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NEWS: Senate Committee Advances FY2019 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill

1 message

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RICHARD SHELBY OF ALABAMA, CHAIRMAN

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COMMITTEE ADVANCES FY2019 COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Measure Prioritizes Federal Law Enforcement, Economic Development, Space, & Scientific Research

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Committee on Appropriations today **approved** the FY2019 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act with funding for programs that support law enforcement, economic prosperity, scientific research, space exploration, and other national priorities.

The \$62.995 billion measure, which is \$3.4 billion above the FY2018 enacted level, funds the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Justice, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies. The committee-passed bill invests in federal law enforcement agencies, state and local law enforcement grants, space exploration, basic science research, economic development programs, trade enforcement, ocean observations, and weather forecasting. It was approved 30-1.

“This legislation invests in significant priorities that impact the entire nation, such as law enforcement, space explorations, scientific research, and economic development agencies,” **said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.)**. “Senators Moran and Shaheen have worked together to strike a fair and proper funding balance, and I commend their good work on this bipartisan measure.”

“This bipartisan bill achieves an appropriate balance between fiscal responsibility and investing in our future by supporting law enforcement, national security interests, economic development and scientific innovation,” **said U.S. Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)**, chairman of the Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee. “Sen. Shaheen and I have worked in an open and transparent manner to address the many important priorities within our jurisdiction, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill when it is considered by the Senate.”

Bill Highlights:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

The bill funds the U.S. Department of Commerce at \$11.57 billion, an increase of \$435 million above the FY2018 enacted level. The Committee continues its strong support for economic development, strengthening trade enforcement, improving fisheries management, protecting intellectual property rights, and advancing severe weather forecasting.

International Trade Administration (ITA) – \$499 million for ITA, including a \$4 million increase above the FY2018 enacted level, to allow ITA’s Office of Enforcement and Compliance to initiate investigations of foreign actors suspected of violating trade laws to the detriment of American businesses.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) – \$305.5 million for EDA, including \$117 million for its Public Works program, which supports brick-and-mortar projects in distressed communities across the nation. Funding for EDA also includes \$25 million for the Regional Innovation Program, an increase of \$4 million above the FY2018 enacted amount, to promote and strengthen regional innovation to spur job creation through private-public partnerships.

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) – \$3.37 billion for USPTO to protect the ideas and inventions of our nation’s entrepreneurs in an effort to advance and innovate all sectors of the economy.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) – \$1.04 billion for NIST, \$161 million below the FY2018 enacted level, to strengthen the U.S. cybersecurity posture through cutting-edge research and development, expand opportunities in the areas of advanced manufacturing, and continue promotion of the highest-quality standards to maintain fairness in the global marketplace. Funding for NIST includes \$140 million for the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, which is a private-public partnership present in all 50 states dedicated to serving small- and medium-sized manufacturers.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – \$5.48 billion for NOAA, a \$426 million decrease below the FY2018 enacted level, to continue core NOAA operations including: ocean monitoring; fisheries management; coastal grants to states; aquaculture research; weather satellites; and severe weather forecasting.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) – NTIA is funded at \$39 million, equal to the FY2018 enacted amount. Funds are included to enhance the National Broadband Map, to help provide better broadband access for underserved communities to allow wider national participation and economic growth, and to allow NTIA to perform cutting-edge telecommunications research and engineering.

Bureau of the Census – \$3.82 billion for the Bureau of the Census, more than \$1 billion above the FY2018 enacted level and equal to the President’s budget request. The bill directs the Census Bureau to continue efforts to hold the costs of the 2020 Census lower than that of the 2010 Census and to maintain focus on activities that will make such savings possible.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The bill funds the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) at \$30.7 billion, \$402.5 million above the FY2018 enacted level. Salaries and expenses for most federal law enforcement agencies are increased by two percent. The constantly changing landscape of criminal activity at home and abroad tests DOJ's ability to deal with emerging threats, and this bill directs federal law enforcement agencies to work cooperatively to safeguard taxpayer dollars while preserving public safety.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) – \$9.415 billion for the FBI salaries and expenses and construction, a \$15 million increase above the 2018 enacted level. This funding will enable the FBI to continue protecting and defending against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats, both at home and abroad. The bill provides \$91.6 million for the Innocent Images National Initiative to target and investigate sexual predators on the Internet, and increases funding for cybersecurity activities to neutralize, mitigate, and disrupt illegal computer-supported operations.

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) – \$2.23 billion for the DEA, \$44 million above the FY2018 enacted level, to allow the agency to enforce the controlled substances laws and

regulations of the United States, including efforts to combat heroin use and prescription drug abuse.

United States Marshals Service (USMS) – \$2.95 billion for the USMS, including \$1.5 billion for federal prisoner detention expenses. This funding will allow the USMS to continue executing Adam Walsh Act enforcement requirements, such as apprehending convicted sex offenders who fail to register as fugitives; executing responsibilities under International Megan’s Law, including alerting foreign governments when registered sex offenders travel abroad; and providing continued support for establishing a new Regional Fugitive Task Force.

U.S. Attorneys – \$2.18 billion for the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys and the 94 U.S. Attorneys offices. This funding includes \$48.34 million, equal to the President’s budget request, to continue the focus on Adam Walsh Act investigations and prosecutions related to the sexual exploitation of children. This funding also includes \$60.5 million to continue efforts to combat cybercrime and intrusions.

Law Enforcement Grant Programs – \$2.87 billion for state and local law enforcement and crime prevention grant programs, which includes grants for state and local law enforcement, the Office on Violence Against Women, and juvenile justice programs. The bill provides \$445 million for Byrne JAG; approximately \$214.5 million for initiatives to address sexual assault kit and other DNA evidence backlogs; \$360 million for Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) programs, including \$102.5 million in support for Drug Courts and Veterans Treatment Courts to further combat the opioid and heroin epidemic; \$90 million for

Second Chance Act grants to reduce recidivism for adults released from jail by offering substance abuse treatment, employment assistance, and other rehabilitation services; \$32 million for COPS Office Anti-Heroin Task Forces grants; and \$8 million for COPS Office Anti-Methamphetamine Task Forces grants.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) – PSN is a high priority of DOJ and focuses on combating violent crime. PSN is fully funded at \$50 million, which is the authorized level recently approved by Congress.

STOP School Violence Act – The STOP School Violence Act, passed in the FY2018 Omnibus, is fully funded at its authorized level of \$100 million.

Crime Victims Fund (CVF) – The bill provides \$4.4 billion to victims and for victim services in FY2019, which is equal to the FY2018 level. Additionally, \$10 million is reserved for the DOJ Office of the Inspector General to audit grants funded through this distribution, and five percent of the total distribution is set aside to improve services for tribal victims of crime.

SCIENCE

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) – \$21.3 billion for NASA, \$587 million above the FY2018 enacted level and \$1.43 billion above the budget request, to support the human and robotic exploration of space, to fund science missions that enhance the understanding of the Earth, the solar system, and the universe, and to support fundamental aeronautics research. Using the same account funding structure as in previous years, this includes:

- \$5.3 billion for Exploration, \$549 million above the FY2018 enacted level, to advance NASA's human exploration program through providing \$2.15 billion for the Space Launch System (SLS), \$1.35 billion for the Orion crewed spacecraft to continue development of NASA's next deep-space crewed capsule, and \$504 million to begin development of the Lunar Orbital Platform.
- \$6.4 billion for Science, \$179 million above the FY2018 enacted amount and \$505 million above the request, including \$1.9 billion for Earth science, \$2.2 billion for Planetary science, \$1.5 billion for astrophysics (including \$304 million for the Webb telescope), and \$720 million for Heliophysics.
- \$725 million for Aeronautics, which is \$40 million above the FY2018 enacted level and \$91 million above the request. The bill supports the ongoing work on aeronautics x-vehicles, advanced research into aeronautics materials and materials characterization, and further research on unmanned aerial systems and unmanned traffic management.
- \$110 million is provided for the NASA's education programs, which were proposed to be eliminated in the budget request, under a newly named Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Opportunities activity. Within STEM Opportunities, Space Grant is funded at \$44 million, NASA's Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) is funded at \$21 million, the Minority University Research and Education Project is funded at \$33 million, and STEM Education and Accountability projects is funded at \$12 million.
- \$933 million is provided for Space Technology, \$173 million above the FY2018 enacted level. Funding is included to advance projects in early stages of development that are expected to eventually demonstrate capabilities needed for future space exploration.

National Science Foundation (NSF) – \$8.1 billion for NSF, \$301 million above the FY2018 enacted level and \$597 million above the request. Funding is provided for basic research across scientific disciplines to support the development of effective STEM programs.

- The bill provides \$222 million above the FY2018 level for research and \$13 million above FY2018 level for education activities. These funds will allow NSF to provide more grants to highly competitive research projects and help provide opportunities to prepare the next generation of STEM leaders.
- \$177 million is provided for EPSCoR, an increase of \$6 million above the FY2018 enacted level.
- \$89.2 million is provided for the design and construction of three Regional Class Research Vessels (RCRV), with \$60.5 million dedicated to the start of the third ship. By having three regional ships, the Gulf of Mexico and the East and West coasts will be able to have a dedicated RCRV to maximize research time in each of these regions.

RELATED AGENCIES

Legal Services Corporation (LSC) – \$410 million for LSC, equal to the FY2018 enacted level. LSC uses a competitive grant process to provide civil legal aid in high-need areas across the U.S.

International Trade Commission (ITC) – \$95 million for ITC, \$1 million above the FY2018 enacted level and \$7 million above the budget request. ITC is an independent agency responsible for providing Congress and the President with impartial advice on U.S. international trade policy.

Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) – \$73 million for USTR, equal to the 2018 enacted level, and includes up to \$15 million derived from the Trade Enforcement Trust Fund for enforcement activities authorized by the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015. As the federal government’s lead negotiator for trade agreements, this funding will maintain the strong bargaining position of USTR, as well as its trade coordination and enforcement actions.

Oversight and Accountability – The measure includes provisions to ensure accountability and oversight of funds within this bill, including:

- Requiring the appropriate Inspectors General to conduct random audits of grant funding to combat waste, fraud, and abuse.
- Establishing an early warning system on cost overruns and requiring agencies to notify the Committee when costs grow more than 10 percent.
- Prohibiting grants and contracts to tax frauds.
- Requiring agencies to report conference spending to their Inspector General.

- Requiring all departments and agencies to link all contracts that provide award fees to successful acquisition outcomes, and prohibiting the use of funds to pay for award or incentive fees for contractors with below satisfactory performance.
- Requiring each agency to report on all efforts made to address the duplication identified by the annual Government Accountability Office duplication reports, along with identifying substantive challenges and legal barriers that could help the agencies further reduce duplication.

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