



COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS VICE CHAIRWOMAN BARBARA A. MIKULSKI

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[Audio \(broadcast quality\) of Senator Mikulski's opening statement and Q&A](#)

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MIKULSKI OPENING STATEMENT AT CJS SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FY16 BUDGET

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, **U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)**, Vice Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Ranking Member of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) Subcommittee, attended a CJS hearing to review the Department of Commerce fiscal year 2016 budget request.

The following are Vice Chairwoman Mikulski's remarks, as prepared for delivery:

“I'm glad to be here with my Subcommittee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) at our first CJS hearing of the year. We have a great first witness in Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker.

“Secretary Pritzker has the department open for business and focusing on jobs and the economy. She has done a great job promoting U.S. businesses and products overseas, bringing investments to America and improving American companies by solving key manufacturing challenges and helping them use available government data. I look forward to hearing more about her efforts at the Department of Commerce.

“Today, we are here to examine the Department of Commerce's \$9.8 billion budget request, which is \$1.3 billion more than fiscal year 2015. The large increase for the department is needed for the Census, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) satellites and ships and for innovation in manufacturing.

“Those needed increases come in the context of the President's full fiscal year 2016 budget request, which is \$74 billion above the Budget Control Act caps for the year. I hope we can work together to raise the caps by replicating the spirit of the Murray-Ryan agreement. Simply put, we need more resources to meet critical human needs while giving the middle class a much deserved raise.

“The Department of Commerce is a major economic engine for America, and the Secretary of Commerce is the spokesperson for American business. The Secretary of Commerce is also the

chief manager in charge of addressing major economic challenges and fixing persistent problems that need strong oversight.

“I know the President’s budget request for the department totals \$9.8 billion, but I also want to know *how* these funds create and protect American jobs, protect American citizens and protect American taxpayer dollars. Will they be used to help promote economic growth and manufacturing? Increase exports? Enable research and development that creates new businesses? Enforce our trade laws? Safeguard our intellectual property? Cyber-protect our businesses and data? And forecast and warn people about severe weather?”

“I am jobs obsessed – obsessed with finding ways to create good American jobs. That’s why I was pleased to include the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act in the fiscal year 2015 Omnibus. The legislation enables manufacturers to come together to solve tough problems that no single company could tackle on its own by matching a little government money with private funds.

“It’s already working in the field of 3D printing. The America Makes center in Youngstown, Ohio, is 3D printing with metals 10 times faster than before. I’m glad that this budget expands the manufacturing hubs model with funding for two additional institutes and a proposal for another \$1.9 billion in mandatory funding to complete the network of 45 institutes. I look forward to hearing more about these promising manufacturing hubs.

“Maryland is also a hub for research and development. I’m thrilled that the President’s Commerce budget supports thousands of Maryland researchers and scientists, including four Nobel Prize winners and other researchers at National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), small businesses working on cybersecurity, fishery and weather scientists at NOAA, satellite builders at Lockheed Martin and statisticians at the Census Bureau.

“The Department of Commerce’s job is to make sure that businesses have the tools and resources they need to succeed. The department helps create jobs through Economic Development Administration (EDA) investments in local infrastructure. Every \$1 in EDA grants leverages \$10 in local and private funding.

“Trade and export efforts are supported through the International Trade Administration’s Commercial Service, which helps American manufacturers get products to international customers. Exporting American goods and services supports 11.3 million jobs in the United States.

“The Department of Commerce not only helps create jobs, but also works to protect those jobs. The International Trade Administration enforces our trade laws and monitors compliance with trade agreements, protecting entire American industries and bringing companies and jobs back home to the U.S.

“The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) protects ideas and inventions, helping America’s innovation economy thrive. Inventors create jobs through innovation and entrepreneurship, and new products turn into new companies. The patent office works to protect

American companies from idea theft by making sure no one can steal your products, and protects American jobs by fighting counterfeit goods overseas.

“When it comes to protecting people, every member of this Subcommittee is pro-weather and pro-science. America has experienced several severe weather events in recent years, and scientists suggest that freaky weather will continue. This is why NOAA’s satellites need to be fit for duty. We owe it to our communities, because one-third of our GDP is directly affected by the weather. Coastal states, like my home state of Maryland, depend on accurate hurricane forecasts and interior states depend on timely tornado warnings.

“We also need to protect our people from the growing threat of cybercrimes. NIST is on the front lines helping companies protect themselves from cyberattacks, consumers protect their identities and the government protect dot-gov.

“The Department of Commerce must be committed to protecting taxpayer dollars. The Inspector General identified persistent management problems within the department. It’s important to control costs for the 2020 Census. This year’s budget request is \$410 million more than the \$1.1 billion provided in fiscal year 2015. I want to know what is being done to make 2020 cheaper than the 2010 Census and to prevent techno-boondoggles, which caused 2010 Census costs to skyrocket in the 11th hour.

“Another key area for oversight is satellites, where a predicted gap in polar satellite data may impact our ability to forecast the weather. While the budget includes increases to start new satellites, we’re still worried about whether we’ll finish our existing satellites on-time and on-budget.

“Also, there have been management problems at USPTO, and they have gone more than two years without a Director. Last year, three Office of Inspector General reports were produced in just one month. I look forward to hearing more about those reports and what has been done to address those concerns.

“I want to thank all the men and women of the Department of Commerce, from trade experts to statisticians, to patent and trademark examiners, to scientists and engineers, to ocean surveyors and weather forecasters. They work hard every day promoting American businesses, protecting American ideas and resources, keeping our economy moving forward and creating jobs.

“And thank you, Secretary Pritzker, for your leadership and continued oversight of the Department of Commerce. We look forward to hearing your testimony.”

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