

STATEMENT OF
MERRICK B. GARLAND
ATTORNEY GENERAL

BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES

FOR A HEARING ON
THE FISCAL YEAR 2022
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUDGET REQUEST

MAY 4, 2021
10:00 am

Good morning, Chairman Cartwright, Ranking Member Aderholt and other distinguished Members. I am honored to make my first appearance before this Subcommittee. I am here today to discuss the President's Department of Justice budget request for fiscal year 2022.

Let me start by thanking you for your support for the Department in the recently enacted FY 2021 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

In remarks to the 115,000-plus employees of the Justice Department on my first day in office, I explained how I approach this job:

“All of us are united by our commitment to the rule of law and to seeking equal justice under law. We are united by our commitment to protecting our country, as our oath says, “from all enemies foreign and domestic,” and by our commitment to enforcing our country's laws and to ensuring the civil rights and the civil liberties of our people.”

My approach reflects the Justice Department’s mission, and the Department’s mission is reflected in our \$35.2 billion FY 2022 budget request.

I’ll share a few highlights with you now.

***First*, our budget supports my commitment to protecting our national security, including addressing both international and domestic terrorism, while respecting civil liberties. It includes increases of \$45 million for the FBI for domestic terrorism investigations and \$40 million for the U.S. Attorneys to manage increasing domestic terrorism caseloads.**

***Second*, almost 65 years after its creation, the Civil Rights Division’s work remains vital to addressing unlawful discrimination and bias. Our budget seeks to increase the Department’s civil rights funding by \$33 million, providing a total of \$209 million for the Civil Rights Division, the Community Relations Service, and related civil rights work. From protecting voting rights to prosecuting hate crimes like those experienced by our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, DOJ’s civil rights work is critical to protecting the American dream.**

Another highlight of the President's request is an historic investment of \$1 billion to support the work of the Justice Department's Office of Violence Against Women (OVW). The important grant programs administered by OVW will assist our state, local, territorial and tribal partners in addressing gender-based violence. In addition, \$120 million is provided to expand our efforts to address widespread rape kit backlogs and to fund new investigative training programs for law enforcement officers and prosecutors in units dedicated to investigating gender-based violence.

Promoting public trust between communities and law enforcement is essential to making both communities and policing safer. Our budget proposes increased investment in programs that support community-oriented policing and addressing systemic inequities, including \$1.2 billion, an increase of \$304 million.

Gun deaths continue to occur at a staggering rate in our country. There is more we can do to make our communities safer. This is both a law enforcement issue and a public health issue. We are seeking to increase our resources to combat gun violence by \$232 million for FY22, supporting both DOJ federal law enforcement resources as well as grant funding for community violence intervention programs, improved background checks, and more comprehensive red-flag laws.

We are also stepping up our work on environmental justice. Communities of color, low-income communities, and tribal communities often suffer the most harm from environmental crimes and pollution. Among our efforts, we are seeking increased resources for our Environment and Natural Resources Division to help these vulnerable populations.

The antitrust laws are the charter of our economic liberty, and the Justice Department is committed to enforcing them. The FY 2022 request for increased resources for the Antitrust Division reflects that commitment.

Finally, there are nearly 1.3 million cases pending before the immigration courts. A 21-percent budget increase for the Executive Office for Immigration Review will help support 100 new immigration judges, improved technology, and other efficiency measures to reduce the backlog.

I have mentioned only a few of the Department's important programs this morning. I ask for your support for our budget as the entire Department works to ensure adherence to the rule of law, protection of public safety, and equal justice for all Americans.

Thank you.