

Testimony on Fiscal Year 2027 Appropriations
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Concerning Department of Commerce Appropriations and the Trump Gold Card Program
April 20, 2026
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Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Meng and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Department of Commerce appropriations and the Trump Gold Card program.

Pursuant to an executive order, the president directed the Secretary of Commerce, in coordination with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security, to establish a “Gold Card” visa program.¹ The order provided that an individual who makes an “unrestricted gift” to Commerce under 15 U.S.C. § 1522 would establish eligibility for certain employment-based visas, and that the amount of the gift would be \$1 million for an individual or \$2 million for a corporation making the payment on behalf of an individual.²

Since the launch of this program in December 2025,³ the president has projected drastic increases to the balance of the Commerce gift account established under § 1522. In the president’s fiscal year 2026 budget request, for example, the president estimated that the fiscal year 2026 net budget authority for the Commerce gift account would be \$1 million.⁴ In the fiscal year 2027 budget request, however, the president has (1) projected that in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 the Commerce gift account will receive more than \$4.2 billion in receipts, resulting in a balance of \$8.4 billion by the end of fiscal year 2027, and (2) specifically stated that the Commerce gift account also “reflects receipts received through the Trump Gold Card Program.”⁵ The anticipated \$8.4 billion balance approaches the Department’s entire \$9.2 billion discretionary funding request for fiscal year 2027.⁶

¹ 90 Fed. Reg. 46031, 46031 (Sept. 19, 2025).

² *Id.*

³ *The Trump Gold Card: Unlock life in America*, U.S. Dep’t of Commerce (Dec. 11, 2025), <https://www.commerce.gov/news/blog/tweets/trump-gold-card-unlock-life-america> (last visited Apr. 15, 2026).

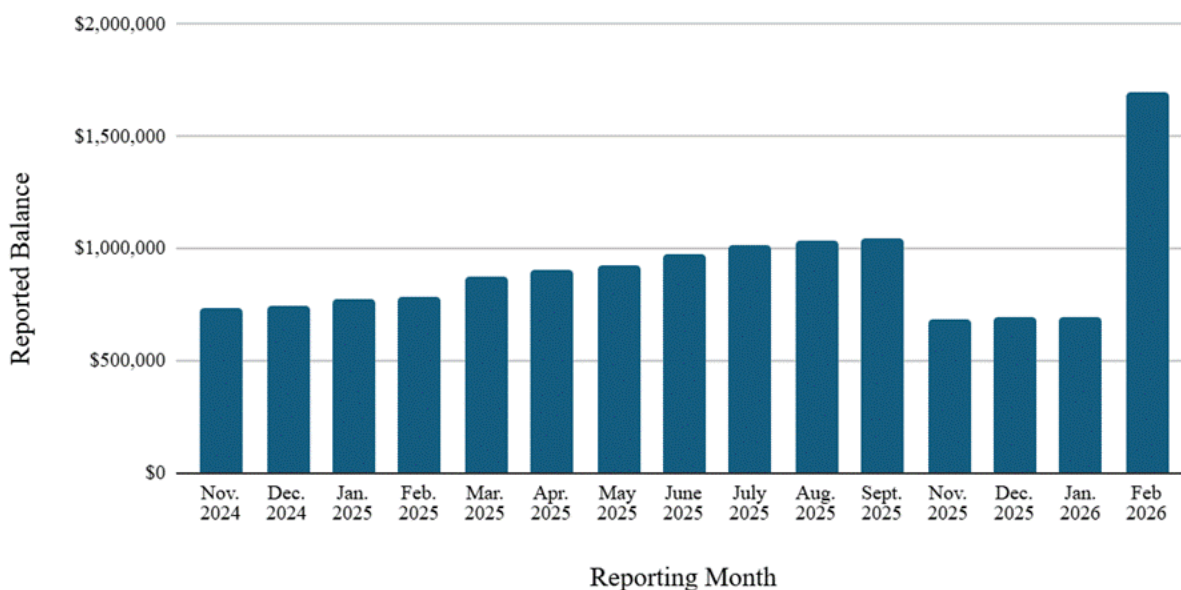
⁴ Off. of Mgmt. & Budget, Exec. Off. of the President, *Budget of the U.S. Government: Appendix, Fiscal Year 2026*, at 189–190, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2026-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2026-APP.pdf> (last visited Apr. 15, 2026).

⁵ Off. of Mgmt. & Budget, Exec. Off. of the President, *Budget of the U.S. Government: Appendix, Fiscal Year 2027*, at 198, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/appendix_fy2027.pdf (last visited Apr. 15, 2026) (FY 2027 Appendix).

⁶ *Budget and performance*, U.S. Dep’t of Commerce, <https://www.commerce.gov/about/budget-and-performance> (“The FY 2027 Budget proposes \$9.2 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Commerce.”) (last visited Apr. 15, 2026).

Despite this substantial increase in amounts in the Commerce gift account, the president’s proposed budget does not describe with any particularity for what purpose these funds will be used.⁷ And as of April 16, none of the Department’s budget justifications explain how it proposes to use these funds, which is especially problematic given its wide purview over promoting foreign and domestic commerce.⁸ Moreover, the Trump Gold Card website does not outline how Commerce will ensure any payments are handled in accordance with best practices for preventing fraud and abuse, explain how it will determine the legitimacy and lawfulness of payments from any foreign sources, describe how it will ensure that the acceptance and use of the funds complies with all relevant laws and agency requirements or confirm whether it has the capacity and willingness to conduct the necessary reviews for these amounts.⁹

Between January and February 2026, the total budgetary resources in the Commerce gift account already has increased by \$1 million, demonstrating the need for immediate congressional oversight on these issues.



In the fiscal year 2027 appropriations process, this Subcommittee—and ultimately Congress—may decide to not provide funding for certain purposes requested by Commerce, may explicitly prohibit Commerce from obligating or expending funds for others and may impose

⁷ FY 2027 Appendix, *supra* note 5, at 198 (restating the language from 15 U.S.C. § 1522: “The Secretary of Commerce is authorized to accept, hold, administer, and utilize gifts and bequests of property, both real and personal, for the purpose of aiding or facilitating the work of the Department of Commerce”).

⁸ FY 2027 Congressional Budget Justification, U.S. Dep’t of Commerce, <https://www.commerce.gov/about/budget-and-performance/fy-2027-congressional-budget-justification> [<https://perma.cc/8FF7-49Y9>] (last visited Apr. 16, 2026).

⁹ See *The Trump Gold Card is Here*, <https://www.trumpcard.gov/> (last visited Apr. 20, 2026).

conditions on Commerce’s use of appropriated amounts. To ensure that the Department does not use Gold Card payments to circumvent any carefully negotiated controls on spending,¹⁰ we urge the Subcommittee to include the following bill and report language.

Recommended Bill Language

Sec. _____. None of the funds provided to the Department of Commerce under this Act, provided under previous appropriations Acts that remain available for obligation or expenditure in fiscal year 2027, or provided from any accounts in the Treasury of the United States derived by the collection of fees or acceptance of gifts or bequests, may be used to obligate any amounts received pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1522 unless and until the Secretary of Commerce submits a detailed spend plan for such amounts to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate at least 30 days in advance of the obligation.

Recommended Report Language

The budget prepared by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB budget) projects that the budgetary resources in the Department of Commerce gift account will increase from approximately \$1 million in fiscal year 2025 to \$8.4 billion by the end of fiscal year 2027. This increase includes receipts received through the Trump Gold Card Program, which commenced in December 2025. The Committee notes that, before the current fiscal year, the Department of Commerce has never received payments for this new program, and the Commerce gift account historically has contained approximately \$1 million in budgetary resources.

The Committee is concerned by the lack of information regarding Commerce’s intended use of these funds, and also the process by which Commerce plans to process payments from any foreign sources. The Committee thus requires that, in advance of obligating any amounts in the Commerce gift account, the Secretary of Commerce provide the Committees on Appropriations with a detailed spend plan describing any planned or proposed obligations, the authority for such obligations, and how each obligation is consistent with the requirements of 15 U.S.C. § 1522. The Committee further directs the Secretary to consult with the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and

¹⁰ Review of Federal Agencies’ Gift Funds (FGMSD-80-77), B-198730, at 2 (Comp. Gen. Sept, 24, 1980), www.gao.gov/assets/fgmsd-80-77.pdf (explaining that gift funds “dilute” congressional oversight); *see also* Samuel R. Bagenstos, “Slush Funds” and Congress’s Power of the Purse, at 11–13 (Jan. 27, 2026) (draft) https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=6140606 (“Deciding how much the government should spend, and on what, involves a complex set of tradeoffs among multiple interests.”). *Cf. generally* Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, Pub. L. No. 119-74, div. A, title V, 140 Stat. 5, 50 (2026) (general provisions placing additional conditions on the use of funds).

Transportation regarding the planned use of any funds in the Commerce gift account, Commerce's process for determining the legitimacy and lawfulness of any incoming payments, including those from foreign sources, Commerce's plans to ensure that the acceptance and use of the funds complies with all relevant laws and agency requirements, and Commerce's capacity to conduct the necessary reviews to ensure proper use of these amounts.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to conduct oversight of Department of Commerce funding. If CREW can provide any additional insight into questions on these issues, we are available to assist.