

**Chairman Richard Shelby Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies**

**Hearing to review to Review the Department of Justice's Role in Implementing
President Obama's Executive Actions Related to Gun Control**

January 20, 2016

(As prepared for delivery)

Madam Attorney General, thank you for joining us today to discuss the President's recent executive actions.

As Chairman of this Subcommittee, I believe that it is my duty to the American people to properly oversee the Department of Justice and ensure that any funding provided by this Subcommittee is used as Congress intended – and within the bounds of the Constitution.

It is clear to me that the American people are fearful that President Obama is eager to strip them of their Second Amendment rights.

Let me be clear: The Second Amendment is not a suggestion. It is an individual right protected in the Bill of Rights that has been recognized by the Supreme Court.

With that in mind, I am very concerned with the recent executive actions by this President for two main reasons.

First, President Obama is far too willing to end run Congress through executive action.

The President has said that he believes that when Congress doesn't act the way he wants us to, then he must act alone. Our Constitution won't allow for this kind of unilateral action, and the American people will not stand for it.

Whether through executive amnesty to thousands of illegal immigrants or increased gun control measures, the President has unwisely acted alone.

However, what the President fails to remember is that we have a system of checks and balances – a system that was created to ensure that power was not concentrated in a single branch of the federal government.

The President has ignored the Founders' system and has accelerated the use of executive fiat to an alarming new level.

Secondly, none of the executive actions that President Obama has proposed would have prevented the recent tragic events in our nation.

Whether it is a terrorist attack or a single gun crime, I firmly believe that those responsible should be held accountable and that we must work to prevent it from happening again.

However, as we have seen time and again, this President uses tragic events to push his political agenda.

I believe that he is more interested in grandstanding and engaging in anti-gun theatrics than actually doing the work necessary to protect this country.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks in San Bernardino, President Obama did not address our law enforcement's failures, which allowed those terrorists to live among us.

He also did not look at making changes to our immigration system after it clearly failed us by allowing an individual who should have been known to be a violent extremist to enter our country.

Instead, the President's immediate response was to propose additional gun control measures.

Criminals and terrorists are not buying their guns from gun shows, gun stores, or collectors because criminals – by definition – do not follow the law.

Madam Attorney General, we live in a dangerous world and the American people are looking to us to do everything in our power to keep them safe.

The next time a terrorist attack occurs in this nation, innocent law-abiding Americans must have the ability to protect themselves and their loved ones from harm if they so choose.

It is our responsibility to preserve their rights, not limit them.

We all know that this President has made no secret of his desire to restrict the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding American citizens.

The American people deserve and expect more from their President. They also expect more from their members of Congress, and I intend to live up to their expectations.

Madam Attorney General, the Department is on notice. This Subcommittee will have no part in undermining the Constitution and the rights it protects.”

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