



Chairman Matt Cartwright
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Oversight Hearing on Management, Performance Challenges, and COVID
Response at the Department of Justice
March 24, 2021

Good morning everyone, and welcome to our second CJS hearing of the year. Today we welcome Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the Department of Justice, a position he has held since 2012. He has also served as Chair of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, which is comprised of all 73 federal Inspectors General.

Prior to leading the Office of the Inspector General, he spent a decade in private practice, during which time he also served as a Commissioner on the U.S. Sentencing Commission. And from 1989 to 2002 he served in a range of significant positions as a Federal prosecutor and with the Department's Criminal Division.

The Inspector General occupies a unique position, with responsibility to oversee the operation and performance of the Department of Justice, and promote the Department's integrity, efficiency, and accountability.

This is especially important now when we are struggling to recover from a global pandemic. In 2020, OIG received \$2 million to oversee DOJ administration of \$1 billion in CARES Act funding. This is on top of its important work in overseeing a sprawling, \$33 billion department, but we will be especially interested in hearing your observations about how DOJ is addressing its COVID-19 challenges and correcting any missteps it might have made during the pandemic, including its administration of \$1 billion in CARES Act funding.

In its 2013 edition of its "Top Management and Performance Challenges" for the Department, leading your list of six priorities were "the growing crisis in the federal prison system" and "safeguarding national security consistent with civil rights and liberties". Seven years later, the lead was "public confidence in law enforcement and protecting civil liberties" and "use of sensitive investigative authorities", followed by "planning and response to a global pandemic" and "a safe, secure, and humane prison system."

While I know these lists don't represent a priority order, it is hard not to be struck by the consistency of these challenges, while noting the nuances in the changes seem to resonate with the times. I'll be interested to hear your thoughts on the persistent nature of these challenges in addition to what specific steps are being taken to ensure they are being addressed.

I also expect today we will cover a wide range of topics in addition to those already mentioned. We will begin with a focus on DOJ's performance in handling the pandemic, and also focus on the challenges DOJ faces in dealing with tragic events such as the January 6 insurrection and the rise of violent extremism in our country.

We will want to hear about how DOJ is dealing with other significant challenges facing the Department, such as efforts by the Department to improve police and community relations; to advance civil rights and civil liberties; racism, hate crimes, and the rise of violent crime in our cities; the never-ending scourge of opioid trafficking; ; foreign influence and cyber threats; and the challenge of protecting voting rights and institutional integrity.

So once again, welcome Inspector General Horowitz, and we look forward to your testimony.