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**CHAIRWOMAN MIKULSKI HOLDS OVERSIGHT AND FY 2013
BUDGET HEARING FOR DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

Senator thanks men and women who make up Department of Justice's civil service

*"They are the guardians of our Justice system and they are often overlooked and undervalued,"
Mikulski says*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS), today chaired a fiscal year 2013 oversight and budgetary hearing for the U.S. Department of Justice. The hearing included testimony from **U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder**.

"I want to begin today's hearing by thanking all of the hardworking men and women of the Justice Department's 119,000 civil servants, including the 25,000 Federal agents – the FBI, ATF, DEA, and the U.S. Marshals – and the people who support those agents; the 20,000 prison guards and correctional staff; and the 10,000 prosecutors, investigators, and legal experts," **Senator Mikulski** said.

"They are the guardians of our Justice system and they are often overlooked and undervalued. I want them to know that the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee knows and appreciates what they do every day."

Senator Mikulski's opening remarks in full, as prepared for delivery, follow:

"Good morning and welcome to our first Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing. We begin our examination of the President's 2013 budget by welcoming Attorney General Eric Holder.

“Today, we’ll discuss how the Justice Department’s 2013 budget request strengthens national security and counter terrorism; protects the safety, security and rights of U.S. citizens; and ensures taxpayer dollars are used wisely.

“We have a very positive relationship with Attorney General Holder. He has brought to the Justice Department the experience of a career prosecutor dedicated to protecting the American people from terrorism and violent crime. Welcome back, Attorney General Holder, and thank you for joining us today.

“I want to begin today’s hearing by thanking all of the hardworking men and women of the Justice Department’s 119,000 civil servants, including the 25,000 Federal agents – the FBI, ATF, DEA, and the U.S. Marshals – and the people who support those agents; the 20,000 prison guards and correctional staff; and the 10,000 prosecutors, investigators, and legal experts.

“They’ve had some amazing accomplishments during the last year. U.S. Marshals arrested more than 12,000 fugitive sex offenders. DEA agents put more than 3,000 drug traffickers out of business. The FBI dismantled 366 criminal enterprises involved in white collar crimes. U.S. Attorneys collected \$6.5 billion in criminal and civil penalties.

“They are the guardians of our Justice system, but they are often overlooked and undervalued. I want them to know that the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee knows and appreciates what they do every day.

“The President’s 2013 budget request for the Department of Justice totals \$27.1 billion, which is \$110 million below the 2012 level. The budget request also includes \$368 million in cuts to prior year funding for core Federal law enforcement functions and grants. This year’s budget also relies more heavily than ever on payments into the Crime Victims Fund, which will finance 30 percent of the Department’s operating budget in 2013. The request reflects the stringent reality of our times.

“As Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science, I have three priorities when examining the budget for the Justice Department. The first is community security. How does the budget support the mission of keeping our communities safe? The second is national security. What resources are needed to keep America safe from terrorism? And finally, oversight and accountability. Are tax dollars being spent wisely?

“I want to make sure that the Department of Justice has what it needs to uphold the rule of law and to protect this country from predatory attacks.

“There is only one new initiative in the Department’s budget request this year—an expansion of mortgage and financial fraud task forces. Our economy depends on the integrity of our financial markets. Our neighborhoods and communities have been rattled by mortgage fraud schemes and scams.

“The budget request includes \$611 million to fight mortgage and financial fraud, including a modest \$55 million targeted increase to hire new FBI agents, new attorneys, new specialized

support staff, and new forensic accountants and in-house investigators. This will also be used to combat financial and mortgage fraud, going after the schemers and scammers who prey on hardworking families and destabilize neighborhoods.

“We can’t have strong, economically vibrant communities unless they are safe. So I want to know how the budget request keeps Americans safe here at home. The request is \$2 billion for grants to state and local law enforcement. This is \$32 million below 2012.

“State and local funding has borne the brunt of budget cuts. Since 2010, grants have been cut by \$1.5 billion, or 43 percent. This is a time when we must be frugal. Tough choices have to be made. The Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee is committed to making sure our police are not walking a thin blue line. We need to know which grants are truly most effective and which programs we need to take a closer look at before reinvesting American taxpayers’ dollars in them.

“A recent Government Accountability Office report recommended that the Attorney General should conduct an assessment to better understand which grant programs overlap with one another to prevent unnecessary duplication. I think that is an excellent recommendation, and I encourage the Attorney General to complete this analysis.

“I know how committed the Attorney General is to keeping children safe from abuse, sexual predators and cyber stalkers. The budget request includes \$328 million to catch predators who use the Internet to stalk children, break up child pornography and prostitution rings, and track down, arrest and prosecute child molesters.

“The FBI and the Marshals have crucial roles. The FBI’s Innocent Images initiative targets sexual predators who use the Internet to distribute child pornography. The U.S. Marshals are charged with tracking down and arresting an estimated 100,000 unregistered sex offenders.

“The Adam Walsh Act called for 500 new Deputy U.S. Marshals to carry out this mission. But since 2010, we’ve been able to prevent furloughs and layoffs, but we’ve been in a holding pattern of 160 new Marshals. I want to make sure we’re putting the right resources in the right places to protect children from these despicable predators.

“The Department’s budget request includes more than \$1.8 billion for Federal law enforcement efforts, including the DEA, ATF, FBI, and the Marshals, to dismantle drug cartels that smuggle illegal drugs, guns and humans along the border, and terrorize citizens and neighborhoods with fear and intimidation.

“Drug trafficking-related homicides in Mexico continue climbing. There were a sickening 12,100 murders in Mexico last year, up 86 percent since 2009. We are very concerned about spillover violence. I want to know if the funds requested are sufficient to shut down the flow of firearms into Mexico, and to stop drugs and violence from coming into the U.S. from Mexico.

“Our nation faces a growing and pervasive threat overseas from hackers, cyber spies and cyber terrorists. We need safe and resilient networks to protect our online banking and commerce, electrical and power grids, air traffic control systems, and digitalized records.

“At the Justice Department, more than 1,500 personnel are working to prevent a broad range of cyber threats, such as computer intrusions, Internet fraud, intellectual property theft, and online child pornography; and to identify the perpetrators.

“The FBI is tasked with the most urgent cyber security responsibilities. They are on the front lines collecting intelligence and investigating computer intrusions that threaten our critical technology infrastructure. We will hear more details about this next week, when FBI Director Mueller testifies before this Subcommittee. But I want to know what you see as the Justice Department’s role as a key guardian of our nation’s cyber security.

“Finally, I want to know how the Justice Department is improving accountability of taxpayer dollars so that every dollar spent to secure our communities is a dollar well spent. The Subcommittee has taken steps to prevent waste, fraud and abuse; prohibit funds for lavish banquets; control cost overruns; and require the Inspector General to do random audits of grantees. I want to know what concrete steps you have taken to put these guidelines into practice and give teeth to make sure they are followed.

“Given all of the Justice Department’s important roles and responsibilities, we must ensure that it has the resources it needs to protect the lives of 330 million Americans. But we also want to make sure the Justice Department is a good steward of taxpayer dollars and makes sure every dollar we spend to keep our nation safe is a dollar well spent.

“I thank Attorney General Holder for his leadership, and I look forward to continuing our work together making a safer, stronger America.”

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