th Congress and determined they could be refurbished for the next class of Senators. This refurbishment saved us about \$2,000.

We pre-purchase some IT equipment so the technology is readily available for Senate offices when needs arise. If that equipment remains in stock for about a year, we determine if it can be repurposed for continuity of operations readiness or deployed to support SAA team members.

A pilot program we are conducting eliminates fees for television monitor rentals. Our rationale is that because we already own the monitors, we do not need to charge Senate offices even a nominal fee to use them. This pilot will allow us to assess the Senate community's needs and evaluate the long-term impact of removing these charges from the rate card.

We are adjusting the Page Program room and board charges to keep pace with increasing costs. A \$90 per month increase was implemented in January, and another \$90 per month increase will be implemented in June, bringing the total monthly withholding to \$1,380 per Page. This will allow Page withholdings to cover the actual cost of meals and groceries for the Page Program, and we will review our costs quarterly to ensure the withholdings are sufficient.

I want to acknowledge some of the challenges the SAA team has faced recently and how we have worked to address those matters.

In CY 2024, more than 2,018,000 people entered the Senate office buildings; that increased almost 18 percent to about 2,375,000 people in CY 2025. To address the increase, we worked with the Capitol Police and the Committee on Rules and Administration to designate certain doors as staff only or staff and Official Business Visitors only and opened additional doors. I appreciate this collective effort to navigate the increase in the number of visitors to the Capitol complex.

The GSA's review of the federal real estate portfolio has also presented some challenges, as some of the facilities the GSA may dispose of house Senate state offices. We are in close contact with the GSA about its plans and any potential impacts on Senate state offices.

In addition, our Page Program has faced challenges due to the lack of evening dining options in the Senate complex. The Senate was in session past 6:00 p.m. on 119 days last year, up from 89 days in 2024. We have to order dinner for Pages working these evening shifts, and finding reasonably priced and consistently reliable vendors is a challenge. Webster Hall does not have a commercial kitchen, so food cannot be prepared or stored on-site. This is, in part, why we increased the Page Program room and board withholdings that I mentioned previously.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our accomplishments and FY 2027 budget request. I am extraordinarily proud of all these efforts and the SAA team leading them. I appreciate your support for the work that we do as we strive to meet the evolving needs of the Senate community.