



COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS VICE CHAIRWOMAN BARBARA A. MIKULSKI

For Immediate Release

Date: Thursday, March 12, 2015

Contact: Mara Stark-Alcalá (202) 224-2667

MIKULSKI OPENING STATEMENT FOR CJS HEARING ON DOJ LAW ENFORCEMENT BUDGET REQUEST

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 fiscal year 2016 budget request for the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Marshals Service, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

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

“I’m happy to be here with Chairman Shelby at our first Justice Department hearing of the year. We are starting with the fiscal year 2016 budgets for the FBI, DEA, ATF and Marshals Service. I hope that the Senate will confirm Loretta Lynch as the new Attorney General soon, so we can have her testify here in the coming weeks. I look forward to hearing all of your testimony and more about ongoing efforts at each of your agencies.

“I may not be running for reelection, but I will still be here in the Senate fighting for the next two years. I will continue fighting for Maryland and federal employees across the nation, including the agents and deputy marshals who are working hard to protect us every day. I am just turning the page, not writing my last chapter.

“Promises made must be promises kept. We must cut through the bureaucracy and red tape to get things done and make sure there is a high standard of accountability and conduct at the Justice Department.

“Before getting to budget issues, I want to raise the issue of heroin use, addiction and trafficking, and how all of your agencies are responding to the resurgence of it in our communities. Heroin is relatively inexpensive at \$10 a hit, readily available and highly addictive. We need to take action now. We can’t just enforce our way out of this crisis.

“That is why I asked the Justice Department to create a task force, led by the DEA, of law enforcement, medical and health care professionals, to come up with real solutions and a comprehensive federal response that can also serve as a toolkit for communities. I look forward to hearing about the group’s progress as well as what your agents are seeing in the field, and what task forces you are a part of in Maryland.

“Another critical issue I want to cover is human trafficking. As dean of the Senate women, I convened a meeting to discuss what we could do as a group to fight the horrible practices of human and sex trafficking. A couple of weeks ago, on February 24, I spoke at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing about the problems of human trafficking and what we could do to address it.

“There are many authorizing bills out there to strengthen penalties and authorize new programs. But as Chair of the CJS Appropriations Subcommittee last year, I made sure anti-trafficking programs were well-funded, including grant programs that help victims get counseling and shelter. Funding also went to federal law enforcement and prosecutors – including \$47 million to the FBI – for stepping up investigations and bringing traffickers to justice.

“Even with the increases to your agencies’ fiscal year 2016 budgets, I am concerned that you won’t be able to keep pace with sex traffickers and Adam Walsh Act violators. Criminals who sell women and children also traffic drugs, guns and other weapons. I look forward to hearing about how your agencies are tackling this horrific crime.

“We are here today to examine the budget requests of law enforcement agencies in the Department of Justice: the FBI, DEA, ATF and Marshals Service. These law enforcement agencies’ budget requests total \$14.9 billion and make up almost half of the Justice Department’s total budget. The modest increase of \$98 million from fiscal year 2015 will allow the agencies to keep up with hiring and cost of living adjustments for agents, deputy marshals, intelligence analysts and computer experts.

“Those needed increases also come in the context of the President’s complete 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 for both defense and domestic programs by replicating the spirit of the Murray-Ryan agreement and provide the resources to protect communities, while giving the middle class a much deserved raise.

“We can’t have strong, vibrant communities unless they are safe. Our state and local police need the federal law enforcement agencies to be strong, because they are the backbone of our criminal justice system. We count on these Justice Department agencies to keep Americans safe by investigating terrorist plots and violent criminal acts; stopping drug cartels and organized crime enterprises; combatting gangs, gun smuggling and human trafficking; and catching sexual predators and cyber criminals.

“Last year, our Justice Department law enforcement agencies were outstanding at taking criminals off our streets. In 2014 alone, deputy marshals arrested over 11,600 fugitive sex offenders, the DEA put over 3,800 drug traffickers out of business, the FBI conducted over 75,000 investigations leading to over 28,000 arrests and the ATF referred almost 2,000 individuals for prosecution of firearms trafficking.

“Before I close up my opening remarks, I want to commend Director Comey for his comments on the subject of law enforcement and race at Georgetown last month. There is a reason his speech was well-received. Among other key issues, he discussed the racial biases we all have

and the need for more police officer training. I want to continue this open, honest dialogue with Director Comey and I look forward to hearing his ideas on how this Committee can shape reform and bring positive change to law enforcement practices.

“Federal law enforcement agencies expect Congress to provide the resources they need on time, under regular order and without shutdowns or showdowns. As Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I intend to continue to push for just that.

“I also want to thank all of the hardworking FBI, DEA and ATF agents and deputy marshals, as well as the intelligence analysts and other professional staff members who support them, for their dedication and determination. On our country’s worst days you leap into action, collecting and analyzing evidence, bringing terrorists and criminals to justice and finding those who prey on our children. You are the unsung heroes keeping our country and communities safe.”

###