



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

FY 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill
May 14, 2015
Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Fattah, for your work to bring forward the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bill for the Department of Justice, the Department of Commerce, NASA, the National Science Foundation, and other related agencies. I congratulate you in particular, Mr. Culberson, on producing your first bill at the helm of this subcommittee. We have been moving at a swift pace that should allow us to complete our work for the fiscal year on time, and I am grateful to all of you on the subcommittee for all of your hard work and commitment to make that goal a reality.

The bill before us today supports a number of critical programs that keep our country safe and grow our nation's economy, with a total allocation of \$51.4 billion. Within that amount, the legislation prioritizes our limited resources on programs with proven results and with a clear economic benefit.

For example, the Department of Justice is funded above enacted levels at \$27.5 billion. This ensures that our federal law enforcement agents at the FBI, DEA, US Marshals Service and ATF have sufficient resources to protect our country and its citizens from crime and terrorism. We have prioritized law enforcement programs focused on cyber-intrusion, gangs, and counterintelligence – as well as the abuse and diversion of prescription drugs, which is our country's fastest growing drug threat. In particular, the bill provides funding for a small but effective grant program within DOJ that helps state-run prescription drug monitoring programs provide doctors and law enforcement with potentially life-saving information about patients' prescription patterns. As our states, localities and federal government implement a coordinated response to this epidemic, we must be ever vigilant against the emergence of heroin use and associated criminal activity, and I am pleased that this bill will support local communities in their efforts to rid our streets of this dangerous, illicit drug. Also of import, this legislation provides sufficient resources for the Bureau of Prisons to address the challenges associated with systemic overcrowding, making the safety of our federal inmates and the dedicated staff a top priority.

In other areas, this bill will help spur job creation and boost our country's competitiveness through smart investments in science and space exploration. The Economic Development Administration is level funded at \$250 million, including some \$15 million to assist coal mining communities around the country that have suffered at the hands of the onslaught of burdensome regulations promulgated under the Obama Administration. Elsewhere, we maintain our investments in core scientific research, for example, funding the National Science Foundation at \$50 million above enacted levels and providing robust support for NASA's planetary science and astrophysics programs. Undoubtedly, these targeted investments today will spur the innovation of tomorrow.

Finally, as with all bills to emerge from our committee, this legislation includes several oversight provisions that will ensure our tax dollars are being spent responsibly. I urge you all to support this bill, and I yield back.

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