

Statement of Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte
Committee on House Administration
Judiciary Committee Budget for the 114th Congress, First Session
Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Judiciary Committee's budget for the First Session of the 114th Congress.

In this economy all Americans are forced to tighten their belts and do more with less. I recognize that and the Judiciary Committee has done the same. However, Ranking Member Conyers and I would like to make the case before you today that the Judiciary Committee is deserving of the maximum amount of funds that you can dedicate to it.

Historically and presently, the Judiciary Committee is one of the most active Committees in the House. In the 113th Congress, for example, a total of 1,060

legislative measures introduced were referred to our Committee. The Judiciary Committee reported 47 bills and resolutions to the House and had jurisdictional involvement in the House passage of 79 bills and resolutions. Finally, a total of 27 bills in which the Judiciary Committee had a jurisdictional interest were signed into law by the President. Already in the 114th Congress, the Judiciary Committee has been hard at work to meet the demands of the heavy workload of the committee, including work on issues of great importance to the entire Congress, such as regulatory reform and combatting human trafficking. One only needs to pick up a newspaper and read the headlines to appreciate how busy the Judiciary Committee has been over the last two years and will continue to be this year as we consider such issues as immigration reform and the reform of our surveillance laws in addition to our

normal heavy workload. We also expect to continue to engage in aggressive oversight this Congress.

Among the important issues the Committee continues to consider are ensuring that federal law enforcement agencies have the necessary tools to prevent terrorist attacks; that the Constitutional rights and civil liberties of Americans are protected; that America's borders are secure and our immigration laws are enforced; and that the administration of justice is fair and efficient within both the Justice Department and federal law enforcement agencies and within our federal judiciary.

In addition, the Committee plays an important role in strengthening our economy and putting Americans back to work. We ensure robust and fair competition under our antitrust laws, encourage innovation and promote America's global competitiveness through our intellectual property laws, improve our immigration laws

to attract the best and brightest from around the world and bolster the business climate by providing relief from burdensome and excessive regulations.

These issues are critical to the safety and economic well-being of millions of Americans.

Because of this, it is vital that we retain a highly qualified staff as the cornerstone of the Committee's capacity to consider complicated and often controversial legislation and policy issues that fall within its jurisdiction.

To attract and retain quality staff, the Committee must be able to offer compensation that is at least somewhat competitive with the private sector.

This is particularly challenging when a disproportionate number of committee staff are attorneys with substantial experience and public policy expertise who could command higher salaries from the private sector.

In addition to the personnel that are necessary to manage the demanding workload of the Judiciary Committee, there are operating funds that will be critical in enabling the Committee to properly investigate certain policy issues under its jurisdiction. For example, I believe that it is an important function of the Committee to conduct site visits and field hearings on certain complex issues, such as immigration reform and our ongoing review of copyright laws, where a full evaluation of the issues is not possible without seeing firsthand how the current programs operate and better understanding the successes and deficiencies of the current law.

In addition, the Committee has requested funds in anticipation of a potential judicial impeachment. We are closely monitoring the recent arrest and ongoing prosecution of Middle District of Alabama Judge Mark Fuller. The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals has

appointed a Special Committee to investigate the allegations against Judge Fuller and the Special Committee will then file a report with the Judicial Council of the Circuit. The Constitution provides the House of Representatives with the sole power of impeachment which is initiated and overseen by the Judiciary Committee. Due to the potential that a recommendation for impeachment may come to the Judiciary Committee from the Judicial Conference following this investigation, we have requested funds for the purpose of establishing an impeachment task force, hiring counsel, conducting an investigation and impeachment proceedings. The funds we've requested for this purpose are consistent with the funds that were required to conduct similar judicial impeachment proceedings in the 111th Congress. Should an impeachment be unnecessary, we would return these funds.

While I have and will continue to do what is necessary to ensure that the Judiciary Committee is even more productive while operating with less, I respectfully request that when allocating funds to committees, you take into account the legislative burden of the Judiciary Committee and the likelihood that it will require more resources when compared with other committees.

I thank you for your time and consideration and yield back the balance of my time.

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