

Dear Listeners,

On Tuesday, March 28, CPB President and Chief Executive Officer Patricia de Stacy Harrison urged lawmakers to continue level funding for CPB. It was a two-hour hearing, and can be found [here](#).

Also, check out the summation below:

CQ NEWS

March 28, 2017 – 1:50 p.m.

Appropriators Probe Need for Public TV, NPR Funding

By Jennifer Shutt, CQ Roll Call

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting began defending its \$445 million annual appropriation on Tuesday – just a few weeks after President Donald Trump proposed eliminating all federal funds for public media.

Testifying before the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee for the first time in a decade, President and Chief Executive Officer Patricia de Stacy Harrison urged



Haris (Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call)

lawmakers to continue level funding for CPB.

“Over the course of 50 years, public media has become an important part of the knowledge infrastructure of American life,” she said.

But the optics of the hearing did not suggest broad Republican support for CPB. While all six Democrats on the committee filled the seats on their side of the dais, only four of the

eight Republican members of the subcommittee came to the hearing. None of the GOP lawmakers who came to the hearing stayed for the entire time.

CPB provides grants for the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio stations throughout the country. Trump in his fiscal 2018 budget outline proposed doing away with CPB’s funding, but because its appropriations are made two years out, that would not occur until fiscal year 2020.

Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., expressed support for the CPB throughout the hearing, saying “this is an agency we all admire.” But Reps. Chuck Fleischmann of Tennessee and John Moolenaar of Michigan appeared more skeptical about the need for continued federal spending for CPB.

Rep. Andy Harris of Maryland appeared opposed.

“In a time of shrinking resources the question really should be raised in every part of the government... ‘Is it fulfilling a role that needs to be fulfilled?’” Harris said.

The Maryland Republican also sharply criticized some of the Public Broadcasting Service's programs, including a film broadcast on PBS about a native transgender Hawaiian, Kumu Hina.

"The film traces Hina's evolution from a timid high school boy to her position as a married woman and cultural director of a school that specializes in Hawaiian language, history and culture, located in one of Honolulu's grittier neighborhoods," according to PBS' website.

Harris also criticized a program on Maryland Public Television about gay marriage, saying he can imagine a campaign advertisement being run against him if he were to vote for continued federal funds for an organization that broadcasts programs that might offend some of his constituents.

"If you come for government funding, you must remove as many vestiges of political agenda that you can," Harris said.

Increased TV Stations

All three GOP committee members asked questions about how CPB has transitioned during the past 50 years and what would happen if CPB were to experience a severe reduction or loss of federal funding. Harris also asked if CPB is still necessary, given the increase in the number of television stations during the five decades since public television began.

Harrison told the committee the role of public media is not the same as for-profit private television stations and noted that talk of privatizing public media is essentially an “oxymoron.”

“I have subscriptions to Amazon and Netflix and I have a very high cable bill, so I’m aware of what’s out there,” she said.

“I think and I know that we deserve the appropriation . . . because we can prove we make a difference in the lives of Americans; not just the 1 percent, but the majority of Americans, who can’t afford to have that cable bill, who can’t afford those so-called market solutions.”

She also cautioned that a loss of federal funding would hit rural communities the most.

“The problem with rural stations — they don’t have this in-depth donor base. They just don’t have what some of the other, bigger stations have and they really depend on the federal investment,” Harrison said.

She noted that while the average public radio or television station gets 15 percent of its annual budget from CPB money, rural stations may use those funds for between 40 and 80 percent of their operating

costs. “If the appropriations would go away there would be this domino effect and it would start with rural stations.”

In addition to focusing on the role public media plays in early childhood education and in local and national journalism, Harrison noted that public media is essential during emergencies and natural disasters. She gave examples of how public television and radio was important during severe flooding in West Virginia as well as Hurricane Sandy on the East Coast.

“Their emergency alerts, in terms of floods, it’s life saving,” Harrison said.

Sincerely,

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