



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

House Committee on Appropriations

Department of the Treasury – FY 2018 Budget Hearing

June 12, 2017

Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the time and I also want to welcome Secretary Steven Mnuchin to the Appropriations Committee. We look forward to your testimony and hearing your frank and candid views on the many issues.

Today's hearing is an important part of the oversight duties of this Committee. Now that we have formally received the Administration's budget request, the Committee will undertake a thorough analysis. We will go through each and every budget line, question every witness and demand credible spending justifications and only then will we make our own determinations on the best use of tax-dollars.

We intend to put forward a complete set of appropriations bills that adequately fund important programs while working to reduce or eliminate waste and duplication.

I will work with Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Quigley to move rapidly in coming weeks and months to complete the fiscal year 2018 Appropriations bills.

Again, today's hearing is a part of the process we follow to determine the best use of taxpayer's dollars. After all, the "power of the purse" lies in this building - it is the Constitutional duty of Congress to make spending decisions on behalf of the people we represent at home.

Mr. Secretary, as my colleagues on the committee know, one of the most important jobs we have as Members of Congress, is helping our constituents with the problems they face with the agencies of the federal government.

Unfortunately, I hear regularly from my constituents in New Jersey about their difficulties in working with the Internal Revenue Service, and at times the outright lack of response they receive from the Agency. Further, I was trouble to learn the IRS projects it will answer about 64 percent of its calls from taxpayers seeking assistance this year!

It is imperative that we work to create a service first IRS that is responsive and helpful to our constituents. While I am hopeful this Congress will be able to reform our burdensome and outdated tax code to make filing taxes a simpler process, I am still troubled by the current

problems that plague this agency and am eager to hear how you plan to address the these concerns.

Further, the Treasury's office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence plays a critical role in keeping our nation safe by safeguarding the financial system against illicit use and combating rogue nations, terrorist facilitators, money launderers, drug kingpins, and other national security threats. These efforts include disrupting ISIS's finances, and enforcing sanctions against bad actors like Iran and North Korea. Given the current national security challenges we face, we must ensure that the Department continues to invest in these critical programs.

In conclusion, I welcome Secretary Mnuchin. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

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