

U.S. Senator John Boozman, Chairman
Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Hearing Statement
The Federal Judiciary Budget Request for FY 16

Good morning. The subcommittee will come to order.

As we begin this important hearing to review the budget request of the Federal Judiciary, we welcome our witnesses: Judge Julia Gibbons, chair of the Budget Committee of the Judicial Conference of the U.S. and James Duff, Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Thank you for being here. We look forward to your testimony.

We all recognize the importance of a fair and independent Judiciary. That independence comes with great responsibility and a commitment to the preservation of our rights. Your work helps to ensure we have a society governed by the rule of law, as envisioned by the framers of our Constitution.

As members of the Appropriations Committee, it is our duty to ensure the hard-earned tax dollars from millions of Americans are spent appropriately. We appreciate that the Judiciary takes its responsibility to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money seriously.

Cost containment is not new to the Judiciary. Recognizing the likelihood of future tight budgets and projected increases in fixed costs, the Judicial Conference unanimously endorsed a comprehensive cost-containment strategy that called for examining more than 50 court operations for reducing expenses. Since then, the Judiciary has focused on three areas that have the greatest potential for significant long-term savings: rent, personnel expenses, and information technology. During the past ten years, the judiciary's cost-containment efforts have resulted in a cost avoidance of nearly \$1.5 billion relative to projected requirements.

It is unfortunate that the President's budget does not reflect that same commitment to reducing the cost of government. In his proposal for fiscal year 2016, the President wants to create \$2.1 trillion in new taxes, increase spending by 65% and add \$8.5 trillion to the debt over the next ten years. While hardworking Arkansans have been forced to cut their spending significantly in the last few years, the President has been unwilling to do the same in Washington.

Under the Budget Control Act, the discretionary spending caps for fiscal year 2016 limit non-defense spending to \$493 billion. This represents an increase of only \$1.1 billion over the 2015 level for all non-defense departments and agencies.

The Judiciary is requesting an increase of 3.9 percent for fiscal year 2016. While we recognize the strides you have made to ensure that you spend your resources effectively and efficiently, it is important to note that all requests for funding must be considered in the broader context of the fiscal constraints facing the federal government.

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The American people want a government that works for them, not against them. They want us to curb Washington's wasteful spending habits; make the government more efficient effective and accountable, and pursue policies that create economic opportunities for everyone.

These are the priorities of the American people. They will be reflected in the critical oversight we conduct as we consider the fiscal year 2016 budget requests for all of the agencies within our jurisdiction.

Judge Gibbons and Director Duff I look forward to hearing from you this morning, but before that, I will first ask Senator Coons to proceed with his opening statement.