



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Rob Blumenthal (202) 224-1010 / Eve Goldsher (202) 224-3751

CHAIRWOMAN MIKULSKI TO FOCUS ON FBI'S RESPONSE TO BOSTON MARATHON BOMBINGS AND IMPACT OF SEQUESTER ON AGENCY'S MISSION

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, focused on the FBI's response to the Boston Marathon bombings at today's subcommittee hearing on the FBI's fiscal year 2014 budget request. The Chairwoman also discussed how sequestration could impact the ability of the FBI to protect the nation from future attacks. The following are Chairwoman Mikulski's remarks, as prepared for delivery:

"Good morning and welcome. Today, the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Subcommittee will hear from FBI Director Robert Mueller about the FBI's budget and priorities for fiscal year 2014.

"We welcome Director Mueller to his last scheduled hearing before the CJS Subcommittee. When he leaves office, he will be longest serving FBI director since J. Edgar Hoover, and the only director to serve out a full ten year term plus an additional two years. I thank you for your service to our nation.

"Director Mueller is one of the nighthawks, always ready for that 3 A.M. phone call. His leadership has transformed the FBI from a traditional domestic law enforcement agency into a global anti-terrorism and anti-crime police force, keeping us safe here at home from threats. I note that two national tragedies bookend Director Mueller's service. He came into this job just a week before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and he will leave just after the Boston bombings.

"Today, all eyes are on Boston. We just sustained the first terrorist attack on the U.S. since 9/11, with the Boston Marathon bombings. It was an attack on the Nation that has impacted all of us – including my home state. Four Marylanders were injured in the attack.

"Erika Brannock is a 29 year-old teacher at Trinity Episcopal Children's Center in Towson. Erika grew up in Ellicott City and Bowie, and she sustained serious injuries to both legs and feet. Also injured was Ericka's mother Carol Downing, who is from Monkton, Maryland. Carol ran in the marathon that day, and was taken to Brigham and Women's hospital after the bombing.

“Nicole Gross is a 31-year-old personal trainer who suffered two broken legs in the bombing. She was a star swimmer at Mount Hebron High School in Ellicott City, Maryland, and now lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. And Nicole’s husband, Michael Gross, who suffered lacerations and burns in the bombing.

“When they were attacked and the Nation was attacked the American people responded. Thank you to the first responders who ran toward danger – the police, fire fighters, paramedics, nurses, and doctors. Working together, they saved lives and limbs.

“After 9/11, we funded training and preparedness, so first responders knew and practiced where to go, what to do, and how to help. Boston was ready to respond because they planned for the worst and they drilled their response. There were well coordinated law enforcement resources – the police and the FBI – through the Joint Terrorism Task Forces.

“After 9/11, FBI was charged with a new national security mission, to disrupt terrorist plots before they happen by identifying, tracking and defeating terrorist cells and dismantling weapons of mass destruction on U.S. soil. Today, counterterrorism and counterintelligence activities make up over 40percent of the FBI’s budget.

“Boston put the focus on the FBI’s counterterrorism investigations. There were immediate successes in analyzing the evidence, pouring through the video, and identifying and catching the Tsarnaev brothers.

“But we also have questions about the process, things we need to know from the FBI. For instance, there appear to have been investigatory gaps. Tamerlan Tsarnaev was on the radar screen, but he slipped through the cracks. Is our system to share information on terrorist threats broken? Can it identify a lone wolf terrorist? We know that the FBI questioned Tamerlan Tsarnaev, but couldn’t open a case. Does the FBI have the tools it needs to not only identify threats, but also to follow up on those threats? Is this budget request is enough to tackle all of the counterterrorism responsibilities and keep the FBI ahead of the bad guys?

“Today, all eyes are on Boston and all eyes are on the FBI. Since the Boston bombings, ricin-laced letters have been sent to the President, Sen. Wicker, and a Mississippi judge. A fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, killed 15 and injured 200. Three women kidnapped in Cleveland, Ohio, escaped from a decade of captivity. A Minnesota pipe bomb attack was foiled in the planning stages. A \$45 million ATM heist was exposed and eight criminals indicted. Top Ten Fugitive child pornographer Eric Toth, was captured in Nicaragua. And gunmen opened fire on a New Orleans Mother’s Day parade.

“In each case, the FBI was on the scene taking the lead or supporting other local, state, and federal partners. We expect a lot of the FBI. We count on the FBI to keep 316 million Americans safe from terrorism and violent crime, to dismantle organized crime and drug cartels, to combat gang violence and illegal drug and gun smuggling, and to catch child sexual predators and cyber criminals.

“But what should the FBI expect of us, the Congress? Rather than providing the resources to face varied and growing threats, Congress has subjected the FBI to shutdown and showdown politics, uncertain funding, and now the sequester. Because of sequester, the FBI is operating at \$543 million below the fiscal year 2013 enacted level, and unless we end sequester, the FBI will be cut by at least \$700 million in fiscal year 2014.

“We know what the FBI expects of us. They expect stable and consistent funding, so that the FBI has the resources needed to keep Americans safe. Every day, we expect the FBI to keep America safe from terrorists and criminals. The FBI expects the Congress to provide them with the resources it needs, on time and under the regular order, without shutdowns or showdowns. And that is what I intend to do as Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee.

“Once again, I thank the people of the FBI and Director Mueller for his leadership. For the information of Senators, we’ll begin our examination of the FBI’s \$8.4 billion 2014 budget request with this open hearing, and then we will recess at 11:00 a.m. and move the hearing into a classified session, where we can talk more fully about Boston and other key national security threats like cybersecurity.”

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