

**Chairman Thad Cochran Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense**

**Consideration of FY2017 302(b) Subcommittee Allocations  
Markup of the FY2017 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill and the  
FY2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill**

**April 14, 2016**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

The Committee meets today to begin consideration of the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bills. We will have a first vote on the 302(b) spending allocations for subcommittees. Then we will proceed to a vote to report the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill and the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill.

We will then return to the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill to consider amendments, and will conclude today's session by considering amendments to the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill.

Our first order of business is adoption of the subcommittee 302(b) allocations. The proposed allocations are on the table before each Committee member.

These allocations are consistent with the amounts approved in the 2015 Balanced Budget Act. They total \$1.07 trillion in base funding and \$74 billion in funding for Overseas Contingency Operations.

The total amount allocated is virtually the same as the fiscal year 2016 spending level. There is no "new money" to be allocated.

The allocations attempt to account for technical changes that affect scoring across subcommittees.

Where one-time expenditures from last year could be re-allocated to support new priorities, we have done so.

The allocations also attempt to address the budgets for agencies such as NASA and the National Institutes of Health where the President has submitted and proposed substantial reductions.

In developing these allocations, we have consulted with each of the subcommittees, and with the Vice Chair of the Committee. It is a fair allocation that will enable us to write 12 responsible appropriations bills for consideration by the Senate.

I urge the Committee to adopt the proposed allocations.

At this time I will turn to my very capable partner and Vice Chairwoman, Senator Mikulski, for any remarks that she wishes to make before proceeding to the adoption of the allocations.

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