

OPENING STATEMENT

Chairman Rick Crawford

February 7, 2025

Good morning and welcome to the organizational meeting of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the 119th Congress.

A quorum being present, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent the Chair be authorized to declare a recess at any time. Hearing no objection, so ordered.

First, I must address a few administrative matters. As a reminder, these proceedings are currently proceeding in an unclassified session. If any member has a classified matter that requires the Committee to enter closed session we will need to vote in order to do so. I ask that members refrain from seeking recognition for classified matters until the Committee has concluded discussing unclassified business, so that all classified matters can be discussed together after proceeding to closed session.

Additionally, since we are in a secure space, all electronics must be left outside. This includes cellphones, wearable technology like smart watches, wireless headphones, AirTags or similar tracking devices, key fobs with Bluetooth, laptops, tablets, and any other device with a camera, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, or a microphone.

Before we begin consideration of the business before us, I would like to recognize myself for a few minutes to welcome everyone to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

With today's organizational meeting, we kick off the Committee's business for the 119th Congress.

I want to start by saying I am honored to lead this Committee and appreciate the Speaker's attention to this Committee's mission. I would like to welcome our new members and thank the Ranking Member, Mr. Himes, for our discussions as we have prepared for today's meeting.

Since its inception in 1977, this Committee has had the mission of representing the American people in overseeing the United States Intelligence Community. This role is vital, as each member here represents both their individual district constituents, as well as all Americans when we conduct our work for this Committee.

The world is filled with dangerous threats which are often more “real” than people realize. These threats hold the American people and their freedoms at risk. The authorities and tools entrusted by the American people to the Intelligence Community are vital to informing the President and members of Congress on these threats and countering those threats.

None of us should ever lose sight that there are those who seek their own interests over the United States’s, and daily place the American people at risk.

Even so, the authorities and tools entrusted to the Intelligence Community by the American people have been abused by some. This is where this Committee’s oversight becomes all the more vital to hold those responsible to account and ensure the American people’s Constitutional rights are not placed at risk in the pursuit of protecting us from the very real threats that exist. It is my intent for this Committee to continue to work in a serious manner, as quiet professionals, to ensure this thorough oversight is conducted, while also empowering and maintaining faith with the brave men and women – our fellow Americans – who work tirelessly, and often at grave risk to their lives, to serve our nation.

Today, we begin the work of the 119th Congress. Amongst other complex issues, we will address:

- evolving threats from adversary use of emergent technologies;
- the need to better develop our partnerships with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere;
- serious concerns with the development of Intelligence Community Assessments;
- Intelligence community support to the administration’s foreign policy objectives;
- needed reforms in our counterintelligence community; and
- the complex issues associated with the growing use of open source intelligence.

I will note this last item, for which the Committee will establish a new subcommittee, was highlighted by Ranking Member Himes during the 118th Congress. I thank him for his attention to this topic and look forward to working with my colleague on this complex issue.

As we work toward rebuilding the nation’s intelligence apparatus, we must never lose sight of the fact that the American people must address the foreign threats we face, while adequately preparing for the threats of tomorrow.

Supporting our Intelligence Community’s mission and protecting American’s Constitutional rights are not, and cannot, be mutually exclusive. We must do both to make sure America’s ability to gather intelligence is never compromised.

With that, I want to introduce our 5 new republican members:

1. **Rep. Ann Wagner** represents Missouri’s 2nd Congressional District. In addition to being a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee, she is one of the founding co-chairs of the bipartisan and bicameral Abraham Accords Caucus and is on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Prior to coming to congress, she was nominated by President George W. Bush, and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, to serve as the 19th U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg.

2. **Rep. Ben Cline** represents Virginia's 6th Congressional District. He is a member of several House committees including, Judiciary, Appropriations, Budget, and the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party.

Prior to Congress, he served over a decade in the Virginia House of Delegates and was a Virginia Assistant Commonwealth Attorney for several years.

He is also no stranger to the Hill, as he worked for Congressman Bob Goodlatte for many years, ultimately serving as the Congressman's Chief of Staff.

3. **Rep. Greg Steube** of the Sarasota area represents Florida's 17th Congressional District. Following September 11, he answered the call to serve our country.

He graduated law school early and enlisted in the U.S. Army. After sustaining an injury in Ranger school, he transferred to the U.S Army Jag Corps and served in Iraq as the Chief of Detainee Operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After returning from deployment, he served as a JAG, prosecuting courts-martial. He then served in the Florida House and Senate. In Congress, he serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means where he advocates for policies that support small businesses, farmers, and ranchers.

4. **Rep. Claudia Tenney** represents New York's 24th Congressional District. She is a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means and the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Prior to being elected to Congress, she served several years in the New York State Assembly. She is a longtime small business owner and a highly accomplished attorney.

5. **Rep. Pat Fallon** of Texas is a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Prior to his time representing the people of Texas' 4th Congressional District, he represented North Texas in the Texas State House and Senate.

He is a staunch national security advocate and successful, decades-long, entrepreneur. He is also just the 15th person in the world to successfully run seven marathons, on seven continents, in seven days.

I welcome all of you to the committee, and I look forward to doing important work with you this Congress.

I also want to welcome Representative Mike Quigley back to HPSCI. It is nice to see you.

With that, I yield to the Ranking Member for any opening remarks.