

**Chairman Richard Shelby Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies**

**Markup of the Fiscal Year 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill**

April 19, 2016

(As prepared for delivery)

Welcome to today's Subcommittee mark-up of the Fiscal Year 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies bill. I want to begin by thanking Senator Mikulski for her partnership on this bill. We have worked together on many issues throughout the years, and I believe that this mark reflects our strong bipartisan relationship.

The recommendation before us is consistent with the subcommittee's allocation of \$56.3 billion in discretionary spending. This level is \$564 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted amount, and \$1.6 billion above the budget request. However, when taking out scorekeeping adjustments and instead comparing true spending, this bill is actually \$183 million below the President's request.

The Committee has made difficult but responsible decisions to craft a bill that stays within the two year budget agreement from last fall. Within these budgetary boundaries, I believe the Committee has achieved a careful balance between the competing priorities of law enforcement, national security, economic development, scientific research, and space exploration.

The bill funds the Department of Commerce at \$9.3 billion, which keeps our next generation of weather satellites on schedule, and ensures the National Weather Service can continue to provide timely warnings for severe weather.

NOAA's inability to modernize the way it manages fisheries has severely diminished the public's confidence in NOAA's ability to do its job. To address these shortcomings, the bill continues to direct NOAA to count fish where fish live, and supports independent studies comparing the status of fish stocks with NOAA's internal data.

This Subcommittee has continued to provide strong funding for NOAA to expand its adoption of electronic monitoring and reporting in order to increase coverage of our Nation's fisheries and reduce costs for our commercial fishermen.

The Red Snapper fishery is vital to fishermen and businesses across Alabama, and I am pleased that this bill continues several provisions that will help respond to the challenges facing anyone that wants to fish for Gulf Red Snapper.

This Committee remains supportive of science and innovation by maintaining healthy funding for the National Science Foundation, while preserving a balanced space program within NASA.

The budget request that NASA presented to Congress included a disingenuous combination of discretionary spending and an unprecedented amount of funding disguised as mandatory spending.

The truth is that NASA's request only totaled \$18.2 billion, a cut of \$1 billion from what this Subcommittee provided last fiscal year. These cuts, if enacted, would erode on-going science missions, jeopardize core operations, and delay exploration launches.

Instead, this bill funds NASA at \$19.3 billion, preserving the funding Congress provided in fiscal year 2016. This level makes it possible for the agency to continue supporting on-going science and exploration missions, especially the Space Launch System and the Orion capsule development, which are both at critical stages of development.

The bill maintains strong funding for the Department of Justice at \$29.2 billion, which includes increases for all federal law enforcement operations to support the men and women on the front lines of preserving public safety. The bill maintains existing gun laws and firearm-related funding, and does not adopt new Presidential executive actions.

The mark includes essential cybersecurity funding throughout the Department in order to protect our Nation, and to track down, arrest, and prosecute child predators to keep our communities safe.

Overall funding for victims and victim-related grant programs – which are widely supported by many members of the Committee – remain at or above the fiscal year 2016 levels.

I believe that the Subcommittee mark strikes a balance between the competing priorities of law enforcement, terrorism prevention, research, scientific advancement and U.S. competitiveness.

We have a transparent product that accommodates the Senate's priorities and addresses the needs of our Nation. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to support moving this bill out of the subcommittee today, and to vote for the CJS bill at the full committee mark-up on Thursday.

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