



May 7, 2018

Hon. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
H305 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nita M. Lowey, Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Congressional Technology Assessment Capacity and Resources

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery, is the world's largest and oldest association of computing professionals representing approximately 50,000 individuals in the United States and 100,000 worldwide. Its US Public Policy Council (USACM) is charged with providing policy and law makers throughout government with timely, substantive and apolitical input on matters concerning computing technology and the legal and social issues to which it gives rise.

USACM writes today to urge you and all members of the Committee, when it meets to consider legislation to fund the Legislative Branch in FY 2019, to support inquiry into whether Congress should reacquire the capacity to identify, analyze and understand the complex technologies increasingly critical to our economy, society, and future as a nation. Many of these relate directly to computing, including: blockchain, quantum devices, encryption, cybersecurity, autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, and algorithmic transparency, among others.

It has been nearly a quarter of a century since Congress last had the ability to commission its own expert independent analyses of complex technologies. USACM strongly supports a fresh look into how that pressing need may best be met. We respectfully urge that such an inquiry be pursued, whether it is conducted by the Appropriations Committee itself, CRS, an outside panel of technical and other experts, an appropriate National Academy, or other body. USACM and our expert members, many of them luminaries in their fields, would be proud to assist that effort.

Sincerely,

Stuart Shapiro, Chair