

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Hearing: U.S. Department of Justice
Attorney General Eric Holder
April 18, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Attorney General Holder, thank you for being with us today to discuss the Fiscal Year 2014 budget request for the Department of Justice. Surely the demands on your schedule have increased dramatically since the tragic events in Boston earlier this week. Our thoughts and prayers remain with the victims of this heinous act, with their families and with the courageous first responders and law enforcement officials who have taken swift action – many of them under your charge.

Unfortunately, this senseless tragedy serves as an important reminder that we must remain ever vigilant against both foreign and domestic threats to our homeland and our citizens. As Members of this Appropriations Committee, we have an important responsibility to ensure that where our federal law enforcement, intelligence officers and military men and women are concerned, we are prioritizing the mission and tying funding to results.

The FY14 request for the Department of Justice of \$28.1 billion constitutes a 3.9% increase over FY13 enacted levels. However, aside from some increases for new gun control efforts, funding for most law enforcement accounts remain flat. Understanding the difficult budgetary constraints under which DOJ is operating - particularly the rapidly escalating costs within our federal prison system - I look forward to hearing from you about the impacts of this flat funding level to the operational capabilities of our law enforcement officials on the front lines.

In addition, I am concerned by a number of budgeting gimmicks and misplaced priorities which undermine the integrity of this request. Once again, the Bureau of Prisons budget is relying on the enactment of authorizing legislation outside the jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee to achieve \$41 million in savings – despite the fact that this same request was rejected in the past two fiscal years. You have also continued to rely on rescissions to finance your discretionary budget, including some \$392 million from core law enforcement accounts. The Committee expressed grave concern with this tactic last year, and I must once again question the wisdom of employing budget gimmicks with the funding that supports our US Marshals, and FBI, DEA and ATF agents putting themselves in harm's way on a daily basis. And finally, I am dismayed to see a request in the President's budget to remove the prohibition on transferring GITMO detainees to US soil. This prohibition was supported in a bipartisan basis in the FY13 bill. The recent uptick in violence at Guantanamo should give us cause for concern, and even *more* reason to keep these dangerous individuals at arm's length.

All of that said, on a more personal note, I do wish to thank you for your continued interest in the prescription drug abuse epidemic which began in my rural congressional district over a decade ago, but which has now emerged as our Nation's fastest growing drug threat. Your department –

and you personally – have been engaged and responsive. In particular, I thank you for allowing a number of representatives from DOJ to participate in the National Rx Drug Abuse Summit in Orlando, Florida, where earlier this month nearly 1,000 individuals from around the country gathered to discuss holistic solutions for prescription drug abuse. I value our partnership and feel that together, we are making some significant progress in our shared mission to beat back on this scourge.

Attorney General Holder, while I regret I must leave this hearing earlier than anticipated, I look forward to any updates you're able to provide about the situation in Boston, as well as your testimony on the budget. Thank you.

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