

THE HONORABLE HAROLD ROGERS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES
BUDGET HEARING – FISCAL YEAR 2025 REQUEST FOR THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF
INVESTIGATION
APRIL 11, 2024

The subcommittee will come to order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the first Fiscal Year 2025 hearing for the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies.

Before I start, I would like to thank Chairwoman Granger for her years of dedication to this Committee and formally congratulate Chairman Cole. I look forward to continuing to work with both of you.

I will begin by recognizing myself for an opening statement.

I'd like to welcome our witness, the Honorable Christopher Wray, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, back to this Subcommittee.

Director Wray, who has nearly 30 years of DOJ and FBI experience dating back to the late 1990s, has served in his current role since August of 2017.

In his capacity as Director, he oversees an agency of over 35,000 people, including special agents, intelligence analysts, language specialists, scientists, and information technology specialists.

The FY25 budget request for FBI Salaries and Expenses is \$11.3 billion, with \$6.7 billion of that amount – about 60 percent – designated as defense spending.

The request amounts to a 6 percent increase above the FY24 enacted level for Salaries and Expenses.

Overall, the FBI budget request includes \$119 million in program increases and approximately \$700 million in other adjustments – representing the substantial increased cost of continuing the FBI's current activities.

In particular, the largest program increase request is for what the FBI has labeled "Restoration of 2023 National Security and Law Enforcement Personnel."

This request is for \$85.4 million and aims to fund 270 headquarter positions, of which only 60 would be actual agents.

The Bureau claims these resources are necessary to limit reductions in function areas.

Let's be crystal clear, cartels continue to flood our streets with fentanyl and poison Americans in record numbers. They are exploiting our southern border and devastating families and communities. Violent crime levels – murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault – remain all too high. There is no question the FBI's mission is more critical than ever.

The requested increases in the FY25 budget are significant, and it is my hope that they are fully discussed at today's hearing in relation to many of the issues this country is facing.

However, it is no secret that the Nation's Federal debt stands at approximately \$34 trillion.

Let me repeat this number, \$34 trillion.

And hard-working Americans continue to face elevated costs for everyday items.

Congress, and this Committee in particular, cannot ignore the unsustainable path that we are on.

It is essential that we ensure every dollar appropriated to agencies is spent effectively, efficiently, and appropriately. Anything less would be ignoring our Constitutional duty.

To that end, our fiscal year 2024 appropriations bill made some difficult, yet necessary, funding reductions for many agencies, including the FBI.

As with all appropriations bills, the FY24 CJS bill was the product of careful consideration and collaboration within Congress. We review budget submissions, call hearings, analyze program increase requests, engage with the agencies, have countless debates, and make final judgment calls.

Not everyone will be satisfied with the final appropriated levels, but ever-increasing debt levels require tough decisions.

Director Wray, we look forward to the opportunity to discuss with you today the President's Fiscal Year 2025 budget submission for the FBI.

I am looking forward to a full conversation on the major cost drivers within this budget request.

Beyond the funding implications of the budget request, I am also interested in the ongoing issues at the FBI that include, but not limited to, the erosion of public trust in the Bureau.

This includes the FBI's overly aggressive tactics, questionable investigative standards, and the overall politicization of the Bureau.

Importantly, I also want to ensure we fully explore the grave crisis at our southern border and the FBI's responsibility when it comes to combating the wide range of illegal activities happening at the border that not only impacts the nation's southern states, but the entire country as a whole.

I believe the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bill achieved the right balance and represented a step in the right direction with targeted cuts aimed at pushing the Bureau to refocus on its core mission.

Mission creep at Federal agencies beyond their required duties is a real problem, and it must be corrected.

I believe in the FBI's mission to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution of the United States. I recognize the challenging yet critical work the agency performs daily: defending the U.S. against terrorists and espionage, combating deadly fentanyl, protecting the Nation's children from becoming victims, and more.

FBI agents are our Nation's defenders, and it is not lost on Members of Congress the sacrifices they make to protect our country.

To be clear, the FBI's mission is critical to the health of our entire Nation.

Mr. Wray, once again, we appreciate you being here to answer our questions, and we appreciate your hard work on behalf of the American people.

I would now like to recognize the Ranking Member of this Subcommittee, Mr. Cartwright, for any remarks he may wish to make.