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## **FTC Budget Ask and Chair Get a Cordial House Hearing**

By Paul Steidler

On Wednesday, May 15, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chair Lina Khan testified to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government about the FTC's Fiscal Year 2025 budget request and related matters.

The hearing was cordial and far-ranging, involving many oversight and general policy questions, which is the modus operandi for appropriations hearings.

The FTC is seeking a 26 percent increase in funding, which would bring its budget to \$535 million. According to Chair Khan, 70 percent of the FTC's budget is for personnel expenses.

Congressman Chuck Edwards (R-NC) expressed "shock" that any government agency would seek such an increase. Congresswoman Ashley Hinson (R-IA) was troubled by the number of FTC employees still working predominantly at home as Chair Khan testified that the headquarters' occupancy rate is only 23 percent.

Chair Khan was lauded by House Democrats, including Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD), for taking on "Greedflation," exemplified by corporations in the food, healthcare, and oil industries whose alleged greed they see as the root cause of inflation. Congressman Mark Pocan (D-WI) was especially effusive in his praise.

Regarding noncompete agreements, Subcommittee Chair David Joyce (R-OH) asked Chair Lina Khan to justify issuing a broad ban which led to a defensive response. Chair Khan cited what she believes is the statutory authority for the Final Rule and asserted that 26,000 public comments helped enable the FTC to issue the ruling. Congressman Sanford Bishop (D-GA) had high praise for the noncompete Final Rule.

The full hearing can be viewed at the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zzeK4dF2MY>