March 6, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: 302(b) Budget Allocation for the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

I write to urge the House Appropriations Committee to set a higher 302(b) budget allocation for Fiscal Year 2021 for the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee. A higher budget allocation potentially will make greater funding available for the Judiciary, as well as the General Services Administration (GSA) and its FY 2021 plans for major courthouse repair projects. Major repair projects are proposed for FY 2021 for federal courthouses in: Kansas City, Missouri; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; and Tacoma, Washington.

As you know, the federal judiciary rents space in nearly 800 courthouses and pays $1.1 billion in rent annually into the Federal Buildings Fund. The FBF is a revolving fund whose collected rent revenue is intended to defray the costs of capital improvements and maintenance needs. Historically, Congress has permitted the FBF to spend what it collects from agencies to support maintenance, repairs, major renovations, and new construction to accommodate agency needs in buildings that GSA owns and operates. However, in recent years FBF appropriations have been significantly below the anticipated level of rent collections from agencies, denying GSA the ability to pursue necessary repairs and renovations. During most of the last decade, Congress appropriated an average of $1 billion per year less than FBF rents collected, leading to FBF funding shortfalls and major deferred maintenance and repair problems at federal courthouses and other facilities.

As a result of these funding shortfalls, federal courthouses increasingly are suffering from a lack of resources to address mounting maintenance issues involving water intrusion, mold, broken elevators, broken HVAC systems, seismic retrofit problems and deteriorating exterior façades. The safety of courthouse employees and visitors -- and the judicial process itself -- are placed at serious risk when courthouse maintenance issues are left unattended.
Therefore, we urge the Appropriations Committee to set a higher 302(b) budget allocation in the FY 2021 budget for the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee and ultimately adequate funding for the GSA and its FBF to deal with these problems.

Sincerely yours,

Christian K. Adams
National President

cc: Rep. Mike Quigley, Chair
    Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee
    House Committee on Appropriations

    Rep. Tom Graves, Ranking Member
    Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee
    House Committee on Appropriations