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June 10, 2016

Honorable Loretta Lynch  
Attorney General of the United States  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to the State of Alaska and to thank you for your willingness to discuss the very difficult public safety issues that plague our remote and rural communities with the Alaska Federation of Natives and Alaska's tribal leaders. Your visit fulfills the commitment that you made to me before the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee on May 7, 2015 and I am grateful for it.

The Alaska congressional delegation is joining together today to express our shared aspirations for this visit in a letter that will be provided to you under separate cover. I would like to take the opportunity through this letter to respond to the two substantive proposals you intend to raise with the group.

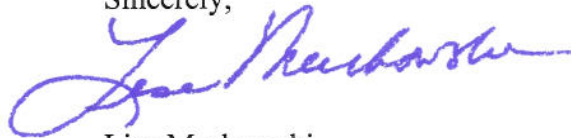
The first proposal is to establish a consultative federal, state and tribal group to work together on Alaska Native public safety issues. Section 909(b) of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, which I authored, required your department to study the reinstatement of the defunct Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission, possibly with changes in scope and composition. In my judgment it is important to maintain an ongoing tribal-federal-state forum to explore ways and formulate actions to address the critical public safety challenges we have discussed during your visits to my office and in congressional hearings. I am very encouraged by this proposal.

The second proposal is to create a new position - Senior Counselor for Alaska Native Affairs - which would be housed in the US Attorney's Office in Alaska and focus full-time on engagement with the Alaska Native community. Section 213(b) of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 provided for the creation of Tribal Liaisons in each of the districts in which Indian Country is present with a broad scope of responsibility. Alaska is one of those districts but because of the dearth of Indian Country in Alaska the focus of a Tribal Liaison in the Alaska US Attorney's Office might be different than a similar position in the Lower 48.

I applaud your commitment to create a Senior Counselor position for Alaska, which, on first impression, is more robust than the position required to be created by Section 213(b). I look forward to further discussions regarding the scope, civil service status, and selection process for the position.

As you visit with our Alaska Native leaders I also wanted to call to your attention that my staff has opened a dialogue with the Office of Tribal Justice with respect to new directions that may significantly enhance the ability of Alaska's tribes to improve public safety in our rural communities. This is an important dialogue and I hope that you will have the opportunity to engage with me on it upon your return to Washington.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

Enclosure

cc: Julie Kitka, President, Alaska Federation of Natives

S. HRG. 114-178

# *Senate Hearings*

*Before the Committee on Appropriations*

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## Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations

*Fiscal Year 2016*

114<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

H.R. 2578

BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE—OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION  
NONDEPARTMENTAL WITNESSES  
UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE

**COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RE-  
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2016**

**THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met at 10:32 a.m., in room SD-192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Richard C. Shelby (Chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Shelby, Alexander, Murkowski, Collins, Kirk, Boozman, Capito, Mikulski, Leahy, Feinstein, Coons, Baldwin, and Murphy.

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**STATEMENT OF HON. LORETTA E. LYNCH, ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD C. SHELBY**

Senator SHELBY. The subcommittee will come to order. Welcome to today's Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee hearing examining the Department of Justice's fiscal year 2016 budget request.

First, let me welcome Attorney General Loretta Lynch to her first hearing before this subcommittee as she assumes the important responsibility of serving as our Nation's chief law enforcement officer. Welcome. As you begin your term as Attorney General, I believe that it is critical for you to return the Office of Attorney General to its constitutional purpose, which is to enforce the laws of the land, not the decrees and whims of the President.

The President has a White House counsel and plenty of attorneys arguing for his points of view on immigration, privacy, environmental regulations and more. The Attorney General, I believe, is the servant of the laws and citizens of the United States, not the President. I want to encourage you, Madam Attorney General, to consider this perspective carefully as you begin your service in a job that is critical to our democracy and to the rule of law.

I am deeply troubled by your support of the President's unilateral Executive actions, which provide amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants. Fortunately, the sweeping policy change undertaken without input from Congress has been stayed by the courts while a detailed review is conducted through the lens of the law and the Constitution. I hope that while this litigation is pending, progress will be made on key responsibilities that are within the Depart-



## TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Attorney General, welcome and thank you. I want to point out the aspects of your budget that focus on tribal law enforcement. This is an issue, of course, that is very important in my State. We had an opportunity to discuss it in your pre-confirmation meeting that we had, and I know that you have recently had a conversation with Julie Kitka, who is the president of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

The public safety challenges that face Alaska Native villages run the gamut, everything from the absence of full-time law enforcement officers in some villages, inadequate resources devoted towards community-based prevention, and restorative justice efforts. We have a tribal court system that is struggling because it is just really in an embryonic stage. We have human trafficking of our native women. The heroin issues that you have heard discussed here today are not just limited to the cities. They are out in our villages.

I know that you have got a lot on your plate. It is clear from the discussions here this morning. But I would like your commitment that you will work with me, you will work with the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) to really be involved to a personal extent and degree with some of these challenges that we are facing as they relate to rural justice in our native areas—in our rural areas. I have been asked by AFN, and I am actually going to be speaking to their board by video or by teleconference this afternoon, for an opportunity to sit with you and some of the native leadership to discuss some of these issues that are just so very troubling to us right now.

So I would like your commitment that we can have that meeting and perhaps very quickly your observations based on your conversations with not only me, but Ms. Kitka, about some of the substantive issues that we have with rural justice in Alaska.

Attorney General LYNCH. Senator, I would look forward to such a meeting, and I would welcome it.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you.

Attorney General LYNCH. I think that the commitment that the Department of Justice and our Nation have made to Indian Country over the last several years has shown great promise, but it is one that must be sustained, maintained, and improved upon. We have several requests in the budget that go directly to the issues of tribal justice, the Office of Violence Against Women, for example.

And because it such an important issue to me, I am just going to outline them briefly because we are asking for an increase of \$100 million, but part of that money would go for tribal grant set asides. Twenty million would go for the Crime Victims Fund Tribal Assistance Program. Five million would go for the Office of Violence Against Women Domestic Violence Jurisdiction Program.

As I know you are well aware, we recently had great success in enabling tribal courts to deal with offenders who commit violence against women and children on native lands when the offenders are non-Natives. That had been a bar for some time. It has been tremendously helpful to have given that jurisdiction to the tribal courts.

We also are asking for money to address environmental problems in Indian Country as well as to maintain current positions. I firmly believe that this commitment must be not only maintained, but expanded upon else we really do risk sliding backwards, Senator, with all the issues faced by tribal lands, particularly, as you and I discussed with Alaska, having such a large land mass and dealing with the law enforcement challenges there. We have to set in place systems that will work, but that will also be maintained.

#### HEROIN

Senator MURKOWSKI. Well, I agree with you. We have got a lot of work to do, and I look forward to those conversations with you and your team. On the heroin issue, you have heard it repeated several times here today, but I will reiterate that in our very remote rural areas, areas that are islands, areas that are not accessible by road, we are seeing the impact of heroin, whether it is in Dillingham, whether it is in Kodiak. And actually we have got meth issues in the community of Kodiak, and law enforcement is focusing on that, so they are not able to focus on some of the smaller villages that are out there.

So you mentioned the heroin task force that is in place. I would ask that you not forget the smaller communities where we see—we see an addiction and a devastation truly just taking our communities, just wiping them out. And it is a frightening thought that the resources may be there and available for the cities, but that our smaller communities where losing a few young people can be so significant to just health, morale, and safety. So I would ask that you work with us on that.

And, Mr. Chairman, I do have other questions that I would like submitted for the record, most specifically with the codification of the Brady obligation in statute. We have talked about that, but I would like further follow up on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Attorney General LYNCH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SHELBY. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you Chairman Shelby, and thank you, Attorney General Lynch, for your service and for your testimony before us today. I want to congratulate you as you being your important service in the interest of our Nation.

Last year, Congress demonstrated its commitment to the Victims of Child Abuse Act by unanimously reauthorizing the programs in both chambers. Children's advocacy centers funded under this law conduct forensic interviews in a way that is both effective in serving law enforcement needs and respectful of the delicate needs of child victims of abuse.

#### CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

I was frankly very disappointed to see the President's fiscal year 2016 budget request once again only asked for half of the amount needed to fund these crucial programs. We are talking a modest amount, \$11 million out of the \$20 million authorization. What has your experience been with children's advocacy centers in your law enforcement role, and do you expect to be an advocate for them within the Department in 2016 and beyond?