



Chairman Ander Crenshaw

*Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
House Committee on Appropriations*

FY 2016 Budget Hearing - Supreme Court

March 23, 2015

Opening Statement As Prepared

The hearing will come to order.

Good afternoon. Welcome Justices Kennedy and Breyer and thank you for being here today. You have both testified before the Committee several times and we appreciate your willingness to meet with us again. We always look forward to our hearing with the Court—it's a rare occasion to have our two branches of government come together.

An impartial and independent Judiciary is a cornerstone of our democratic system of government. The job of our third branch is of great importance—responsible for resolving disputes not only between people, but also between the Executive and Legislative Branches of government. The Courts must have the respect of our citizens and the Courts must respect the citizenry's notions of fairness, justice, and moral correctness. The significance of the Supreme Court's work is clearly disproportionate to the size of its budget. Outside of the confirmation process, today's hearing is one of the few instances when the Supreme Court and Legislative Branch interact. It is, in my opinion, an important interaction as we recognize and respect the responsibilities of each Branch.

As you know the Federal government continues to operate in an environment of scarce resources. I want to commend the Supreme Court for its continued efforts at cost containment. The Court's overall budget request totals \$88.2 million for fiscal year 2016—a nearly \$1 million decrease from fiscal year 2015. The Court has implemented several cost-containment initiatives in the areas of financial and human resources management in the last several years, which has resulted in significant savings. Most of the increases in the Court's 2016 budget request are for annual inflationary increases.

Justice Kennedy and Justice Breyer, I look forward to hearing from you about the resources necessary for the operation of our nation's highest court, as well as any thoughts you may have regarding our nation's courts as a whole. We will work to make sure that the Court has the resources it needs to fulfill your Constitutional

responsibilities. We appreciate your efforts to reduce the Court's costs during these challenging financial times.

On a separate note, I would like to recognize the Chester Bedell Inn of Court in Jacksonville, Florida founded in 1985 and Florida's first inn. The Inn has been promoting civility and boosting professionalism in the Jacksonville community for over two decades and it would be their distinguished honor to host a Supreme Court Justice in Jacksonville on Law Day at their annual meeting in 2016. Justices, I hope you will share this invitation with your colleagues and I appreciate your consideration of this request. I would be honored to welcome you to my hometown of Jacksonville, Florida.

I now recognize my friend, Ranking Member Serrano.

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