



# Chairman Hal Rogers

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## House Committee on Appropriations

### **FY 2017 Budget Hearing: Office of Management & Budget Opening Statement As Prepared February 23, 2016**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Director Donovan, we are pleased to have you with us this afternoon to discuss the President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request for the Office of Management & Budget (OMB) – as well as some reoccurring themes in the overall request.

This marks the eighth and final budget request under the Obama Administration, which you have been part of from the beginning. While we may not agree on everything, I've enjoyed working with you over the years and appreciate your service to this country.

For Fiscal year 2017, you have requested \$100.7 million for OMB, which is \$5.7 million above Fiscal Year 2016 enacted levels. These additional funds are proposed to hire more staff, raise pay and benefits, and for increases in rental and IT costs. As you know, we are in tight fiscal times so any request for additional dollars is met with extra scrutiny in this committee.

Your relatively small agency plays a critically important role in overseeing the administration of the entire executive branch, and it is important that this committee assess the strength of the President's budget request as a whole. As you are aware, in December, Congress and the President came to an agreement to set budget caps for Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017. So I am disappointed – but not surprised – that this year's budget request seeks at every turn to circumvent the terms, and the spirit, of that agreement. Year after year, this Committee has rejected the Administration's attempts to evade statutory discretionary spending caps by proposing new and unrealistic programs on the mandatory side of the ledger. And yet, here again, this budget, which you helped craft, shifts tens of billions of dollars from discretionary funding over to mandatory funding. If we were to blindly follow the President down this path, by 2020, our country would spend more money on interest payments on the national debt than we would on protecting and defending our nation. Instead of proposing real solutions to help get our nation's fiscal house in order, the President has chosen only to exacerbate the problem.

And while I have sadly come to expect the budget request to be a political document, this year, I am especially disappointed in two proposals in particular. First, despite bipartisan efforts in the past several years to increase funding for medical research – this budget opts instead to politicize the issue: proposing the \$1 billion cancer "moonshot" through mandatory funding, outside the terms of the BBA and outside the scope of this committee's jurisdiction. The same goes for the proposal related to our nation's deadly opioid epidemic. Our country loses over 100 lives a day to heroin and prescription drug overdoses. That's over 100 families every day that lose a son, a daughter, a father, due to this tragic scourge. Do not mishear me: I have enjoyed working in a

bipartisan fashion with a number of dedicated individuals in this Administration to curb the tide of abuse, to help save these lives and these families. I believe we have made some real progress, and I do not question their commitment. However, when we receive a \$1 billion proposal – in mandatory funding – to address this pressing problem, I do have to question the sincerity and seriousness of the request.

It's unquestionable that funding for NIH, and for treatment and law enforcement to fight against drug abuse, are important, admirable goals that we all share on a bipartisan basis. But here, we have to make tough choices and prioritize. And this budget request is completely devoid of that leadership. Again, I am not surprised, but I am truly disappointed.

Moving on to the global Zika virus emergency. The Committee has received the President's Supplemental Appropriations request for Zika and we are reviewing it carefully. But I am disappointed you didn't take our Committee's recommendation to use unobligated Ebola funds for the immediate response to Zika, which we offered to backfill as needed, in the FY 17 bills. I think you will eventually regret that decision. The supplemental you've requested will take time, will probably get mired in controversy, and will likely attract many requests for additional emergency funding. We gave you a quick and easy path, and you've chosen a much more difficult one that will only slow the response to Zika. I'm sorry you didn't take the good advice we offered you.

I look forward to discussing these issues with you further during the question and answer portion of the hearing. Thank you, and I yield back.

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