The Legislative branch plays a central role in our democracy, but for decades Congress has systematically underfunded congressional operations as compared to the rest of government.

The chart below shows discretionary non-defense discretionary spending from 1995-2020 (in constant dollars. During that quarter-century, non-defense discretionary spending increased by 58%, but spending for the legislative branch increased only by 27%.
The legislative branch receives only 0.7% of non-defense discretionary funding. Total non-defense discretionary funding for FY 2020 was $621.5 billion; the legislative branch received just under $5 billion.

Within the legislative branch, 20% of its total funding goes towards the personal offices in the House and the Senate, at $520m each, which covers all member representational costs. Major costs for Congress come from its support agencies: the Library of Congress gets 15% of the budget ($728m); the Architect and GAO each gets about 12% (~$610m); and the Capitol Police get 9.5% (~$460m). (The USCP has requested a $56m increase for FY 2021.)
Particularly interesting, however, is the spending trend. *The two major cost drivers inside the legislative branch are the Capitol Police and the Architect of the Capitol.* By comparison, House MRA's and House committee funding levels are unchanged, even though costs of living in Washington have increased, as has the number of constituents served by each office.
Let’s take a closer look at the spending trends for personal and committee offices in the House. Funding levels for the MRA in the House is actually significantly lower than a decade ago. For FY 2020, the MRA is set at $615m, but it was $726m in FY 2010 (adjusted for inflation), which is a 15% reduction. It’s even lower than FY 2013, which was at $618m.

Spending on House committees is down by $153m since 2009/10, a 35% reduction.
The Senate did a somewhat better job of retaining capacity in its personal offices, but not in its committees. For FY 2020, the SOPOEA is set at $449m, but it was $490m in FY 2010 (adjusted for inflation), which is an 8% reduction. (There’s an automatic adjustment for population size for personal office staff working on constituent matters.)

Spending on Senate committees is down by $113m since 2009/10, a 35% reduction.