



April 26, 2018

Hon. Steve Daines, Chairman
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Chris Murphy, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Congressional Technology Assessment Capacity and Resources

Dear Chairman Daines and Ranking Member Murphy:

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 Subcommittee, 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, 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