

Chairman Frank R. Wolf
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Fiscal Year 2014 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill
Full Committee Markup
July 17, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

Today, I am pleased to bring to the Committee the fiscal year 2014 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Before I summarize the highlights of the bill, I want to first thank the Ranking Member, Mr. Fattah, and all the members of the Subcommittee for their participation and assistance.

The budget allocation we had to work with this year presented some challenges, however we worked together in a bipartisan fashion to incorporate priorities and perspectives from both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Fattah has been an outstanding partner at every step of the process, and I appreciate the open and cooperative relationship we have enjoyed.

I would also like to thank Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey for providing us with a fair allocation, and for allowing us to forge ahead under regular order to accomplish the work of the Committee.

Finally, I want to recognize the Subcommittee staff, including the clerk Mike Ringle, Leslie Albright, Jeff Ashford, Diana Simpson and Colin Samples, and also Bob Bonner and Matt Smith from the Minority staff for their work in preparing the bill before us today.

The recommendation we bring to the Committee includes \$47.4 billion in discretionary spending, a reduction of 5.6 percent below the current fiscal year and 7.4 percent below the President's request. The bill is less than 1 percent above the FY13 post-sequestration level.

We have focused limited resources on the most critical areas: fighting crime and terrorism, including cyber attacks; improving weather forecasts and warnings; and boosting U.S. competitiveness and job creation by investing in science, exports and manufacturing.

We have made every effort to mitigate the potential for furloughs, particularly in public safety agencies. However, a "grand bargain" to end sequestration and address mandatory spending will be necessary to fully solve the problem.

For the Department of Commerce, the bill includes \$7.5 billion.

Hurricane Sandy and the tornadoes in Oklahoma reminded us again of the loss of life and economic disruption that can result from severe weather. The bill provides funding above the request for National Weather Service operations, weather research, and NOAA's two flagship weather satellite systems to provide the data that is essential to accurate warnings and forecasts.

The bill makes critical investments in manufacturing, export promotion and job creation, including a task force and an EDA grant program to incentivize U.S. companies to bring their manufacturing and services activities back to the United States.

The bill also includes \$120 million for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program to help advance job growth in the manufacturing sector.

The bill also features important investments in scientific research programs, including \$7.7 billion for the National Science Foundation. Basic scientific research is a key to long-term economic growth and competitiveness, and is the foundation for the economic security of future generations.

Preparing tomorrow's STEM workforce is also critical to American competitiveness. More than \$1 billion is provided through science agencies in the bill for science education programs.

For NASA, the bill includes \$16.6 billion, including \$3.6 billion for space exploration. This amount will allow NASA to meet upcoming flight milestones for the new Orion Crew Vehicle and the Space Launch System. NASA's aeronautics research is vital to the competitiveness of our aviation sector. This bill includes \$566 million for aeronautics, an increase above the FY13 level.

The bill restores cuts in the President's request to NASA's planetary science program, including funding for robotic missions to Mars and Jupiter's moon Europa.

For Justice, the bill includes \$26.3 billion.

Defending the Nation from internal and external threats remains the top mission priority of the Justice Department. The bill includes \$8.1 billion for the FBI, an increase above FY13 to continue counterterrorism activities, investigations of cyber intrusions, and task force work to investigate and eliminate violent gang crime. Federal Prisons operations are funded at \$6.7 billion. The bill maintains staffing levels to ensure safe and secure operations, and continues the activation of recently constructed prisons to alleviate overcrowding.

The bill creates a Chuck Colson Task Force on Corrections, which will make recommendations for systematic reforms to increase public safety, improve offender accountability, reduce recidivism and control costs in the Federal Prison System. This effort will distill lessons learned from recent innovations at the State level, and set the stage for these and other reforms to take hold in the Federal system, and in corrections systems nationwide.

The bill maintains funding for high priority, proven Justice grant programs, including: Byrne Justice Assistance Grants; SCAAP; missing and exploited children programs; and DNA grants.

Violence against women and victims of trafficking grant programs are increased above the current level and above the President's request.

The bill includes important initiatives for keeping firearms out of the hands of prohibited persons, and for improving school safety. NICS background checks are only effective if State records are complete and included. The bill includes \$55 million for grants to States focused on improving State records submissions to the NICS system.

For example, as of last October, nineteen States had submitted fewer than 100 mental health records to the system. States that receive these grants from DOJ end up substantially increasing their rate of mental health record sharing, which is a significant improvement in the integrity of the NICS system.

On school safety, the bill includes \$75 million for a comprehensive research and grant initiative run by the National Institute of Justice, and \$3 million to continue support for the National Center for Campus Public Safety.

That is a summary of the recommendation before you today. The bill recognizes our fiscal realities, controlling overall spending, while prioritizing critical Federal functions.

I urge all Members to support the bill and I yield back to the Chairman.

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