

BEA's Current State of Play

Vipin Arora, Director



Given the opportunities and challenges facing BEA, what criteria should we use to prioritize our work—and why?

Where to target our innovative efforts?

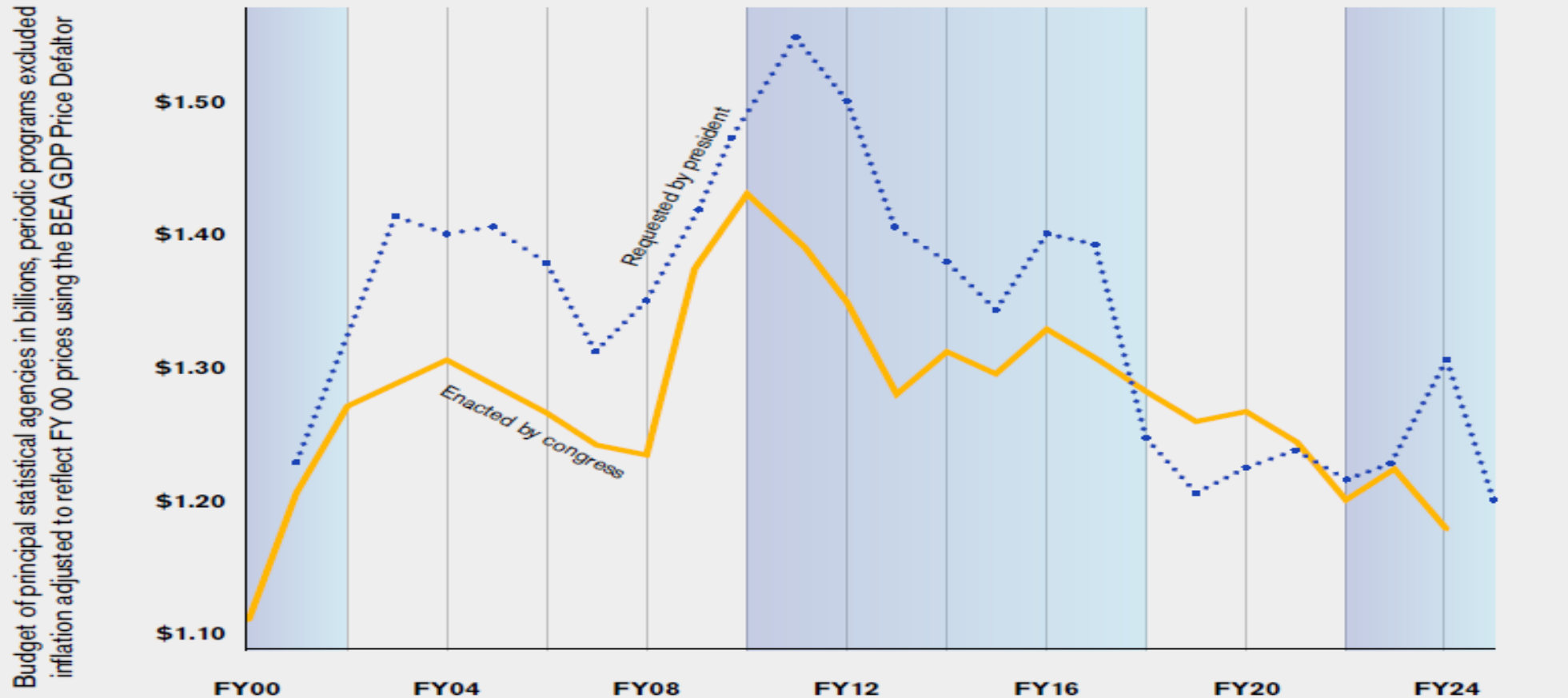
What to keep doing? What to stop?

What to take on?

Historical context

The federal budget environment for statistics has been challenging—real statistical agency budgets have declined since 2010

FIGURE 4. The President’s Requested Budget and Enacted Level for the Combined Budget or Non-cyclical Budget Lines, 9 Federal Statistical Agencies, FY 2000–FY 2024

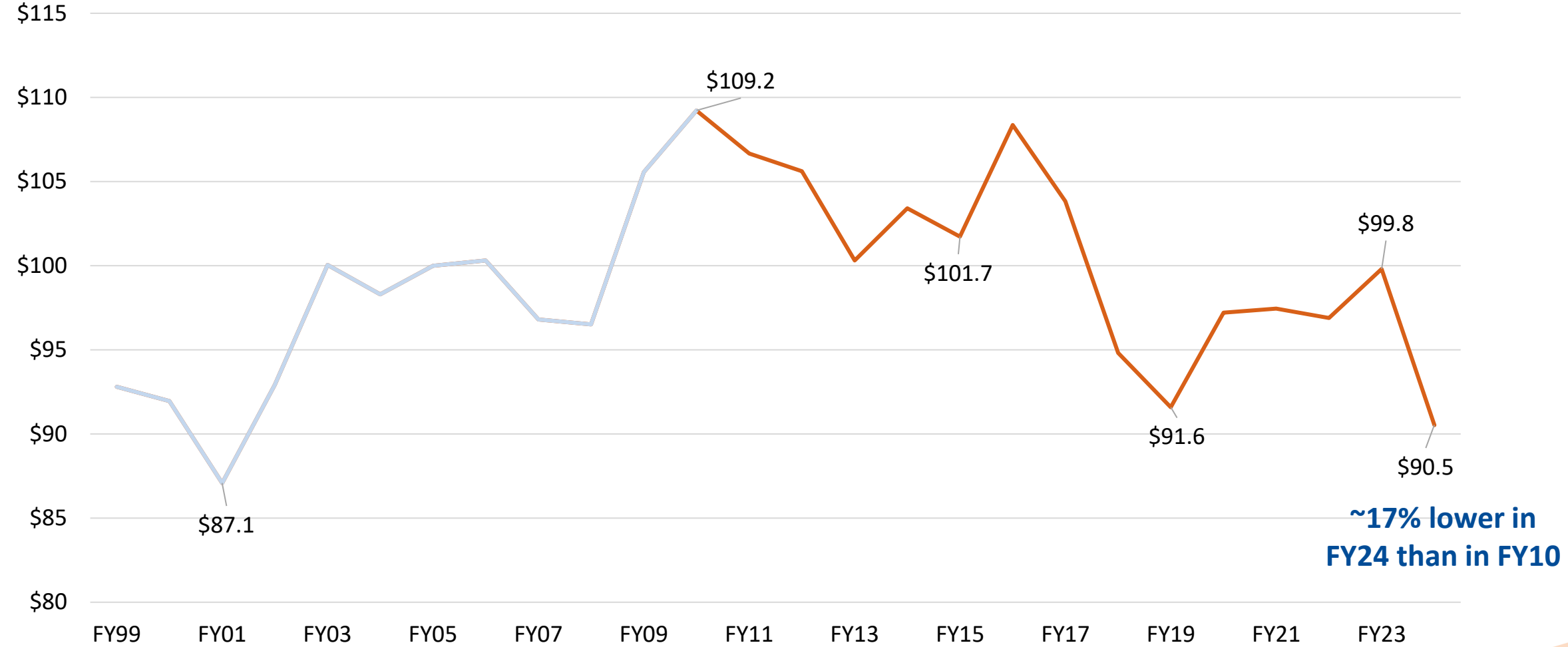


NOTES: BTS, NCSES, ORES, and SOI are omitted because their budgets are not determined through the congressional appropriations process. The Census Bureau budget line for periodic censuses and the NASS line for the Census of Agriculture are both omitted because of their cyclical nature. The shaded regions denote the different presidential administrations that initiated the budget process by releasing the executive budget.
SOURCE: Pierson et al. (2024)

BEA's inflation adjusted budget has followed this trend—it is the second lowest in 25 years and fell nearly 10% last year



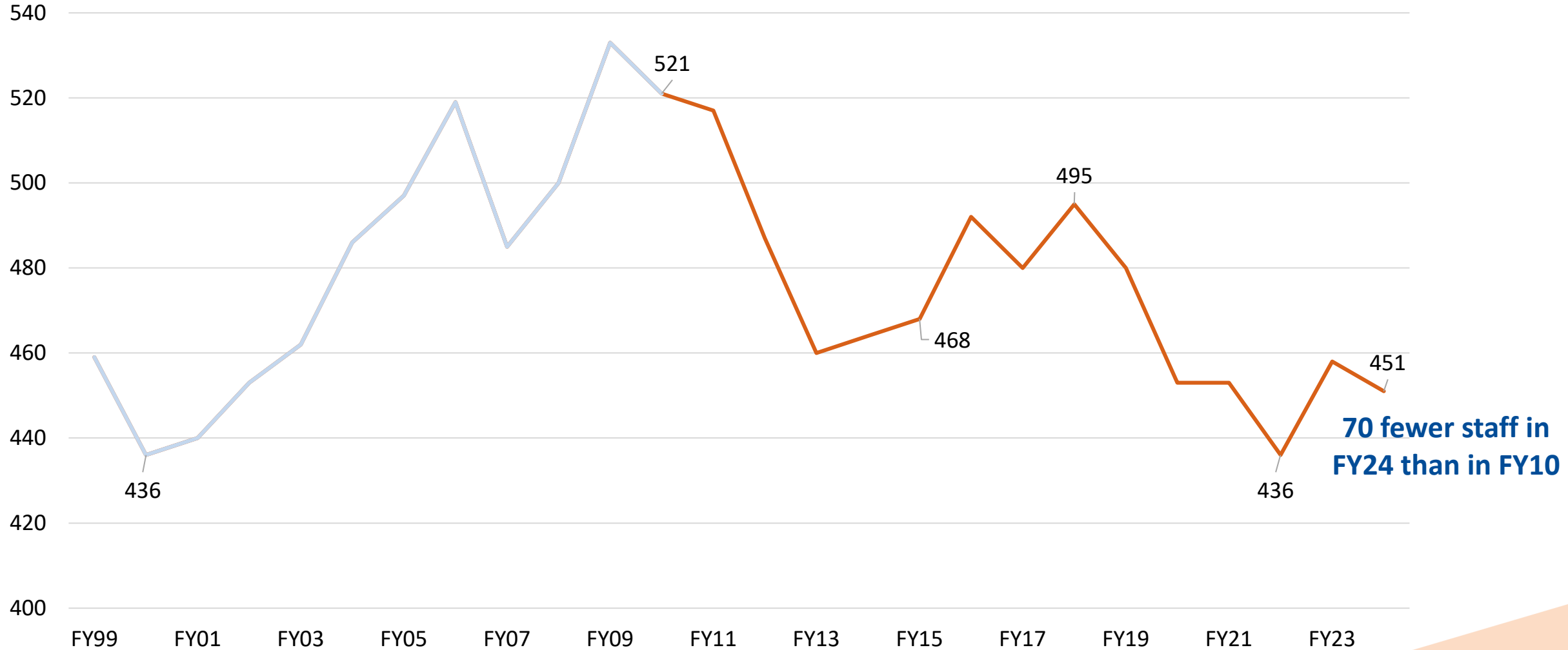
BEA budget
millions of 2017 dollars



Our staffing levels have also trended down since 2010



BEA staff on board
on last day of FY



**70 fewer staff in
FY24 than in FY10**

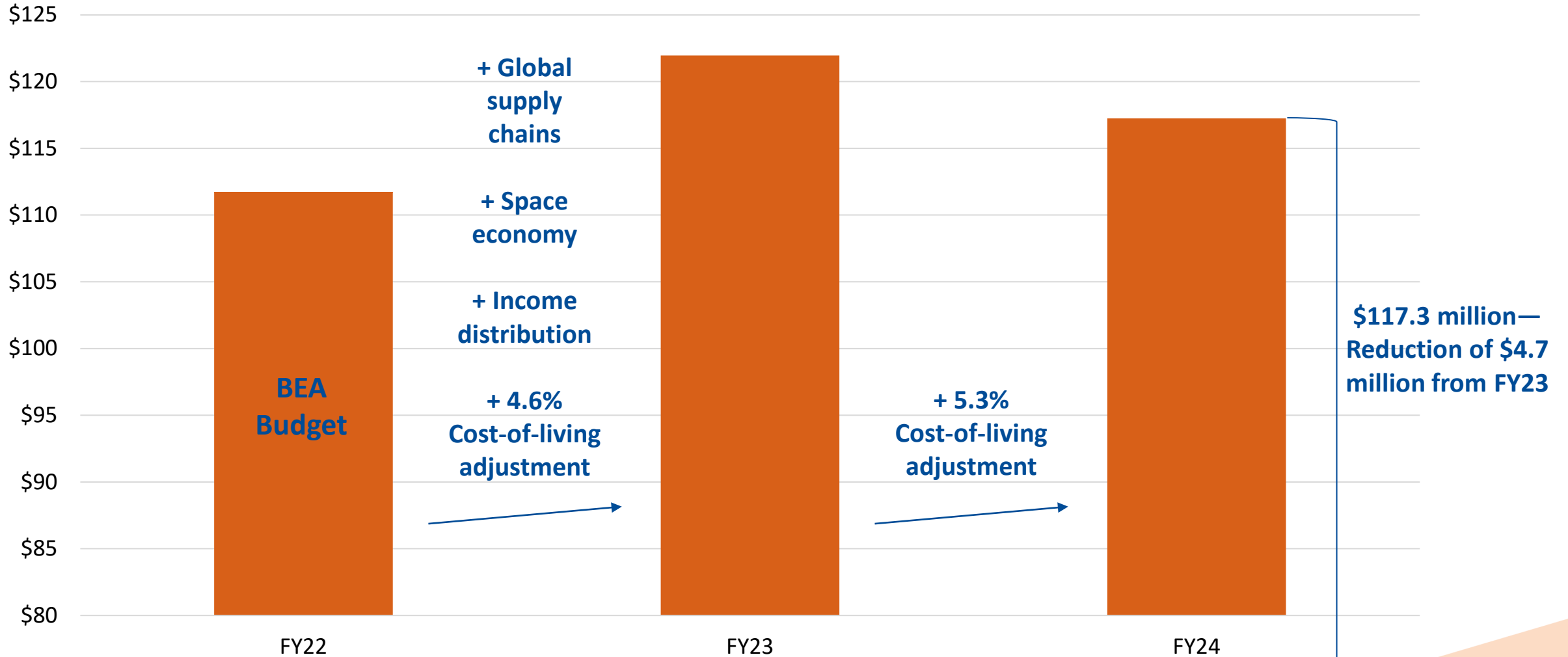
The last few years



Since 2022 we've added three major initiatives and labor spending has increased over \$10 million due to federal cost-of-living adjustments



BEA budget
millions of dollars

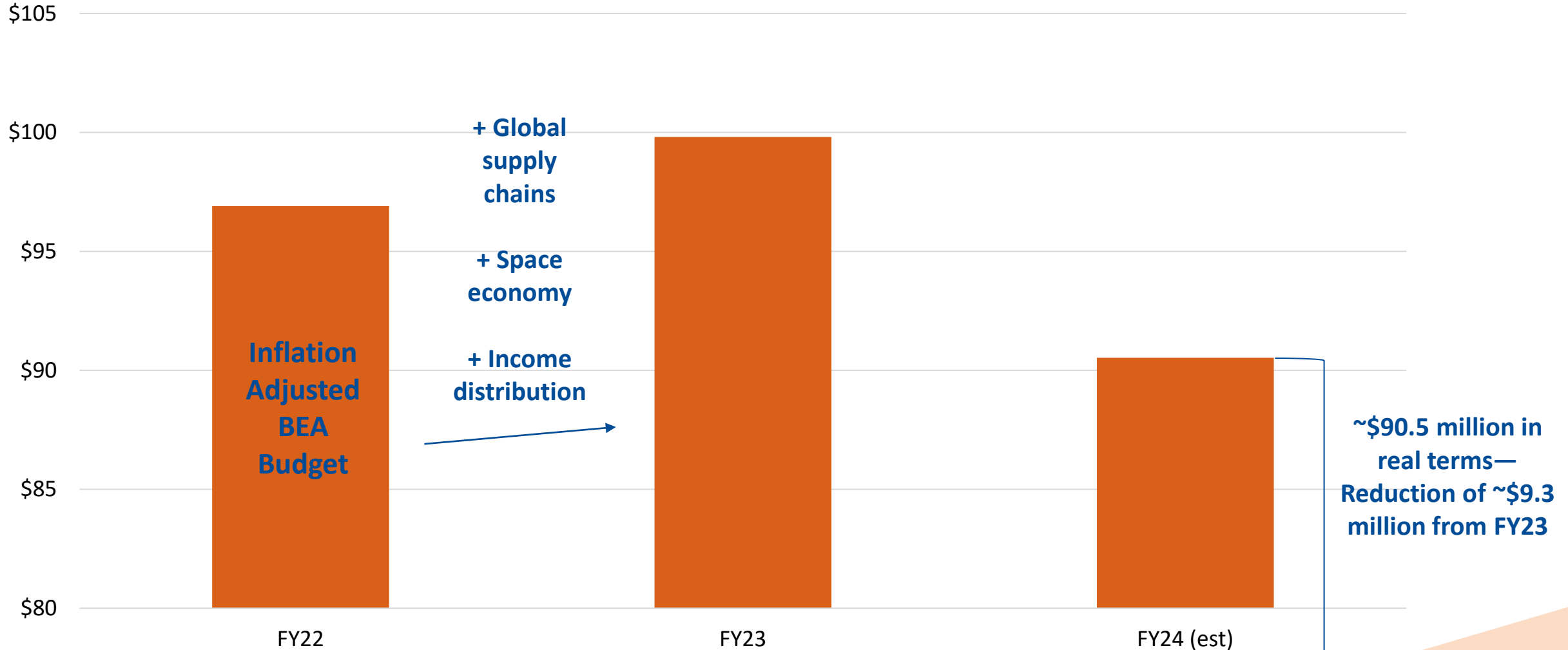


Data from BEA's appropriated budgets

When you adjust for inflation our FY24 budget is smaller than in either FY22 or FY23—and we have three major new initiatives



BEA budget
millions of 2017 dollars



Nominal data from BEA's appropriated budgets, price data from [NIPA table 3.10.4](#) for compensation of general government employees

We met our very challenging FY24 budget constraint with a comprehensive approach that minimized impact on users and staff



1. We are reducing headcount by attrition and have been under an external hiring freeze since March

2. We've focused current staff on core products and have targeted specific focus areas for innovation
 - This means we've had to discontinue certain detailed tables of our economic accounts and are working to streamline releases

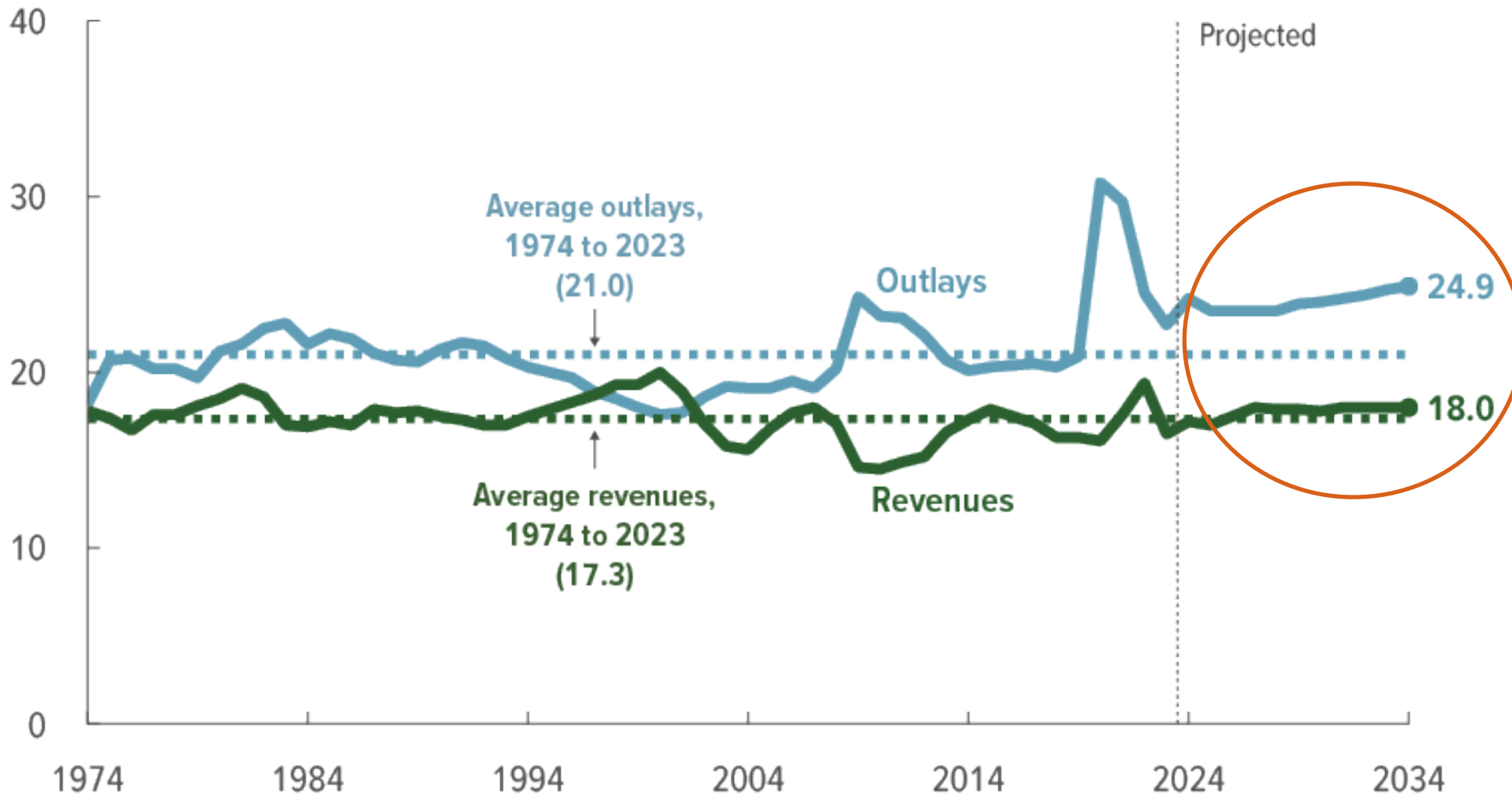
3. We significantly reduced spending on data purchases and IT modernization

Looking forward



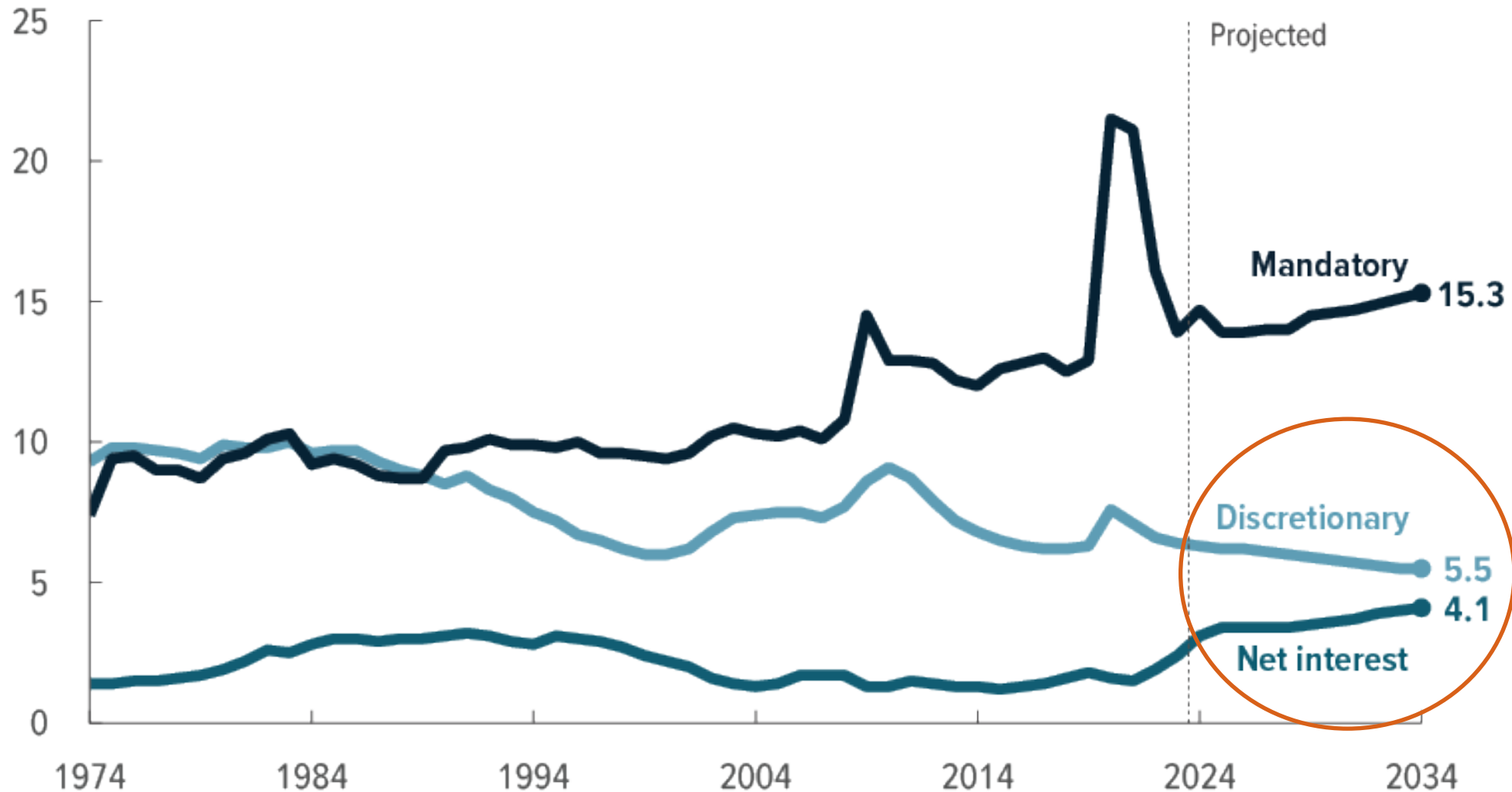
CBO projects that the gap between total federal outlays and revenues will widen in the next 10 years

Percentage of GDP



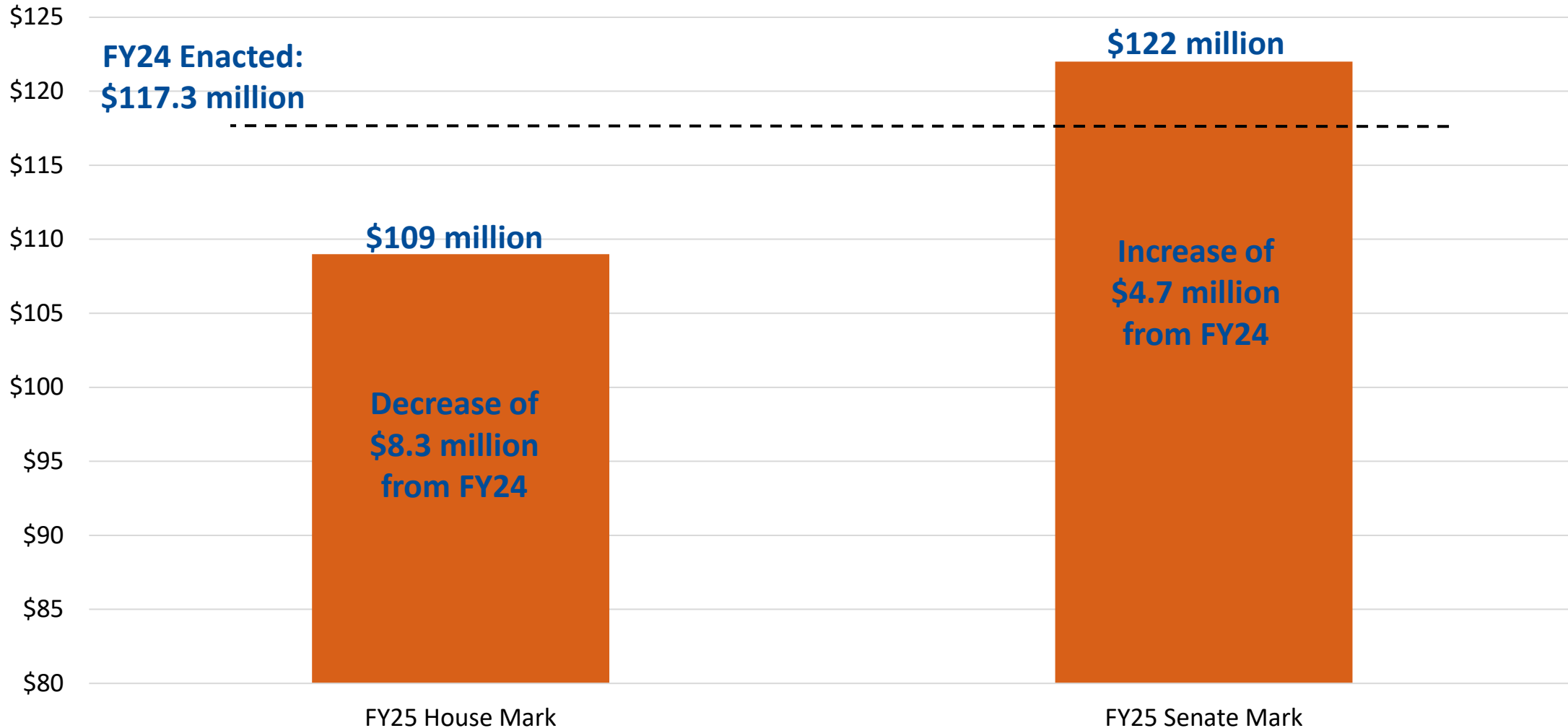
That projected gap is driven by mandatory spending and payments on interest—discretionary spending is projected to fall to historic lows (as a share of GDP)

Percentage of GDP



Narrowing in on BEA's outlook for FY25 reveals substantial uncertainty—there is a \$13 million dollar difference in our FY25 House and Senate marks

millions of dollars



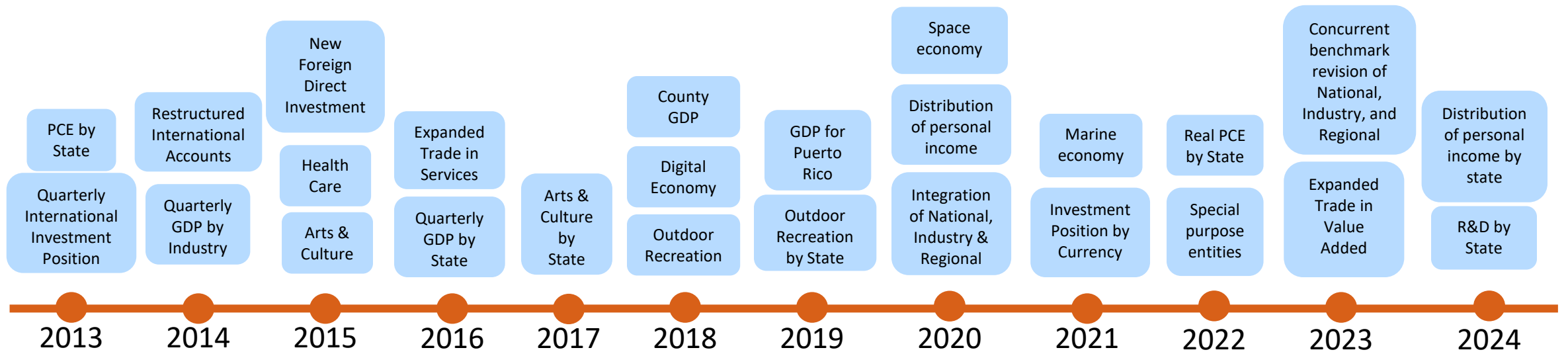
Inflation adjusted estimates of those marks indicate that BEA's FY25 budget will remain at historically low levels



BEA budget
millions of 2017 dollars



Given this overall state of play, we need your advice on how to keep the innovation coming



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