



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Full Committee Markup – FY 2015 Commerce, Justice, Science Bill and Report on the Suballocation of Budget Allocations

May 8, 2014

Opening Statement As Prepared

This meeting will come to order.

I welcome you all to our second full committee meeting of the year.

As you may know, today is the memorial for one of our distinguished and respected friends and former colleagues, Jim Oberstar. Some of our members are at the service today, and we send his family and many friends our thoughts and condolences.

Turning to our business for the day - We have two items on our agenda today: consideration of the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2015, and approval of the final, complete set of 302(b) suballocations.

We are fresh off a successful week, and I hope to continue that success today. I would like to congratulate you all on the passage of our first two Appropriations bills – particularly Chairman Cole and Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Bishop. Two down, 10 to go.

Thank you all for being here on time and ready to work. I look forward to another respectful and constructive markup today.

The first order of business for the day is the Fiscal Year 2015 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill.

The Commerce, Justice, and Science bill is a truly comprehensive piece of legislation. It supports American innovation and economic development, but also preserves the safety and security needed for our nation to prosper.

As Chairman Wolf said, this legislation provides \$51.2 billion in funding for the Department of Justice, the Department of Commerce, NASA, the National Science Foundation, and related agencies.

But – as this Committee is devoted to doing with every piece of legislation we put forth – we have made sure this funding is provided in a responsible and rational way.

The Subcommittee has combed through every line of the budgets for these agencies – rooting out waste and duplication, and trimming unnecessary spending to produce a lean, efficient, and effective bill that comes in nearly \$400 million below last year.

The President's request for this bill had \$800 million in false savings and offsets, and underfunded a variety of critical programs. This bill rejects those gimmicks, while funding important programs at responsible levels.

As a result, this bill preserves critical functions of our government – protecting the life, liberty and property of the American people – while being sensible with taxpayer money. Our priorities included law enforcement, national security, public safety initiatives, and programs with great economic benefit.

To highlight some of these priorities:

With the goal of keeping our nation safe from top to bottom – from battling terrorism and fighting crime across the globe, to supporting local law enforcement and cleanup of meth lab sites – we've increased funding for the Department of Justice \$383 million above last year.

This includes increased funding for the DEA to continue the battle against illegal drugs. I am very grateful that \$367 million will go to efforts to combat prescription drug abuse, which has emerged as the nation's number one drug threat. Too many families are dealing with the tragic, permanent repercussions of this scourge on our nation, and this cannot continue unabated.

We have also increased funding above the President's request for the National Weather Service, and fully funded programs that will help maintain and improve weather forecasting to help warn communities about potentially devastating natural disasters.

With the goal of advancing U.S. interests globally, we've targeted funding toward programs within the National Science Foundation and the Department of Commerce that work to improve U.S. economic competitiveness and innovation.

We have included several provisions that underscore other priorities – such as prohibiting the transfer or release of Guantanamo detainees into the U.S., protecting our Second Amendment rights, and preserving the sanctity of life. The bill also contains language that ensures the conscientious and responsible spending of taxpayer dollars – including a prohibition on contracting to train agency employees to engage in publicity or propaganda.

Before I close, I would like to thank the dedicated staff – we couldn't be here without them. I'd also like to thank the Subcommittee for their hard work and input, ensuring that they have crafted the best bill possible. Lastly, I'd like to thank Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Fattah for their leadership and teamwork.

As you all know, this is Chairman Wolf's final CJS bill as Chairman of that Subcommittee and as a Member of Congress. It has been a pleasure to serve with him in this Congress – since 1980 – and he will leave such a large hole when he departs.

This bill is a high note to go out on. Mr. Wolf, I know I am not alone when I say we will miss you. Thank you for your service, and for your fine work on this bill.

In honor of Chairman Wolf, I hope that all my colleagues will support this bill today.

Thank you.