

**Chairman Jerry Moran Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies**

Hearing to Review the FY2020 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of Commerce

April 2, 2019

(As prepared for delivery)

Good afternoon, I call this hearing to order.

Welcome to the first budget hearing of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for fiscal year 2020.

I am pleased to welcome our panel of witnesses, who represent a majority of the Department of Commerce Bureaus and the Secretary's Office.

My focus for today's hearing will be to better understand the Commerce Department's top funding priorities and to emphasize those programs and activities that are important to our states, communities, and the nation.

The Department of Commerce executes a broad range of activities critical for our nation, which include: conducting a cost-effective and accurate Decennial Census; working with distressed communities to support economic development; promoting and increasing trade and investment for U.S. companies; enforcing trade laws to ensure American businesses can compete on a level playing field; and operating weather satellites and forecasting severe weather, among others.

The President's FY 2020 request for the Department of Commerce is \$12.2 billion, which is \$756 million above the FY 2019 enacted level, representing a 7 percent increase in the Department's overall budget.

This increase is due in large part to the \$2.3 billion in additional funding requested for the Census Bureau, as the agency prepares for the 2020 Decennial Census.

Once every 10 years, the Bureau of the Census becomes the largest budgetary component of the Department as they hire over 400,000 temporary workers to execute the mandated count of the population of our country.

And, as of yesterday, we are now less than one year away from when the Department will begin receiving responses to the 2020 Census.

The Census provides vital data about our nation that directly impacts each state's representation in Congress, as well as the distribution of billions in formula-based federal funding among states and localities.

The Department must ensure it meets the constitutional mandate for the 2020 Census, and this Subcommittee wants to be assured that funding requested in FY 2020 can accomplish this task.

In addition to the Census, the Department of Commerce is central to our nation's continued economic growth, and the Economic Development Administration, or EDA, is a critical element of that work.

Just a few weeks ago I was with EDA Assistant Secretary John Fleming in Kansas to announce a \$2 million dollar EDA grant for an aviation laboratory at Wichita State University, and was able to witness the importance of EDA's work first-hand.

EDA investments are critical for building and furthering regional capacity and translating innovations into jobs.

Likewise, the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership program is strongly supported in the business community as a positive example of a nationwide public-private partnership that improves the competitiveness of the domestic manufacturing industry.

Representing a rural yet multifaceted state like Kansas, I strongly support these economic development programs.

Rather than choosing to eliminate these opportunities, the Department of Commerce should be looking for more ways to help states, localities, and industries address their unique economic development needs.

The Department of Commerce also has an important role to play in maintaining U.S. leadership and long-term competitiveness in technology and science.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology – or, NIST – is synonymous with scientific and technological leadership and innovation.

While I am encouraged by the Department's efforts to prioritize research and development funding for "next-generation" technologies — like quantum science, artificial intelligence, and microelectronics — I am also concerned about what the proposed cuts to the NIST Scientific and Technical Research and Services programs will mean for long-term U.S leadership in these areas.

I look forward to hearing more details on NIST's plans to increase research in "next-generation" technologies and also preserve U.S. scientific and technical leadership.

In recent months, natural disasters have occupied an outsized share of headlines across our country, including the Midwest and specifically Northeast Kansas. Just last week I was in Northeast Kansas to tour the disastrous flooding that has impacted so many communities across the Midwest.

The Department of Commerce, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - or, NOAA - is responsible for understanding and predicting weather and water events and enabling the protection of life and property through the effective broadcasting of that information.

The recent spate of natural disasters has highlighted the importance of this work —and also the need to improve our ability to forecast and reduce the impacts of weather and water events, which I was glad to see is a component of the FY 2020 budget request.

I am interested to hear NOAA's plans for improving our current weather prediction and modeling capabilities and how the FY 2020 request will support these efforts.

The Department also oversees the federal use of spectrum and manages broadband grants through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or, NTIA.

There is a concern in my home state and in states across the country that communities are not able to fully access broadband because they live in either under-served or unserved areas.

I am interested to hear how the Department is currently working to address this problem and how the FY 2020 request will further support efforts to understand where broadband access is lacking in our country.

Lastly, the Department of Commerce also plays a significant role in promoting global trade and enforcing our nation's trade policies.

The trade-related work of the Department of Commerce are of particular interest and importance to me and many on the Subcommittee

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses from the International Trade Administration and the Bureau of Industry and Security about their resource needs in FY 2020 to address the increase in trade activities.

Furthermore, I want to convey the deep concern Kansas businesses, farmers, and ranchers have shared with me regarding the retaliatory tariffs imposed on American agricultural products in response to the Department's Section 232 enforcement activities.

Kansas is a major exporter, and our economy relies on the ability to sell products we grow and manufacture to consumers around the world.

I agree with sentiments that our nation must be tougher in enforcing trade agreements. However, when enforcing trade rules, we must be mindful of the negative impacts retaliation can have on our domestic products.

Achieving this balance will require continued congressional oversight, including this Subcommittee closely monitoring the funding provided for trade activities and enforcement.

To all of the witnesses, I look forward to hearing your views on these and other matters during today's hearing.

I now turn to our Ranking Member, Senator Shaheen, for her opening statement.

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