

Ensuring Safety, Fairness, and Community Trust in the Criminal Justice System

Meeting Our Greatest Challenges: The President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget

Under the President's leadership, we have turned our economy around and created 14 million jobs. Our unemployment rate is below five percent for the first time in almost eight years. Nearly 18 million people have gained health coverage as the Affordable Care Act has taken effect. And we have dramatically cut our deficits by almost three-quarters and set our Nation on a more sustainable fiscal path.

Yet while it is important to take stock of our progress, this Budget is not about looking back at the road we have traveled. It is about looking forward and making sure our economy works for everybody, not just those at the top. It is about choosing investments that not only make us stronger today, but also reflect the kind of country we aspire to be – the kind of country we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren.

The Budget makes critical investments in our domestic and national security priorities while adhering to the bipartisan budget agreement signed into law last fall, and it lifts sequestration in future years so that we continue to invest in our economic future and our national security. It also drives down deficits and maintains our fiscal progress through smart savings from health care, immigration, and tax reforms.

The Budget shows that the President and the Administration remain focused on meeting our greatest challenges – including accelerating the pace of innovation to tackle climate change and find new treatments for devastating diseases; giving everyone a fair shot at opportunity and economic security; and advancing our national security and global leadership – not only for the year ahead, but for decades to come.

Since the President took office, the rate of violent crime in the United States has fallen to levels not seen in decades. In 2014 – for the first time in over 30 years – the Federal prisoner population decreased, following the passage of the Fair Sentencing Act in 2010, changes to Federal sentencing guidelines, and implementation of DOJ's Smart on Crime initiative. The Budget builds on successful practices and invests in reform where necessary.

Incentivizing Justice Reform with the 21st Century Justice Initiative.

To further the Administration's support of criminal justice reform that enhances public safety, avoids excessive punishment and unnecessary incarceration, and builds trust between the justice system and the community, the Budget proposes the 21st Century Justice Initiative, a \$5 billion investment of \$500 million per year over 10 years. The Initiative will focus on three objectives: reducing crime, reversing practices that have led to unnecessarily long sentences and unnecessary incarceration, and building community trust. Specifically, States seeking funds would focus on one or more opportunities for reform in both the adult and juvenile systems, including: examining state laws and policies that contribute to unnecessarily long sentences and unnecessary incarceration and changing those laws and policies in ways that do not sacrifice public safety; promoting critical advancements in community-oriented policing; and providing comprehensive front-end and reentry services.

Supporting the President's New Executive Actions to Reduce Gun Violence.

The Budget supports the President's plan to protect our children and communities by reducing gun violence through background checks, inspections of Federally-licensed firearms dealers, improved tracing and ballistics analysis, and efforts to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals. The Budget provides funding to hire 200 new special agents and investigators for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); enhance the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN); and improve the National Instant Background Check System (NICS). Additionally, the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security will conduct and sponsor research into gun safety technology that would reduce the frequency of harm from accidental discharge or unauthorized use. Lastly, the budget includes a \$500 million investment to increase access to mental health care.

Renewing Efforts to Promote Juvenile Justice and Fight Youth Violence.

The Budget proposes \$334.4 million for the Justice Department's Juvenile Justice Programs and includes evidence-based investments to prevent youth violence. These investments include \$18 million to fund the Community-Based Violence Prevention Initiative; \$4 million for the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention to help further leverage and scale Federal efforts that support youth violence prevention; and \$20 million for the new Smart on Juvenile Justice initiative that will provide incentive grants to assist States to foster better outcomes for justice-involved youth. Further, the Budget makes available \$23 million for research and pilot projects focused on developing appropriate responses for youth exposed to violence, as well as resources for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE) Initiative.

Continuing Efforts to Combat Violence Against Women.

The Budget provides \$489 million, of which \$326 million is made available from the Crime Victims Fund, for the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) at the Department of Justice to reinforce efforts to combat and respond to violent crimes against women. As a result of prior investments in this area, civil and criminal justice systems are more responsive to victims, and crimes of violence committed against women have declined in recent years. Yet, reducing such violence and meeting the needs of the estimated 1.9 million women victimized by rape and sexual assault annually, and the nearly seven million victims of other sexual violence each year, remains a critical priority. This funding includes \$200 million for STOP Grants to Combat Violence Against Women, \$35 million for the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), and \$26 million to reduce violent crimes against women on campus. The Budget also provides \$5 million for a Tribal Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction grant to support tribes that choose to participate through funding to strengthen tribal criminal justice systems, provide indigent defense counsel, develop appropriate jury pools, and assist victims.

Countering Violent Extremism.

Incidents of violent extremism in the United States and Americans traveling abroad to join terrorist groups heighten the importance and demonstrate the critical need of stopping radicalization.

The President's Budget includes funding for the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) newly created Office of Community Partnerships. This office will formalize and continue current efforts to

build relationships and promote trust with communities, which focus on innovative, community-based approaches that seek to discourage violent extremism and undercut terrorist narratives. The President's Budget also includes \$50 million in federal assistance for the Federal Emergency Management Agency specifically for efforts to respond to emergent threats from violent extremism and prevent, prepare for, and respond to complex, coordinated attacks.

The President's Budget includes \$15 million for the Department of Justice to significantly improve the ability of communities and stakeholders to identify potential extremists and intervene where necessary to thwart radical behavior that may lead to violence. Grant funding will support research, model development, training, and demonstration projects at the community level to enhance the partnership to counter violent extremism of law enforcement agencies nationwide with local residents, business owners, community groups, and other stakeholders.

Reducing Crime and Recidivism.

The Administration is committed to a comprehensive strategy to reduce incarceration costs over the long term by facilitating inmates' transition into society in order to reduce recidivism rates, increase public safety, and strengthen communities.

The Budget takes steps to address the cycle of incarceration by investing additional resources in the Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) evidence-based re-entry programs. These investments include \$89 million to increase health and mental health services and expand staffing for Residential Reentry Centers (RRC). It also includes \$91 million to provide innovative reentry programs in BOP facilities, create programming that strengthens familial bonds, increase vocational and educational training, and expand RRC beds. In addition, the Budget provides \$100 million for the Second Chance Act Grant program, an increase of \$32 million, to reduce recidivism and help those exiting the justice system rejoin their communities and lead productive lives. The Budget provides \$95 million – an increase of \$7 million – for the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program to prepare justice-involved adults and juveniles for success in the labor market through career assistance, training, and supportive services.

Protecting Civil Rights.

The Budget strongly supports the agencies that protect civil rights. Specifically, the Budget:

- Provides \$156 million for the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division to protect civil rights – including enforcing Federal prohibitions against racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination. For 2017, the Civil Rights Division will enhance efforts to improve policing practices, protect the rights of servicemembers, and better enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Builds upon existing resources provided to the Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS) to respond to alleged hate crimes on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.
- Provides \$376 million for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a \$12 million increase, to allow the agency to target and remedy employment discrimination and address its backlog of private-sector discrimination charges.
- Provides \$114 million for the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, including additional funding to strengthen the agency's ability to target pay discrimination.

- Provides \$138 million, an increase of \$31 million over the 2016 enacted level, for the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, which ensures equal access to education, from preschool through higher education. The additional funding provides over 150 new full-time employees to help successfully respond to complaints of discrimination and to ensure Federal grantees follow civil rights laws. The work of this office includes combating sexual violence, promoting teacher and resource equity, and reducing discriminatory discipline practices.