



GAO Review: Are Additional Federal Courthouses Justified?

The Federal Judiciary Wants Billions of Dollars for Wasteful Courthouse Construction

- The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is holding a hearing Wednesday, April 17th on a new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on excessive federal courthouse construction costs.
- The federal judiciary is asking Congress and the taxpayers for \$1 billion in new construction projects.
- GAO reports that it will actually cost taxpayers more than \$3.2 billion to complete the list of requested projects.

GAO Finds Courthouse Construction is Excessive and Unnecessary

- Federal courthouse construction costs continue to spin out of control.
- The judiciary and the General Services Administration (GSA) base their construction requests on inflated long-term projections of future judges that are flat out wrong.
- Although the judiciary has made some necessary updates to its criteria for determining construction requests to better align with their true needs, most of the \$3.2 billion worth in projects currently being requested were not evaluated under the new criteria, nor would they have met those criteria.
- GAO recommendations for courtroom sharing that could utilize space more efficiently and reduce costs have not been implemented.
- GSA courthouse construction often exceeds limits authorized by Congress.

GAO Recommends a Construction Moratorium

- Greater transparency is necessary about why the judiciary and GSA select their construction projects, the true costs of those projects, and what alternatives – including courtroom sharing – were considered.
- A moratorium on courthouse construction should be imposed until the requested projects are properly evaluated.

It's Time to End the Ongoing Waste

- Over the last decade, GAO has documented almost a billion dollars of overbuilt and unneeded courthouses.

- This waste has resulted in empty, underutilized, and abandoned federal courthouses across the country, including Miami, Buffalo, and Washington, DC. GSA is also moving ahead with plans to build another excessive courthouse in Los Angeles.
- The judiciary's latest construction plan would lead to more empty federal space, more inefficiency, and more waste of taxpayer dollars.

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