

**Chairman Jerry Moran Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies**

Hearing to Review the FY2020 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of Justice

April 10, 2019

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning, I call this hearing to order. Attorney General Barr, welcome to the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee hearing to examine the Department of Justice's Fiscal Year 2020 budget request. I am also pleased to welcome Mr. Lee Loftus, the Chief Financial officer of the Department.

I'd like to begin by thanking the 112,000 men and women that work for the Department of Justice. The work they do is vital to protecting Americans and upholding the rule of law.

I'd especially like to thank the men and women of the Department of Justice for persevering during the recent government shutdown. I am sorry for the stress I know your employees faced, and it is my hope that we are able to avoid future shutdowns by enacting timely appropriations bills.

In order to accomplish this, and write the FY20 CJS appropriations bill, this Committee needs to understand the Department's resource needs.

The President's FY20 budget request proposes over \$30 billion for the Department of Justice. Because you indicated yesterday you will report to Congress on the Mueller investigation next week, it is my hope that the Budget Request will be the main focus of our hearing today.

But I would ask that in our hearing today, you clarify one issue relating to the Mueller Report from your testimony yesterday.

When we met before your confirmation I told you I'd like to see the Mueller Report released to the public as expeditiously as possible, and to the fullest extent possible as allowed by law.

Will you, as I hope, release a redacted version of the actual report Special Council Mueller submitted to you, or did you intend to indicate you will only provide a report of your own on the findings derived from the Mueller Report?

Now, in regard to the President's FY20 Budget Request. The Department's FY20 request is not based off of the Department's FY19 appropriation, and therefore does not contemplate the increases provided, or the government-wide 1.9 percent pay increase included for Federal Employees.

Because the baseline of the FY20 Request is below the Department's current appropriation, I encourage you to take the time today to discuss any needs that may not be adequately represented in the President's budget proposal.

In particular, I hope you will discuss the Department's resource needs as they relate to the First Step Act. As an original cosponsor of this legislation, I am concerned to learn that the FY20 Request only includes \$14 million in additional funds for the implementation of this important piece of legislation. This figure is short of the \$75 million authorized.

I do note to see several program increases for the Department of Justice included in the Administration's request this year. These increases reflect the Administration's priorities which include strengthening our national security, combating violent crime, cybercrime, drug trafficking and the opioid epidemic.

The Request also includes enhancements for immigration enforcement, another Administration priority, under the Executive Office of Immigration Review, or EOIR, and the Environment and Natural Resources Division. The FY20 request seeks \$670 million for immigration-related enforcement activities and border security efforts, including 100 additional Immigration Judge teams and 10 new positions in the Environment and Natural Resources Division's Land Acquisition Section. I was disappointed, however, to discover that the Request does not include technology enhancements or improvements for EOIR.

In FY19, Congress provided \$25 million for technology improvements to transform EOIR's paper system to an electronic case management system or ECAS. ECAS, though incredibly important, was only forward looking. EOIR did not plan to include the paper files associated with the 861,513 case backlog into ECAS. To encourage this practice, our FY19 CJS Report Language directed EOIR to develop a plan for folding existing cases into ECAS.

Today, I hope to learn more about both the status of implementing ECAS as well as the Department's plan to incorporate the backlog into this system, and if there are additional needs associated with the full implementation of ECAS, please discuss those today.

The Department's FY20 Request reflects its broad and multifaceted mission of protecting and defending the laws of the United States. Members of the DOJ Law Enforcement Community, including the FBI, DEA, ATF, U.S. Marshals, and the Bureau of Prisons, put their lives on the line every day to keep our Country and Communities safe.

The Department's mission, and especially its law enforcement focus, is central to America's safety and stability. It imperative that Congress ensures the Department is adequately equipped to affect its mission, and I look forward to working with you on that endeavor.

I also look forward to learning more on the Department's request for resources dedicated to the Law Enforcement Mental Wellness Initiative, which includes peer mentoring, mental health checks and suicide prevention.

Several indicators show that for the third straight year, police suicides outnumbered line of duty deaths. Much like our veterans and active duty service members, law enforcement officers need access to comprehensive programs that address mental wellness – something many jurisdictions struggle to provide resources for.

Before I turn to Senator Shaheen, I want to thank you, Attorney General Barr, for your attention and acknowledgement of the Committee's Questions for the Record from our FY19 Budget Hearing. As you know, the Department's responses to these questions were 8 months late, making it impossible for this Committee to consider the Department's responses as we crafted our FY19 CJS bill.

I would like to note that after I brought this to your attention, we received DOJ's responses in short order. It is my hope that under your leadership the Department's will continue to respond expeditiously to this year's Questions for the Record and other Committee inquiries.

Thank you for your important testimony today. I now turn to our Ranking Member, Senator Shaheen, for her opening statement.

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