

Hearing Transcript

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Hearing on Member Priorities

February 28, 2017

CULBERSON:

Good morning. The Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriation Subcommittee will come to order. This is our -- our first hearing, and it's especially appropriate that we would start out with a Members' Day, to hear from our colleagues on their top priorities, the projects and -- and issues that they are -- are working on that are important to them and their districts.

It's -- it's a -- it's a particular privilege for me to chair this subcommittee. It's one that I've always loved to serve on. The issues that we cover, from helping federal law enforcement, to economic growth in this nation through the Department of Commerce, and ensuring that the American Space Program is the best on Earth, and that we fund and support cutting-edge scientific research are -- are all issues near and dear to my heart, and they are to each and every one of you.

I know this -- this subcommittee also has a long tradition of working together, arm in arm, on behalf of the country, and regardless of party. We all are focused on ensuring that we get -- get our -- get our bill done in a -- in a bipartisan way in support of our men and women in uniform in law enforcement, combating crime and terrorism, and promoting trade, forecasting the weather, and investing in basic research and exploring space. It's a -- a goal we all share, and it's a privilege for me to work with each and every one of you on this.

Our -- our hearing today is -- we're -- we -- we've got each member who's coming in to testify has about five -- it says five minutes, and I'll do my best to -- to stay -- we'll do our best to stay on the clock. Appreciate you being here, spot on, Mr. Posey, and -- and we will -- we will make sure to listen carefully to everyone's concerns, do our best to accommodate you in every way that we can, and working together, I'm confident we'll -- we'll make great progress on that.

I'm especially pleased to have my good friend, Jose Serrano, back as a ranking member. We've worked together for many years on this subcommittee, and done a lot of great things for the country, and had a lot of fun. The important part's the fun. We get along great and are good friends, so glad to have -- be working here with you...

SERRANO:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Mr. Serrano, and it's a privilege for me to recognize you.

SERRANO:

Well, I -- I look forward for some more. Let me apologize for being late five minutes. It's one of those interesting modern stories. I was in the building at 10 o'clock, ready to come in here at 10 o'clock. Then I reached in my left pocket and realized my cell phone was not with me. So I had to backtrack my whole morning to find my cell phone. So much for the lack of importance of a cell phone, otherwise I would have had to go (inaudible) find my phone, and I would have been...

(CROSSTALK)

(UNKNOWN)

(inaudible)

SERRANO:

But I found it. It was next to your locker. Anyway...

(UNKNOWN)

I didn't do it.

(UNKNOWN)

Yeah.

SERRANO:

I'm looking forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman. I know you and I are not naive. We know that we have -- there are party differences. These are difficult times. But this committee is very important to me, so much so that I gave up the ranking membership on financial services in order to be back (ph) a member over here, because I've always said that this committee traditionally does not hurt anyone. On the contrary, it helps people. It helps our law enforcement people. It explores space. It takes our space program, brings them into the schools to teach kids about math and science and so on. It does a lot of other things. It's got the Justice Department, the Census Bureau, which we may have differences on, but it's, you know, constitutional mandate.

So I look forward to working with you, and at the minimum, Mr. Chairman, what I'm looking for is that our friendship remains, and even during these difficult times, and they probably will be very difficult. If we don't agree, we don't have to be disagreeable.

(UNKNOWN)

That's right.

SERRANO:

We're going to be -- still be friends, and realize in a democracy you -- you disagree. You know, I'll close with this: I may be the only person who defends gridlock, and I say it this way: In China, the budget is always on time. In a democracy, there are disagreements. Some people want the budget on the day it's supposed to be. It doesn't work that way. He gets elected, he gets elected, you get elected to represent our community and our thoughts, and sometimes those things clash. But that's what makes this country the one where people are still, (KNOCKING SOUND) knocking on its door, to come in every day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CULBERSON:

Thank you. Thank you very much. Well, Mr. Posey, we're delighted to have you with us here this morning. Oh -- make sure -- does anybody else have any opening comments? Want to make any...? Ready to roll?

We appreciate you being here today. Your written statement, of course, will appear in the record, and please, recognize you for five minutes.

POSEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ranking Member, and -- and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today as you consider funding priorities for fiscal year of 2018.

I ask for your continued support of our nation's space programs, particularly our exploration programs, including the space launch systems, the Orion spacecraft, and exploration ground systems.

American dominance in space is no longer a given, as all of you know. I see your heads going like that, two of you. Rival powers such as Russia and China continue to develop their space capabilities. Ceding our dominance in space, the ultimate military high ground, to any other nation is unacceptable in both the national security and military readiness grounds.

As we look beyond the future of American leadership in space we are reminded of the words of our recently departed friend and colleague, Senator John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth, when he said, "The most important thing we can do is inspire young minds, and to advance the kind of science, math and technology education that will take us to the next space of space travel."

With that in mind, a refocused NASA, with fates (ph) a high-end, (ph) a mission to Mars, and with an aim towards establishing a lasting American presence on the moon, can invigorate and inspire the entire nation, including the next generation of science, technology, engineering and math leaders.

Since the retirement of the shuttle, the U.S. commercial space companies have successfully transported cargo to the International Space Station, and with sufficient support, American commercial crew companies will launch American astronauts from America by 2019. Let's resolve to keep this on track, and break our dependence on the Russians at a cost of over \$80 million per seat.

The Space Launch System, the most powerful rocket ever built, is -- is a critical component in maintaining our nations beyond the moon, and on the mission to Mars. Thousands of skilled workers from hundreds of companies in nearly every state across the country are building the hardware and technology for this system in order to prevent delays to Exploration Mission 2, the first crew mission of SLS and Orion, set for 2021. The SLS requires an -- an fiscal year of 2018 appropriation of \$2 billion.

With the successful first flight in December of 2014, Orion, humanity's first interplanetary space ship, is on track for a mission in 2019 aboard the SLS rocket. The Orion spacecraft is a key to manned mission to Mars and beyond, and is the only spacecraft capable of taking humans to multiple destinations in deep space, and returning them safely back to Earth.

Fully developed, Orion will be able to support missions to the moon, Mars, and everything in between. In fiscal year 2018, welding is scheduled to begin on the EM-2 crew module, as well as completion of the design crew systems for the first crewed flight. We need an appropriation fiscal year 2018 of \$1.35 billion to see that actually happen.

Along with the manned and unmanned spacecraft, ground systems are an indispensable part of the infrastructure (sic) of space exploration. Much of the existing ground systems at Florida's Kennedy Space Center date back to the 1960s Apollo era. The -- the -- the material we use for tracking rockets from the Kennedy Space Center still have some vacuum tubes. Half the people in this room don't know what vacuum tubes are, not because it's a lack of knowledge; it's just before they were born, and that's -- that's the technology we're still using for telemetry in some cases at the Space Center, and -- and we must upgrade that telemetry.

Kennedy is hard at work finishing preparation for Launch Complex 39B, the former shuttle pad where SLS will launch. The ground systems team is on schedule, having completed 80 percent of the structural changes. A fiscal year appropriation of \$635 million is needed to keep these activities on track.

Modernizing the ground base infrastructure is a key to continued U.S. dominance in space. As I've been very frequently known to say, no ground systems mean no launches. For over 50 years the United States leadership in space has benefited our economy's national security, our economy, strengthened our international relationships, advanced scientific discovery, and improved life here on Earth in many, many ways.

I ask for your continued support of our nation's space programs, since the committee crafts the fiscal year '18 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Posey. NASA's one of those areas where all of us are in agreement in the Congress of how important they are, and we'll look forward to working with you on this. Questions, or...?

SERRANO:

No, we are in agreement. It's -- it's not only... But I always keep looking in (inaudible) schools.

CULBERSON:

Yeah.

SERRANO:

There's a lot that our children can learn from the space program, and that's why I think I always keep pushing NASA (inaudible).

CULBERSON:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your kind comments.

POSEY:

Thank you very much.

(AUDIO GAP)

CULBERSON:

Thank you to please, to recognize Representative John Faso of New York's 19th District. We're glad to have you here with us this morning.

FASO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(AUDIO GAP)

FASO:

All the -- EDA is the only federal agency in charge entirely with economic development. The grant programs that they employ are intended to secure a long-term economic growth by leveraging regional assets. EDA was appropriated a \$261 million in FY16.

The issue, to me, is U.S. manufacturing. We have clearly a skills gap in our country. The manufacturing sector is expected to outperform the U.S. economy, growing by three to four percent, compared to just two to three percent in the U.S. economy as a whole. But according to the Manufacturing Institute, this economic growth will lead to the creation of 3.5 million new manufacturing positions over the next 10 years. But nearly two million of these positions will remain unfilled.

The thing I heard from manufacturers and businesses in my district over this past year and a half was that they had jobs. They just couldn't find the right people to fill those jobs. We have a real skills gap.

Hudson Valley Community College, located in my area, and actually located specifically in Mr. Tonko's district, immediately adjacent to me, but it serves both of our communities, they're committed to closing the manufacturing skills gap by training dozens of highly- skilled, advanced manufacturing technicians every year.

Currently, they have a program that trains 144 students a year. They're looking to try to expand that to 228 students, almost twice their current enrollment. Virtually every single one of these students in this two-year program has a job before they leave the program. The -- when I toured the Hudson Valley recently, they told me that we could build 50 to 75 of these type centers around the country, and every single one of the people that graduates as an advanced manufacturing skill technician would find a job in our economy. They quickly advance in their fields. They often are \$18 to \$25 to start, and by expanding its advanced manufacturing program, Hudson Valley estimates that it will place over 1200 skilled technicians into the work force and generate an additional \$286 million in salaries just in our capitol district region in upstate New York over the next 10 years.

The great thing about this program as well is they have a private sector partner, and all across the country, the Hoss Foundation has been supporting manufacturing centers like Hudson Valley. They have assisted similar colleges and technical centers across the country, providing over \$50 million in private sector grants to manufacturing programs. The Hoss Foundation is dedicated to closing the manufacturing skills gap, because manufacturing is an important backbone of our economy.

So Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I encourage you to look closely at the grant programs that go to train young people in advanced skills manufacturing, advanced technology manufacturing, because the jobs are out there. We just can't fill those jobs because we don't have enough qualified people.

A program like this, which helps train them, is essential to that, and I would ask -- I have prepared remarks I will ask to include in the record. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CULBERSON:

Without objection, your written statement will be included in the record, and we look forward to working with you on this. Thank you.

FASO:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Any questions? Yes, sir.

(UNKNOWN)

It's not really a question. I just want to thank you for bringing this forward. We've got areas in my neck of the woods that have kind of long-term economic distress, and they're seeing real opportunity in new waves of manufacturing, whether it be composite technology, or cross-laminated timber, and a lot of stuff we didn't even know about five, ten years ago. And I think, you know, the EDA programs are such a drop in the bucket, but can really be, you know, substantial impact for those areas that are facing economic distress. So thanks for bringing this forward.

FASO:

Thank you. And -- and these people that are trained in these programs, they go and work in other businesses where they train local technicians to, based upon the skills that they learn in programs like this. So these are really at the cutting edge, and it's really important for us to help us restore manufacturing in our country.

(UNKNOWN)

Thanks.

FASO:

Thank you, member of the committee.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much.

FASO:

Thank you, sir.

CULBERSON:

Please recognize Congressman Robert Pittenger of North Carolina. Glad to have you here with us, Robert.

PITTENGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CULBERSON:

Yeah.

PITTENGER:

Ranking Member, and members of the committee, I deeply appreciate the time offered me, this time to speak. I want to also thank you for including my request of a study on the National Weather Service radar coverage gaps in last year's Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill. Although last year's language was not signed into law, I appreciate the signal of support from the committee today as I ask for your continued support.

Many major metropolitan areas rely on the National Weather Service to detect and provide warning for severe weather, such as thunderstorms and tornadoes. Some cities, however, must rely on radars that are far away, provide weak and inaccurate readings due to the curvature of the earth. The city of Charlotte, for example, relies on radar almost 100 miles away.

In 2012, this resulted in the National Weather Service issuing a tornado warning 10 minutes after the tornado touched down. As reported in the media, a seven year old, Jamal Stevens, was in his bed when the tornado tore through his house, tossing him into an embankment alongside Interstate 45, hundreds of feet away from his room.

In 2013, the current system provided a warning, but for citizens in an entirely wrong neighborhood.

More recently, a tornado in December 2015 struck neighboring Union County with no warning from the National Weather Service.

Fortunately, our region has not suffered any fatalities due to the inadequate coverage, but we shouldn't wait for a tragedy to act. The Charlotte reason is just one example of dangerously inaccurate weather radar coverage. Additional areas of inadequate coverage include Columbus, Ohio, northwest New Mexico, and Washington state.

Our language request would require that the Commerce Department identify weak coverage areas and formulate a plan to resolve the problem. Whether that be by constructing a new radar, or by improving existing government radars. Far too many lives are at risk from a problem that the federal government can easily address.

So I do thank you for your consideration, and I appreciate the time to come before your committee.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much. I look forward to working with you on this. It's a good thing you -- you point out, and we appreciate you coming in.

PITTENGER:

Can I submit my testimony for your record?

CULBERSON:

It will be included in the record without objection. Any questions?

PITTENGER:

Thank you very much, sir.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much. Next, I'm pleased to recognize Representative Jared Polis of Colorado. Glad to have you with us.

POLIS:

Thank you, Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Serrano. Appreciate your punctuality as well. For those of us who are at committee meetings it's really very helpful, and I appreciate the committee working on time. I want to thank you for giving this opportunity to members to come before you.

I want to first encourage the subcommittee to continue to move forward, and not backwards, on important science funding for our country, including priorities like the National Science Foundation, our national labs, our research institutions.

Science, frankly, is one of the most important aspects of making our country great. In my home state of Colorado, we're home to 30 federal labs, including National Renewable Energies Laboratory, NOAA, NIST, ANCAR. But the results go far beyond Colorado and my district. If you decrease funding for sciences, it's not only research and knowledge that you take backward, but also the billions of dollars of economic benefit that come out of our federal research, and that's why I encourage you to protect funding for science.

On the other hand, I want to address some other needs that we hope that you can include in your committee marks. Last week the president's spokesman indicated that they may spend Department of Justice resources to try to disrupt legal recreational marijuana sales in states that have set up successful regulatory systems.

I point out in states where about 60 percent of the American people live there is some form of legal and regulated and taxed access to marijuana, and frankly, this would create a lot of chaos in states like mine. Frankly, we have a solution. You can include in your committee marks and language

that I've worked on with Mr. McClintock and others that would ensure the federal government does not waste its very limited resources prosecuting men and women who are acting in full compliance with state law.

The DEA clearly has more pressing and urgent concerns. Many of us are concerned with the opioid epidemic, with meth, and of course, other illegal drugs. And we encourage you to make it clear that the DEA should focus on those priorities, and of course, continue to focus on prosecuting marijuana offenses where they run afoul of state law.

I urge you to include language to prevent the DEA from using resources to take action against regulated, recreational, or medicinal marijuana in states that have legalized and regulated it, and potentially find some savings and decrease funding for the DEA as a whole to this effect. The money that they would have put into those areas, you can either issue back to DEA for other purposes, or I know you're looking for savings. That can be an area you can look to save.

In a series of revelations from 2013 to 2015, another issue that came to light is that the DEA has been gathering a vast database of information on personal communications of Americans. As you know, there was no Congressional authority this -- for this program, no oversight for Congress. We were able to include language on the floor last time this bill came up to protect the privacy of all Americans from the NSA and the DOJ. I would simply encourage you to include that language in your committee bill that prohibits the DOJ from using federal funds to engage in bulk data collection of American's phone records or other data.

It's time that Congress put an end to these abuses perpetrated by our own intelligence community and by the DEA. I'm hopeful that this committee can, in the committee mark, provide reasonable guidance to the states with regard to the priorities of the DEA with the limited resources they had -- have. I'm happy to yield back for any questions.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much. We look forward to working with you on -- on each one of these. Thank you. Any questions, members? Thank you, thank you, Jared.

POLIS:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

I see Mr. Donovan's here, and we'd be pleased to recognize you.

DONOVAN:

Thank you very much, Chairman.

CULBERSON:

And we will -- your written statement'll be entered into the record in its entirety without objection.

DONOVAN:

Thank you very much, Chairman. I'd like to thank you, and Ranking Member Serrano, along with the additional members of the subcommittee for allowing me this opportunity to testify in support of funding for the cost associated with protecting the president of the United States and his family, starting on November 9, 2016.

Specifically, I ask the committee to fully reimburse local jurisdictions for the cost associated with protecting the president-elect and his family from November 9, 2016 through January 20, 2017. I also ask the committee to fund the continuing costs of protecting the first family, and when present, the president of the United States for the period beginning January 21, 2017.

Mr. Chairman, the security burden on local police jurisdictions like the city of New York -- New York's Police Department between President Trump's election and inauguration was unprecedented. President Trump worked and resided at one of the busiest intersections in the world, an area through which thousands of vehicles and pedestrians pass every hour, and has become the city's number one tourist attraction.

The location of Trump Tower in the heart of America's largest city requires more complex security arrangements than have been needed for past presidents. To effectively protect him, the United States Secret Service required logistic input from the New York City Police Department, along with uniformed and non-uniformed officers, to manage traffic and provide additional protections.

I think we could all agree that protecting the president of the United States is a national priority and honor, but circumstances have dictated that the cost of such protection fall disproportionately on the local jurisdictions. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I'm deeply appreciative of the \$7 million reimbursement the Appropriations Committee included in the short-term continuing resolution passed last December.

However, over the past several weeks my staff and I have collaborated directly with one impacted jurisdiction to compile detailed, actual cost figures to inform an appropriations request for the full cost of protecting President Trump between election day and inauguration day, and for continuing expenses incurred thereafter.

While I recognize that other local jurisdictions may also face funding challenges, I have outlined the actual cost figures provided to me by New York -- the city of New York, including rationales for their input. The city analyzed 25,000 patrol log entries to determine precisely the amount of man hours spent by the New York City Police Department and the Fire Department of the city of New York over that 73-day period.

The city then referenced relevant collective bargaining agreements, overtime wages, and fringe benefit requirements to determine the cost of each working hour spent in defense of the president and his family, according to rank and tenure of the committed personnel.

I served for 12 years as district attorney of Richmond County, and I'm very familiar with the wage and benefit packages of the city's police officers. I personally reviewed the figures provided to me by the city, and I believe it to be wholly accurate and reasonable.

In my opinion, the below figures represent the city's best effort to quantify exactly the cost incurred in protecting President Trump and his family. I further believe that the estimated cost of ongoing protection represents a good faith approximation, and should be considered the best data available. Of course, should you or your staff have any questions concerning these figures, my staff and I are available at your convenience to facilitate prompt answers.

The New York City Police Department's daily rate -- average rate from November 9, 2016 to January 20, 2017 was about \$308,000 per day. Collective bargaining agreements were about \$1,323,000, and New York City's total cost between November 9, 2016 and January 20, 2017 was \$23,825,000. New York City's total cost was \$25.5 million, and that includes the cost for the New York City Fire Department as well.

Cost of continuing expenses after inauguration day, the average daily rate for the New York City Police Department for the first family is between \$127,000 and \$146,000, and the average rate for protecting the president and first family is about \$308,000. The New York City Fire Department has a fixed cost, annual fixed cost of about \$4.5 million.

So again, I thank you for this opportunity to testify, Mr. Chairman. I sincerely and respectfully request that the committee full and -- fully reimburse state and local jurisdictions for the costs associated with protecting the president of the United States and the first family from election day to inauguration day, as well as the costs incurred thereafter. I thank you very much, sir.

CULBERSON:

Thank you, Mr. Donovan. We all admire the courage and character of New York City's Police Department, and the superb work that they do. We all admire them immensely, and look forward to working with you on this.

DONOVAN:

I will certainly relay that message, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

(CROSSTALK)

CULBERSON:

Thank you, sir. We're very, very proud of them. Any -- wait. Any other questions or comments? Mr. Serrano.

SERRANO:

Mr. Chairman, I.. This is an issue that the whole New York delegation has been working on with Mrs. Lowey, Mr. Donovan, and -- and all the folks who realize that this is a real problem. It's an issue. It's not a problem having the president with us. That's kind of a -- a thing that New Yorkers can brag about. But it's not like he picked a certain part of a certain state somewhere. It happens to be in the vicinity of St. Patrick's Cathedral, not far from where the Christmas tree is going to be pretty soon in Rockefeller Center. In that whole area, there is no more traffic in New York City, and it costs a lot of money to protect the family.

And lastly, for good or for bad, it looks like this president may spend less time at the White House than other presidents have in the past. So he's going to be somewhere else, and I suspect that that somewhere else will be a lot in New York. So I think we -- we need to put our heads together and see how we can help localities with this course, especially New York City, because it's going to - - it's going to cost money, and it may not go away.

CULBERSON:

Look forward to working with you and (inaudible)

SERRANO:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Please recognize the gentlelady from New York.

LOWEY:

My goodness, I guess (inaudible) I think it's on. OK.

First of all, I want to thank you, Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Serrano for holding this meeting. We are so appreciative, and it's good to see you.

CULBERSON:

Good to see you.

LOWEY:

Fellow New Yorker, thank you, Dan Donovan, for being here, and expressing to all of us your concerns and the needs of New York. I am very appreciative. In fact, I drove by that area yesterday just to take another look, and there are about six metal grids that are set up. There's obviously a lot of traffic, going to see where the president is residing in New York, as you very well know.

And these security costs during the presidential transition period and beyond are, quite frankly, unprecedented in New York. President Trump held meetings with heads of state, CEOs, other

security risk individuals in the middle of midtown Manhattan. I really wonder how those stores are even doing business there.

Millions of people go by there every day, and post-inauguration security challenges continue in New York and other areas like Palm Beach, creating increased demands on first responders in many local jurisdictions.

The New York Police Department, as you expressed, has served the president while continuing to protect millions of residents and visitors. This dual role is not sustainable without additional resources. So I just want to, Mr. Chairman, echo my friend, Mr. -- Congressman Donovan, Mr. Donovan's sentiments, hope that the committee will consider our bipartisan, multi-reaching concerns carefully.

No local jurisdiction should be left on the hook for extraordinary security costs like what we've seen in New York to cover, frankly, it's the federal responsibility of protecting the president. So whether he's in New York, or Florida, he may be playing golf in New Jersey... We're not quite sure where he travels to, but we know how important this is, because we know what the New York Police Department has done.

So thank you very much, and thank you, again, for your consideration, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Ranking Member. We look forward to working with you. Thank you.

DONOVAN:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much. Mr. Jenkins, any other...? Ms. Ming (ph)? Anyone else? Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Donovan.

DONOVAN:

Thank you, Chairman. Thank you all.

CULBERSON:

I see we've been joyed by -- joined by Mr. Panetta of California, and we welcome your testimony. Thank you.

PANETTA:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

You succeeded Sam Farr.

PANETTA:

Correct, sir.

CULBERSON:

That's great. Give Sam our best wishes.

PANETTA:

I will, I will. He's -- he's enjoying his time retired, that's for sure.

Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Chairman Culberson. I appreciate this opportunity.

CULBERSON:

Without objection, we'll enter your written record -- your written statement into the record.

PANETTA:

That's fine.

CULBERSON:

In its entirety.

PANETTA:

Please. Thank you, thank you. Mr. Serrano, thank you.

It's an honor to be here. I appreciate this opportunity, and this opportunity to testify in front of this committee, as I also appreciate the importance of the Appropriations Committee's annual check on our nation's priorities.

So I thank you for this chance to talk about something that's very important to me, and very important to all of us, and that's our National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration programs that promote stewardship for our nation's marine resources.

I represent the central coast of California, and a coastline that I believe, and if you ask most people that drive down Highway 1, and Big Sur, and go to the Monterey Bay will tell you, is the most magnificent meeting of land and water in the world. In my congressional district there on the central coast, we're fortunate to have the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. I call it, basically, a national park. It's a park that protects 276 miles of shoreline, and reaches a depth of 12,700 feet down the deep Monterey Bay Canyon.

People call the sanctuary the "Serengeti of the Sea" because of its 34 species of marine mammals, over 500 species of fish, and more than 180 species of sea birds and shore birds.

All of our nation's marine sanctuaries are managed by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. That management helps spur economic growth and generate approximately \$8 billion for the local economies that surround our national sanctuaries. Moreover, marine sanctuaries provide public access for research, exploration, education, and ocean tourism.

If you go to the Monterey Bay region, you'll understand with its aquarium, with it's, you know, mini-outdoor recreation vessels that enjoy the Monterey Bay. But also, something that I -- I believe that people don't know -- on the Monterey Bay there's close to 24 research institutions that surround that bay and are managed by such schools as Stanford, Cal State University Monterey Bay, San Jose State, University of California at Santa Cruz as well.

Based on that, I'm respectfully requesting \$65.5 million for fiscal year 2018 for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. More specific, within that count, I urge \$57 million to the sanctuaries and marine protected areas, and \$8.5 million to the Marine Sanctuaries Construction Program. I believe, I submit to you, that it is an investment in our largest national -- natural resource, the ocean -- something that provides food, medicine, employment, scientific research, and of course, national security.

Another area I'd like to talk about is NOAA's education program, Bay Watershed Education and Training, otherwise known as BWET. That's an environmental education -- education program that promotes authentic experimental learning for K through 12 audience -- audiences in their nearby watersheds.

This program utilizes local STEM professionals as guests for classrooms, and provides professional development to educators to enhance their skills in environmental education. Over the past five years, dozens of programs in my district have received BWET funding. With grants as small as \$20,000, environmental educators expose a diverse group of K through 12 students to the importance of diverse watersheds, basic scientific research message -- methods, and environmental stewardship.

As a prosecutor I worked a lot with youth in Salinas, California, and I can tell you that there are many children who live less than 20 miles from the ocean, yet never have the opportunity to see what I've just talked about. And I believe that BWET provides them an important chance to do that, something to -- to do, which is something that I feel that many of us take for granted.

That's why I'm respectfully requesting the subcommittee allocate \$20 million for BWET in fiscal year 2018.

The Fisheries Data Collections Surveys and Assessments Programs supports (sic) the eight regional fishery management councils that develop and enforce management plans, conducts data research, and fish stock assessments, as well as national fish surveys. That information is used by

eight regional councils, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, and three interstate marine fisheries commissions.

The councils rely on these fishery surveys to determine annual catch limits for the fishery management plans, and to monitor the health of fish stocks. Therefore, I respectfully request \$164.7 million for fiscal year '18 for those programs.

The Observers and Training Program. Now that's -- although I realize that fishing regulations set forth by the regional councils are meant to prevent depleted U.S. fish stocks, the United States imports 90% of its seafood. Some of this seafood may be obtained by illegal overseas fishing activities such as mislabeling products, and overtreating products with water-retaining chemicals.

The funds of the Observers and Training Program, they're designated within their fisheries, science and management, and it would support operations that inspect and enforce import restrictions on illegally harvested and improperly documented seafood and marine resources. Training is necessary to conduct audits on incoming seafood deliveries, and enhance overall seafood traceability.

In order to support these operations, I would request, respectfully, \$45.5 million to be appropriated to the Observers and Training Program.

I strongly urge this subcommittee to invest in our nation's largest natural resource, our ocean. It is important that we not only protect our oceans for recreation purposes, but for our \$282 billion blue economy, as well as our future. These programs help educate our youth, protect our seafood that reaches our tables, preserve the marine environment, and employ thousands of Americans along our coast.

I thank you for your time, your consideration, and hopefully, your investment in these crucial programs. Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much, Mr. Panetta. Our marine sanctuaries are national treasures, and we appreciate very much your testimony. I look forward to working with you.

(CROSSTALK)

PANETTA:

Thank you, Chairman. Likewise.

CULBERSON:

(inaudible) Any questions? Yes, Mr. Kilmer?

KILMER:

I -- I just -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank you for raising the issue around some of NOAA's programs, and the NMFS programs, in particular. I -- I hadn't fully appreciated until I got here how big a deal those programs are to economic development in communities that depend on an active fishery. We've had multiple disaster declarations in -- in my neck of the woods, and, you know, we face the potential of hatchery closures if NOAA and NMFS can't get the job done. So I just appreciate you coming in and highlighting the importance of these programs.

PANETTA:

Thank you, sir.

CULBERSON:

Mr. Serrano.

SERRANO:

Very briefly, NOAA has been very much involved in my community. In fact, there's a quick story that I'll tell you, and one that got written up in National Geographic and everywhere throughout the world. That's the fact that there's actually a river called the Bronx River. It runs through the Bronx for 23 miles up to Westchester County, and there was cement on one side, and cement on the other, and a polluted river in the middle -- so polluted that when NOAA got involved, and the Army Corps of Engineers got involved, a lot of agencies, the first thing we took out was a jeep, a jeep that was in the river.

Today, that river has fishes. That river has boating. And for the first time in 200 years, New York City, which is a beaver -- used to be a beaver pelt colony, and that was its main business, a beaver came back. And now, a second beaver came back.

(LAUGHTER)

(UNKNOWN)

What were their names?

(LAUGHTER)

SERRANO:

There's a reason -- there's a reason for that. And don't say it's, we had earmarks. And when you have earmarks, you get the beaver name, Jose, and so...

(LAUGHTER)

SERRANO:

So then, here -- here's where I messed up. When the new beaver showed up, the Bronx Zoo called me up, because they were involved, too, and said, "Name the beaver." I said, "I don't want to be a wise guy, you know, arrogant." "OK, we'll do a 'name the beaver' play on -- on the Internet." You know what they called the second beaver? Justin Beaver.

(LAUGHTER)

SERRANO:

But -- but all that to say that this river is alive, doing well. It's a model, and it was because these agencies got involved. And -- and what the children, there are now about 25 community programs, from after school education and math programs, to music programs -- everything. That came from that nucleus, which was the revival of the river.

CULBERSON:

That's great.

PANETTA:

Well, in Monterey, we -- we don't have a lot of beavers, but we do have a lot of sea otters.

SERRANO:

Yes.

PANETTA:

And I can tell you, because of these programs, their population is flourishing, and I'm sure there's lots of naming opportunities as well.

(LAUGHTER)

CULBERSON:

It's a great story, and it's going on nationwide. The Houston Ship Channel used to be terribly polluted, and it's -- it's cleaned up now. And you're actually seeing porpoises come far up the channel, so... It's a -- it's a great story, and I know everybody would love to hear about the beavers, too. I'm glad ... So, thank you, Mr. Panetta.

PANETTA:

Thank you, sir. I appreciate the opportunity.

CULBERSON:

Thank you. And I see Chairman Reichert is with us, Congressman Dave Reichert of Washington's 8th District. We're glad to have you with us, and your written statement will appear in the record in its entirety, without objection.

REICHERT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CULBERSON:

Glad to have you here, and recognize you for five minutes.

REICHERT:

Thank -- thank you.

CULBERSON:

Thank you.

REICHERT:

Before I get started, I'd like to pass unanimous consent to have a letter written by two law enforcement caucus chairs, myself and Bill Pascrell, that's been sent to the president regarding the topic of the COPS grants.

CULBERSON:

Yes, without objection.

REICHERT:

Thank you. I don't know how I follow Jose Beaver and Justin Beaver, but I'll -- I'm going to give it a shot. I have lots of stories too, but, you know, this is really, you know, it's a great story that you've told, sir, about -- about animals returning to a clean river.

This is really a story, when you talk about law enforcement and community, it's really a story about, you know, human beings who can function in a community who come back to neighborhoods who have been sort of a dirty river in -- in the middle of, you know, some pretty productive parts of our cities across the country.

Part of the success in allowing that sort of thing to happen has been the COPS Program, has been the ability for police officers, police chiefs and sheriffs across the country, to come to the COPS Office and make application for hiring grants.

Now, when I was the sheriff my last eight years of my 33-year career in Seattle, I -- I used the -- the COPS grants on a number of occasions, and yes, it's true. The Chairman and I have had these discussions. It's very, very difficult for us to -- to apply for a grant, and three years later, come up with a full cost of the -- of the employees. But it does give you an opportunity to work for -- with your council and your state legislators to come up with those funding (sic).

You know, after 9/11, I think it's one of the great success stories of the COPS Office. It provided an ability to adapt and respond quickly to critical law enforcement incidents or emerging issues in the field, and they've done so many times, including providing \$92 million to the city of New York shortly after 9/11 for officer hiring, and making hiring grants available to Orlando, and Dallas, San Bernardino in the aftermath of mass shootings.

And there are other stories that I -- I could go into, and I -- I know the controversy around COPS grants in -- in that local, you know, cities and counties and states should be paying for these police officer positions on their own. However, today, there is a great need, an emergent need, for this sort of help.

And I think that, again, as the chairman of -- I -- and I have, you know, visited on many occasions, on, what does the future hold for supporting local law enforcement across this country? And I know moving money to burn JAG (ph) is -- is one way to do that. But unless there's some specific language that directs that some of the money be actually spent on hiring police officers, it -- it's -- I don't know if it's going to happen.

The other thing I will -- I want to thank the chairman for, and members of the committee, is -- is their commitment to -- to increase the funding on Project Safe Neighborhoods, which is the project that was specifically designed when I was a sheriff, and I was an integral part of developing Project Safe Neighborhoods, a \$20 million increase in that budget, and I appreciate that.

There's more to do in the area of -- of gangs, and gun violence, and drugs, as -- as you know. But I think today, my message is, we need to keep intact some form of COPS hiring grants, and transition, begin a transition to supporting police departments, from sheriffs and police chiefs across the country in other ways so they can free up money to actually hire officers.

So I think it's important to look ahead to 21st century solutions to assisting police departments and sheriffs' offices, and becoming accredited, to having training programs that are -- that are top notch, to having evidence rooms that are operating at the highest level of expertise in collecting evidence, storing evidence, preparing it for court, to hiring.

So this accreditation process to me is one of those most important things. But first and foremost, we've got to make sure that today, in this most critical time of keeping our neighborhoods safe so that real people come back to our -- our neighborhoods. It's -- it is absolutely critical that we keep intact for -- for a while the COPS Grants Program.

Thank you, and I yield back.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much, Mr. Reichert. Do you -- We admire and respect our men and women in uniform, and I was so pleased to hear when President Trump came to the Republican retreat to tell us that one of his top priorities was to ensure that our men and women in blue, and our men and women in uniform around the world are respected, and as -- as they should be for the great work that you do. Thank you.

REICHERT:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much. Mr. Kilmer?

KILMER:

Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank you for speaking about the importance of COPS grants. Certainly around the hiring issues, but maybe you can just speak briefly to the importance of those grants also in trying to enhance the relationship between law enforcement and the communities in which they work.

In our neck of the woods, you know, for example, Tacoma's undertaking this Project Peace initiative to try to kind of lower the temperature around some of the potential concerns, and you know, certainly, COPS grants can be really vital in that regard too, if you want to speak to that.

REICHERT:

Yeah, I think that's -- that that is a critical point to make. I -- I spent a lot of time in the -- in the Tacoma area back in the -- in the days when I was investigating the -- the Green River case, and know the neighborhood and community pretty well.

The -- one of the critical tools that law enforcement can use today are storefront officers, are -- are school resource officers, are -- are officers who are engaged in the Police Activities League, the PAL Program... Any outreach that police officers and community can do together to go into those neighborhoods that may not have the most positive view of law enforcement. Once they get to know the -- the police officers, the neighborhood begins to change, believe it or not.

I'll tell just a short story about Baltimore. I'm sure they'll be proud to hear that I've shared this story, because it's great work that they are -- they are doing in Baltimore.

One of the programs that they've recently instituted after some of the violence that has occurred in their city, tragedies... They -- they planned an outdoor -- an outing with -- out into the outdoors, and a hiking and camping trip with some inner city youths, and they spent a week in this -- up in this camp, and at the end of the week, everybody's in -- in plain clothes, but at the end of the week there was a -- a gathering of the young people and the -- the counselors around a camp fire.

But there was something different about this gathering versus the gathering that's occurred the entire week with this group. This time, the -- the counselors wore their police uniforms, and surprised and shocked all of the young men and women who were members of gangs, or about to be affiliated with gangs. They were shocked, and amazed, and surprised. They had just spent the entire week, and had a ball, with a bunch of cops. So they made tremendous progress as a result of that interaction.

The COPS Office gives police departments and sheriff's offices, and state police officers across the country the opportunity to build this sort of program when they don't have the funds right now to -- to do that. And it's -- it is absolutely critical, and I think will and can result in the reduction of crime, and building -- building neighborhoods.

CULBERSON:

Mr. Serrano.

SERRANO:

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for your testimony, and for your support of the COPS Program. I was here when President Clinton worked closely with Congress, and vice versa, to create this program. And it was never the intent to have localities pay for it. The intent was for the federal government to be involved in augmenting and helping the local communities with all the issues that they had.

So those people that now make it controversial, as you've stated in your opening statement, by saying let localities pay for it, are forgetting what the reason for creating a separate program was. Otherwise, why would you need a federal program, if you're just going to tell localities to pay for it?

It was to create a better situation and a better atmosphere. Because God knows, there might be five, 10, 15, 100 issues in this country that merit immediate attention. One of them is for the community to understand who law enforcement is, and for law enforcement to understand who the community is. They both need each other, and they need to know that as soon as possible.

REICHERT:

If I could comment real quick, Mr. Chairman, I think it's absolutely critical, though, that the community, the local community has some skin in the game. And they -- they need to be a part of this process, and eventually, I think, need to take responsibility for. So I -- I -- I'm in agreement with you on the -- on the initial intent of -- of the COPS Office.

But I -- I've found that unless you go -- when you go into communities, and now I'm talking about my local community, as I served as the sheriff, and as a deputy, detective, and SWAT commander, hostage negotiator... When you go into the communities and you begin to work with the community, if -- if -- if it's all about the police are going to do this, and the community's going to

do that around you, and it's not the community involved and engaged with us, there -- there -- there's no success.

So I -- I do think that there is a responsibility by our local governments to be -- to have some skin in the game, and be a part of the process.

CULBERSON:

I've always felt the single most important part of our law enforcement, the entire law enforcement community in the United States, from -- are our men and women in uniform. A good heart, good common sense, dealing with the situation in neighborhoods, that you know better than anybody else. So, really appreciate your service.

REICHERT:

They just need to know now they've got backup.

CULBERSON:

Yeah, that's right.

REICHERT:

All right.

CULBERSON:

We need to make sure they all know we've got their back. Thank you.

REICHERT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Thank you. Good morning, Congressman Moore. We're glad to have you here with us, and your written statement will be entered into the record in its entirety without objection. We're pleased to have you with us.

MOORE:

Thank you so much, Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Serrano, and my colleagues and distinguished members of the subcommittee. I want to thank you for this extraordinary opportunity to testify on the importance of -- of investing in the cost-effective, life-saving Violence Against Women Act programs, and the Victims of Crime Act.

I'm the representative from Wisconsin's 4th Congressional District, but I'm also here as a survivor of both domestic and sexual violence.

The crimes of domestic and sexual violence are pervasive and life threatening. The CDC's National Intimate Partner And Sexual Violence Survey revealed that domestic violence affects more than 12 million Americans each year, approximately 15 and a half million children are exposed to domestic violence annually. Every day in the United States, an average of three women are killed by a current or a former intimate partner.

In my own home state, 68 lives were lost due to domestic violence in 2016, the highest that we've seen since we started counting.

Likewise, sexual assault is a national scourge, requiring local VAWA-supported resources. Nearly one in five women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape, and half of all women have experienced some sort of sexual violence.

These are not pretty data. Over 1.8 million individuals in Wisconsin have been raped or sexually assaulted. But with VAWA funding, Wisconsin rape crisis centers helped over 12,000 survivors in 2015. And I'm incredibly proud of the Wisconsin programs, and I know there are programs around the country, all of our districts, because of -- of Violence Against Women funding.

It was only a few years ago that we worked tirelessly in this body to reauthorize the passage of a bipartisan VAWA. We worked tirelessly to ensure the law meets the needs of all victims, including landmark provisions that granted survivors additional protections, safe housing, and justice for Native American women.

Our nation has made such phenomenal progress in understanding and addressing violence against women because we've made a national, ongoing, bipartisan annual investment. Before the passage of VAWA, these crimes were family matters, in the shadows. With the passage of VAWA, the infusion of federal funds fosters unprecedented coordination between front-liners responding to domestic violence and secular (ph) thought (ph) crisis.

In communities, VAWA driven coordination urged professionals out of their silos and brought them to a common table. VAWA's national scope ensures the successes in an individual community are brought to scale, and they continue to be replicated across the country.

VAWA's work is complemented by VOCA, which funds direct services to victims of all kinds of crimes, including dating (ph) and stalking. Together, VAWA and VOCA have fueled our undeniable national progress. VAWA saved an estimated \$12.6 billion in net averted costs in its first six years alone. Funding -- cutting funding would erode this progress and jeopardize lives. Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, such as Mr. Reichert, judges would not have the training and the tools they need to ensure victims' safety, and to hold perpetrators accountable.

An overwhelming need still remains. According to the National Network in Domestic Violence survey count, in just one day, although we've done such a great job, 11,000 requests for services are unmet due to lack of funding and resources. More than a third of the nation's 1,300 rape crisis

centers have a waiting list for critical services, while over 40 percent have faced a reduction of staffing over the past year. For those individuals who are not able to find safety, the consequences can be dire, even fatal.

We know that when immediate services are available, victims can escape life-threatening violence and rebuild their lives. I urge you to support full funding for all VAWA programs and increase release of VOCA funds as you work on the fiscal year '18 S.J. (ph) -- CGS (ph) bill. Our federal resources create vital cost-effective programs and help reduce related social ills and save our nation money now and in the future.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much, Congresswoman Moore. We cherish your support for the importance of these programs and appreciate your personal passion and commitment to help victims of violence all over the country.

MOORE:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I know (ph) -- I always say that it will just be a great day when we can defund this program and we won't need it any more. We'll just work our way out of this problem, and unfortunately, that's not on the horizon right now.

CULBERSON:

I believe we can keep working towards the rebuilding stable families and ensuring people respect each other, do all we can to instill those core American values in every new generation that comes along. Thank you very, very much for your testimony.

Mr. Serrano.

SERRANO:

I want to thank you for your testimony. It's not every day, if you pardon me bringing it up again, that you can get a person before you who not only represents victims, but was a victim himself or herself. And so your testimony is really powerful.

I also want to congratulate you on the fact that you never give up on this issue. I mean, every time you speak, that you could be speaking about a trip to the moon and you bring this issue up. And that's -- I say that not in a jocular way, but seriously and with great respect. And I thank you for that.

And you won't go away just thinking that you just made a statement and that's it. We take seriously and we hear, we take notes, and these folks remind us of what we heard during these hearings. Thank you.

MOORE:

Thank you so much. And you know, if I could just respond to that, Mr. Serrano.

You know, I'll be 66, God willing, in April. And so, I was sexually assaulted in my life long before there were -- there was the Violence Against Women Act, probably before there were any -- there were no calls you could make to anyone. And before there was mandatory reporting.

You know, I was sexually assaulted as a child, sexually assaulted as a teenager, as a college student. And, you know, I've even gone to court, even dared to go to court where I was on trial. You know, what kind of underwear did I have on? Did I have any on? And the perpetrator got off.

So this is very personal for me. It leaves indelible marks on you. Maybe that's why I bring it up. It changes who you are.

But I do remember, you know, some of the first people that rescued me from a violent situation where I was almost killed. I mean -- and, you know, it was a woman from Jamaica who was a CNA, and another white woman who was a CNA, and they whisked me off. They were people who just barely knew each other, but they joined together for me.

And it -- we can't rely on those informal systems because, like I said, half of all the -- I just don't know many women, to be honest, who haven't been beaten or raped or held hostage by their immigration status, and that's unfortunate.

CULBERSON:

I -- there's just no lower form of life on earth than someone who'd hurt a woman or her child. I just admire you immensely and appreciate so much your testimony. And obviously, because of those two women who helped rescue you, look where you are today.

MOORE:

Here I am. Thank you so very

CULBERSON:

It's a great country. God bless you. It's a great testament to your character. Thank you.

MOORE:

Thank you, colleagues.

CARTWRIGHT:

Mr. Chairman, I'd like (inaudible), with my thanks, Representative Moore. It's been a pleasure to get to know you and to serve with you, and to hear you bring your characteristic passion to this subject. It was a great privilege. Thank you for doing that. And thank you also for the written submission. This is really an erudite treatise on the things that you're talking about. It gives extensive references to authoritative sources that back up every single thing that you have said.

I come from Scranton, Pennsylvania, birthplace of Joe Biden.

MOORE:

Yes.

CARTWRIGHT:

I'm going to be reporting back to Vice President Biden about the work you have done to stand up. Scranton was his birthplace, but the birthplace of VAWA was in his senatorial office, and he'll be pleased to hear what I have to tell him. Thank you so much.

MOORE:

I love Joe. I do.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much.

MOORE:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

We are pleased to have with us today Representative Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania's 8th District. And your written statement will be entered into the record in its entirety, without objection. And we thank you for taking the time to be with us, and look forward to your testimony.

FITZPATRICK:

Thank you, Chairman Culberson, and thank you, Ranking Member Serrano, and the entire committee. And I'm here representing today the members of Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District, in support of robust funding for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, also known as CARA.

Communities across this nation have been devastated by opioid-related addiction. Drug overdoses have increased substantially and it is now the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. And the opioid epidemic continues to claim lives in my district as well as pretty much every

member of Congress's district across this country. From my district, from Levittown, Lower Salford, there's no part of our district that has been left unaffected.

Last year in Bucks County, which is the largest part of my district, opioid-related deaths rose by a staggering 50 percent, last year. In neighboring Montgomery County, opioid overdoses claimed a staggering 240 lives, a 36 percent increase from the previous year.

And in Chairman Culberson's district, two Houston area newspapers found Harris County had 275 prescription drug-related deaths in 2015. And in the New York City area, in Ranking Member Serrano's district, Bronx County had the highest rate of heroin-involved overdose deaths, and the largest increase of opioid-related deaths.

And with the passage of CARA last year, we now are at a pivotal moment in decreasing opioid-related death trends and targeting unlawful distributors through appropriations. Thoughtfully designed, CARA utilizes a balance strategy, encompassing six pillars, prevention, treatment, recovery support, criminal justice reforms, overdose reversal, and law enforcement.

The Comprehensive Opioid Abuse grant program provides \$103 million annually in grants to states, local governments, and tribal enforcement agencies. Specifically, in fiscal year 2017, the 2017 Funding Bill, released last May, Appropriations funding would allow the Attorney General to make grants in the following sections. Forty-two million to drug courts, \$12 million to mental health courts, and adult and juvenile collaborative program grants, \$12 million for grants for residential substance abuse treatment for state prisoners, \$7 million for veterans' treatment core programs, and \$14 million for states to expand or improve prescription drug monitoring programs.

This month I had the opportunity to discuss the opioid epidemic in my home district with Bensalem Township Police Department, Bucks County government officials, and members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. And each stakeholder emphasized the need for more and fuller funding for CARA, but I highlight two groups specifically.

First, state officials found it necessary to make significant enhancements to prescription drug monitoring programs, PDMPs. PDMPs can incorporate the same principles of other monitoring programs, including real-time data, interoperability, and incorporate a user-friendly design. I cite the Emergency Department Information Exchange and the National Precursor Log Exchange as existing systems that incorporate these principles successfully.

Second, our law enforcement officials, and they touted the need for additional funding to do the following. Expand overdose reversal capacity, expand prescription drug take-back programs across this country, investigate illicit activities for heroin and fentanyl, and improve efforts in seeking out unlawful distribution of prescription opioids. And in my discussion with Public Safety Director Fred Herron of the Bensalem Police Department, I learned that that department had reported two -- a 233 percent increase in fatal overdoses between 2015 and 2016, which is unbelievable.

Bensalem Police Department, this police department is the largest -- the ninth largest police department in Pennsylvania and the largest police department in Bucks County, and they have

minimal funding to combat this program and this problem. And they strongly believe that increased funding will enable them to do more, especially save lives.

And as a CPA in my former life, I fully understand the challenges of the Appropriations Committee faces with regards to allocating resources and being mindful of the budget. But I am confident that there will be a positive economic and, more importantly, positive social return by investing money in saving lives, where families can stay together and live productive lives together.

And I want to applaud Representatives Rogers, Carter, and Jenkins for their continued efforts as members of the Congressional Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery Caucus. And personally, as a member of the caucus -- I'm sorry. As a member of the Bipartisan Heroin Task Force, I ask this Committee to fully fund CARA for this fiscal year, for 2018.

And I want to thank you for your time and consideration. And just ask that, when you are considering the appropriations process, this is an issue that literally affects people's lives. It's a matter of life and death. And it is an epidemic across all districts in this county.

And I thank you for your time, and I yield back.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much, Mr. Fitzpatrick. This is an absolutely horrible, out of control epidemic that has just swept the country, and we appreciate very much you coming in to testify on behalf of this important program. And obviously it's something that we need to do all that we can to help local law enforcement, and help deal with fentanyl in particular.

And the DEA recently was horrified to see the explosion in fentanyl, which is so deadly and so powerful that the officers going in and cleaning up these labs, even a speck on their skin, they can get an overdose. That stuff is just pure poison. So I really appreciate your bringing this.

FITZPATRICK:

Appreciate it.

CULBERSON:

And we look forward to working with you on it.

Any questions.

FITZPATRICK:

Thank you for your time.

CULBERSON:

Please recognize Congressman Danny Davis from the 7th District of Illinois. We're pleased to have you with us here today, Mr. Davis, and we will enter your written statement into the record in its entirety, without objection. And look forward to your testimony. Thank you.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member Serrano.

I'm here today to advocate for a critical program that is reconnecting families and stabilizing communities, the Second Chance Act. The Second Chance Act which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law in April of 2008, authorized \$166 -- \$165 million for programs that have improved coordination of reentry services and policies at the state and local level, nonprofit organizations which mentor other transitional services to adults and juvenile offenders re-entering the community.

At the end of 2014, federal, state, and local correctional facilities held more than 2.2 million people. This amounted to at least one in every 200 residents. Unfortunately, most individuals face numerous challenges when returning to the communities from prison. And research indicates that over half return to prison within three years of their release.

At least 95 percent of the people incarcerated in state prisons will be released back to their communities at one point. Research suggests that without support, more than two-thirds will be re-arrested within three years of their release, and half will be re-incarcerated. However, when individuals returning from prison are able to access some services they need to rebuild their lives, the families and communities they return to are stronger and safer.

There have been more than 700 grants awarded in 49 states allowing reentry programs to expand. Second Chance grantees have served more than 137,000 participants since 2009, with 83 percent of all adults serving receiving no help and a substance abuse treatment services and referrals. Also, 60 percent of all adult participants have received cognitive-based services. Major Second Chance Act grant programs, including those awarded to community-based organizations, are prioritizing the use of grant dollars for independent program evaluations.

State and local government and non-profit organizations around the country have been eagerly launching innovative reentry programs, and families and communities are desperate to access the services the Second Chance Act provides.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, I am hopeful for a full funding of the Second Chance Act, and I look forward to working with you on this request. I would also like to submit for the record further information on the success of the Second Chance Act. I thank you, and yield back.

CULBERSON:

Thank you. Without objection, the written document that you've offered to the Committee will be entered into the record. Thank you. I appreciate very much you bringing this important program

to our attention today, and thank you very much for your testimony. We look forward to working with you on that.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

Mr. Serrano.

SERRANO:

Thank you very much.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

CULBERSON:

I'm please to recognize my good friend, Congressman Ted Poe, 2nd District (inaudible).

POE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Mr. Serrano.

As the Chair knows, I have spent most of my life, if not all my life, in the criminal justice system, first as a prosecutor for eight years in felony court, 22 years at the District Court in Houston trying felony cases, and now here in Congress, I'm proud to serve with Chair -- Co-Chairman caucus -- Costa on the Victim's Rights Caucus.

I'm going to talk about two things, and over all of those years, I have seen not only defendants but victims of crime. And some of those victims, mainly sexual assault victims, still contact me from time to time, just to check in, and I want to see how they are doing, because crime, especially to assault victims, many of them never recover. They just don't. We would hope they would, but they don't.

So there's two programs that are just excellent. There's the Victims of Crime Act. Congress in 1984, Mr. Serrano may have been here. I know you weren't but -- passed with bipartisan support. That was a great idea. It allowed federal judges to fine convicted criminals in federal court, and that money went into a fund for crime victims.

Make the criminals pay rent on the court house, pay for the system they created. And it's not taxpayer money. It's money that goes to victims. At least it's supposed to. And a very novel, wonderful idea, and now that fund is \$12 billion. And that's a lot of money, even for us, you know.

And only a fraction of that money is spent each year on crime victims. And all due respect, the rest of that money, the other 80 percent is used as an offset to fund other things that have nothing to do with crime victims. That is very unfortunate. I'll just use that word.

That money belongs to crime victims. It doesn't belong to other programs. But it's so tempting to take that money and use it as an offset. Remember, it's not taxpayer money. It's money that belongs to victims.

So I first want to say I would encourage this committee to spend more of that money. It's a little over \$2.5 billion that is spent, but the needs for crime victims, especially in the day of trafficking that we have, is increasing every year. And some of these shelters are doing great just to keep the lights on. And yet, here's this money that maybe could go to them to help crime victims.

So, spend more of that money and send it to where it belongs. That's to crime victims, not to other projects that have nothing to do with crime victims.

The other one is the Violence Against Women Act that was reauthorized in 2013. This program - - of course, we all know what's going on -- helps federal funds that goes to grants, to domestic shelters, and also to rape crisis centers.

Some of that money is the only money that rape crisis centers get, is the Violence Against Women Act funding, and it's done through grants. They go through the grant process and all of that stuff. Some VAWA money -- I say VAWA. VOCA money goes to that program, but not all of it. It's primarily grants by the federal government.

So those are two programs where we can speak for victims. Victims do not have a high-dollar lobby to come up here wanting something, you know, wanting anything. They primarily -- the people that come up here, I call them the victims' posse, they're made up of victims just trying to help other victims. And most of them have had some tragedy in their life that they're trying to deal with.

So, only Congress can speak for victims. There is no one else. VOCA money belongs to victims. Spend more of it, because it's their money. The VAWA grants are something that we do that is excellent. And I know there are a lot of programs, and we do a lot of things, and we spend money on everything from the military to bridges and roads. But what better way to spend money, is take care of American citizens who have been crime victims.

And with that, I will answer any questions that you have. And that's just the way it is.

CULBERSON:

Thank you, Judge. I think you're exactly right. Only Congress can speak for victims. They just don't -- they don't have anybody else, so I deeply appreciate it. And I like your description of this money. It's a rent on the court house.

POE:

Yes.

CULBERSON:

That's a good way to think about it. Make these bums pull their own weight. Pay their freight.

Mr. Serrano.

SERRANO:

(Inaudible) your testimony. To acknowledge that you come before us with firsthand knowledge of how these programs work, and where the dollars should be going after it's collected. So I think that you raise an impact on what we have to go through when we make these decisions. I thank you.

POE:

Thank you, sir.

CULBERSON:

And I think it's important to remember, too, that Houston, unfortunately has become a hub for human slavery. The sex trafficking is just awful. And it's -- really appreciate your leadership and working on that.

POE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CULBERSON:

We'll do all we can on the Commerce Subcommittee to work with you and help. Thank you. Thank you, Judge.

POE:

Thank you, all.

(OFF-MIKE)

CULBERSON:

Well, thank you, Congressman. I appreciate . . .

MEEHAN:

(Inaudible.)

CULBERSON:

. . . having Congressman Patrick Meehan from Pennsylvania's 7th District with us here today. And your written statement will be entered into the record in its entirety without objection.

Once again, thank you for your testimony today. (Inaudible) spot on time. Again, we thank you.

MEEHAN:

(Inaudible) the importance of providing funding to continue to address the problems of opioid and heroin addiction. It's a special honor to be here, because many of you have been leaders on these issues long before opioid and heroin addiction and overdoses became a nationwide epidemic.

As you know, section 201 of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act authorizes \$103 million annually for the Department of Justice to combat the opioid epidemic. The DOJ funding will be used to support state efforts to prevent and respond to the opioid epidemic.

The law authorizes a comprehensive opioid abuse grant program for states that enables them to use federal funding to implement or expand treatment programs as an alternative to incarceration, provide training and resources to first responders to administer opioid overdose reversal drugs, and to investigate unlawful distribution of heroin, fentanyl, and opioids. The fentanyl problem, as you know, is -- it's out of control.

The grant program authorizes states to use federal funding to implement or make improvements to their prescription drug monitoring programs. PDMPs reduce doctor shopping, change prescribing behavior, and decrease the time spent on drug diversion investigations, and they reduce prescription drug abuse.

The effect -- effectiveness of PDMPs can be enhanced through interstate data sharing. However, not all states with PDMPs share data with other states, because more than half of the states were able to share data with at least one other state. This funding, authorized by the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse grant program, will enable states to improve the utility of PDMPs, an issue wherein I have three states together, just to be (inaudible) , bordering my district.

States may also direct grant funding to divert veterans with addiction away from criminal justice system into drug treatment courts. More than two million young men and women have served our country in Iraq and Afghanistan and other duty posts overseas, and many face a difficult readjustment to civilian life after serving overseas.

According to the Rand Corporation, one in five veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will experience a stress-related mental illness, and many others fall victim to drug and alcohol abuse. The symptoms and subsequent behavior associated with post-traumatic stress, mental illness, drug abuse, and alcohol dependency bring many of these veterans into contact with the criminal justice

system. Veterans account for nine out of every 100 inmates in U.S. jails and prisons. That's a remarkable statistic.

As a former district attorney and federal prosecutor, I saw firsthand the struggles facing many of our veterans. Troubled veterans who commit small offenses deserve a chance to break free of the cycle of dependency and mental illness, not an irrevocable ticket to a jail cell and a loss of important veterans' benefits.

That's why in 2008 a judge in Buffalo, New York, opened the nation's first veterans' treatment court. Modeled on the successful drug courts program, veterans' treatment courts divert offenders from traditional criminal justice systems. Veterans' treatment courts promote sobriety, recovery, and stability through a coordinated response that involves cooperation and collaboration with the traditional partners found in drug and mental health court.

The courts also team up with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare networks, the Veterans Benefits Administration volunteer veteran mentors, and family support associations. They're all key to getting that veteran back on track.

Access to veterans' treatment courts is a simple bipartisan way that we can support our veterans instead of the retributive instrument of justice. The veterans' treatment court is seen as a restorative instrument of justice. Veterans' treatment courts have already developed a track record for low recidivism rates.

More than 200 veteran treatment courts have opened since 2008 and more are slated. I commend the subcommittee for its past support for veterans' treatment courts, and I ask for continued funding. We all know the statistics about the epidemic's effect on our communities.

As the subcommittee makes decisions regarding our nation's spending priorities, I ask that you think about the individuals and families in your districts whose lives have been turned upside down or sacrificed as a result of addiction. There's still much more to be done to address the opioid addiction crisis, but CARA and the funding it authorizes is a big step forward in helping our communities cope and respond.

I thank you for your consideration.

CULBERSON:

Thank you very much, Mr. Meehan. It's such a wonderful program, the veterans' treatment court, that's had a great success record, and deeply appreciate your coming in to remind us of that fact. Keep that in the forefront our mind and look forward to working with you on this.

MEEHAN:

I thank you, Congressman, and I note for the record that it was in this room and it was your committee that the first real commitment to them has been made, and they've made a huge difference in the lives of our veterans. So I thank you for that leadership.

CULBERSON:

Thank you. Mr. Serrano.

SERRANO:

I want to thank you for your testimony. This is an issue that's taken on some life, if I may use that expression, before our Congress was not paying attention to it. Neither was the American people, in all honesty. It was happening, and unless you were affected it wasn't happening.

This epidemic that's running throughout this country is being confronted now. People are aware. I think when Americans become aware and as representatives become aware, things begin to happen. And that's what I'm hopeful of, and I think that it's going to happen.

MEEHAN:

Well, I thank you for . . .

SERRANO:

I thank you.

MEEHAN:

. . . for your attention to it, and your appreciation.

I remember running for office and seeing a young man across the street, on the corner with a bottle and a bag at 9:00 a.m. And I asked about him, and they said he's there every day. And he was a -- I made a commitment that if I ever got here, I was never going to forget that young man. But the old military, we never leave our war fighters behind on the battlefield. And this is a battlefield that too many are facing.

And I thank you for your leadership and helping us pay attention to them, to put them into a system that allows them to get the support to help them see through.

CULBERSON:

Thank you for coming.

MEEHAN:

Thank you, Congressman. Thank you for the chance.

CULBERSON:

I guess -- (inaudible) go off the record (inaudible).

(UNKNOWN)

Yes, we're done.

CULBERSON:

All those members who were coming to testify personally have done so. We have a number of statements for the record, and without objection we will have those entered into the record in their entirety.

So the Subcommittee hearing is adjourned. Thank you very much.