



Department of Justice

**STATEMENT OF
MERRICK B. GARLAND
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND
RELATED AGENCIES**

**AT A HEARING ENTITLED
“A REVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT’S FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET
REQUEST FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE”**

**PRESENTED
APRIL 17, 2024**

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INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon, Chair Shaheen, Ranking Member Moran, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the President’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 funding request for the United States Department of Justice.

Since I last appeared before you, the more than 115,000 employees of the Justice Department have continued to work tirelessly to fulfill our mission to keep our country safe from all threats, foreign and domestic; to protect the civil rights of everyone in our country; and to uphold the rule of law that is the foundation of our system of government.

Our law enforcement agents, prosecutors, and grantmaking experts have continued to work closely with police and community partners across the country to help protect the safety of the American people.

That has included our efforts with law enforcement and community partners to replicate successes we have seen in communities that are driving down the violent crime that spiked during the pandemic. Our U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and our Criminal Division are going after the individuals and gangs responsible for the greatest violence. Our law enforcement agencies are working with their state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners to seize illegal guns and deadly drugs, including fentanyl. And our grantmaking components are working closely with local communities to provide targeted support and assistance. We are funding evidence-based, community-centered initiatives aimed at preventing and disrupting violence. We are supporting community policing efforts that build the public trust between law enforcement and the community that we know is essential to public safety. We are making critical investments in hiring law enforcement officers in communities nationwide to address the crisis in recruitment and retention. And we are providing much-needed resources for law enforcement officer health and wellness.

We know that we must remain focused and vigilant, but we are encouraged by recent FBI

data indicating a decrease in violent crime in communities across the country in 2023 compared to the prior year, including an over 13% decline in homicides. This indicator of declining violent crime comes alongside other encouraging data we have seen released within the last year.

And in the wake of the October 7 terrorist attacks on Israel, we have worked closely with our law enforcement and community partners to monitor the impact the conflict in the Middle East may have in inspiring foreign terrorist organizations, homegrown violent extremists, and domestic violent extremists both in the United States and abroad. Following the October 7 attacks, I directed all of our U.S. Attorneys' Offices and all of our FBI Field Offices to meet with local law enforcement and community leaders to strengthen our response to threats of hate-fueled violence. We have seen a sharp increase in threats against Jewish, Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities, and we are aggressively investigating and prosecuting such threats. We will continue to do so.

We are continuing to prioritize our responsibility to protect both the safety and the civil rights of everyone in our country. We are prosecuting hate-fueled acts of violence and threats of violence. We are protecting the cornerstone of our democracy: the right of all eligible citizens to vote and to have that vote counted. We are working to ensure constitutional policing and to build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. And we are enforcing federal law prohibiting discrimination in all its forms. Just last fall, only two years after I launched the Justice Department's Combating Redlining Initiative, I announced that we had secured more than \$100 million for communities across the country that have been harmed by discriminatory lending practices.

The Justice Department is also continuing to fulfill the responsibility that underlies all of our work – upholding the rule of law. We are adhering to the norms that safeguard the Justice Department's independence and integrity. Principal among those norms is that we treat like cases alike. There is not one set of laws for the powerful and another for the powerless; one for the rich, and another for the poor; one for Democrats, another for Republicans; or different rules, depending upon one's race or ethnicity or religion. We follow the facts and the law. We do not tolerate improper influence of any kind. And we apply the law in a way that respects the Constitution.

Our work to uphold the rule of law includes protecting our country's democratic institutions and protecting those who serve the public from violence and threats of violence. Since the January 6, 2021, attack on the United States Capitol, the Department has engaged in one of the most complex and resource-intensive investigations in our history. We have initiated prosecutions and secured convictions across a wide range of criminal conduct that occurred on January 6, as well as in the days and weeks leading up to the attack. That includes convictions of those who brutally assaulted officers at the Capitol; those who obstructed the certification of the presidential election; and leaders of both the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers for seditious conspiracy. So far, we have charged over 1,380 individuals and obtained over 940 convictions in connection with the January 6 attack.

We are also continuing to investigate and prosecute those who use violence and threats of violence to target Americans who serve and interact with the public at every level. Last month, as a result of the work of the Department’s Election Threats Task Force, a man in Massachusetts was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for threatening an Arizona election official. Also, in February of this year, a woman in Texas was sentenced to 37 months in prison for threatening to assassinate a federal judge in Florida. In February, we secured the conviction of a man in Florida for threatening to murder a member of Congress. During the first week in January, we charged a man in Connecticut for making threats against a Veterans Affairs Medical Center and a member of Congress, and we charged an individual in Florida for threatening to kill a member of Congress and the congressperson’s children. Last December, we secured a year-long prison sentence for an individual in New Mexico who threatened to “put a bullet” in the face of a congresswoman. These cases represent just a fraction of the work the Department is doing to disrupt and prosecute violence and threats of violence against those who serve the public.

Securing the \$37.8 billion in discretionary resources outlined in our FY 2025 budget request is critical to our efforts to advance the Department’s mission in service of the American people.

Keeping Our Country Safe

The Department’s FY 2025 budget requests more than \$21.0 billion to sustain and expand the capacities of our law enforcement components and U.S. Attorneys’ Offices to help keep our country safe. This funding includes:

- **\$11.3 billion** for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to carry out its complex mission, including keeping our country safe from a multitude of serious and evolving threats – which include terrorism, espionage, cyber threats, violent crime, and the proliferation and potential use of weapons of mass destruction;
- **\$2.8 billion** for the United States Attorneys’ Offices, including resources to prioritize the prosecution of violent crime;
- **\$2.7 billion** for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to combat drug cartels and the flow of deadly drugs into our communities (in addition to the \$651.7 million dedicated to DEA’s diversion control efforts);
- **\$1.9 billion** for the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) to assist local law enforcement in apprehending violent fugitives in our neighborhoods and to protect our nation’s judges and courts;
- **\$2.0 billion** for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to continue to implement the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*, to address the scourge of violent gun crime, and to support the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network and the National Services Center;

- **\$239.3 million** for the Criminal Division to prosecute violations of federal criminal law, including cybercrime, drug trafficking, child exploitation, and gang and gun-related violent crime; and
- **\$143.5 million** for the National Security Division to enhance its ability to pursue national security threats, including threats posed by terrorism, cybercrime, and hostile nation-states.

Today, I would like to highlight four significant areas the Department is focused on in our efforts to help keep our country safe: protecting national security; combating violent crime and gun violence, including by supporting state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement and building public trust; disrupting drug trafficking networks and preventing overdose deaths; and protecting Americans from economic harm.

Protecting National Security

The Justice Department's FY 2025 budget request includes nearly \$7.7 billion for national security programs to combat the wide range of complex and evolving threats facing the United States — while protecting civil rights and civil liberties. At the beginning of this year, the Justice Department secured the guilty plea of the terrorist who attacked NYPD officers in Times Square on New Year's Eve in 2022. That case represents just a snapshot of the work the Department is doing to help counter the threat terrorism poses to our country. Our request includes more than \$1.6 billion to support the counterterrorism work of our 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices; our law enforcement components, including the FBI and the ATF; our grant-making offices; and our litigating divisions, including the National Security Division, the Civil Division, and the Criminal Division.

In addition to sustaining and strengthening our counterterrorism efforts, the Department's FY 2025 budget also requests investments in our work to investigate, prosecute, and otherwise disrupt the threats posed by the governments of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Russia, Iran, and North Korea. To address these threats, the Justice Department is bringing prosecutions against foreign agents attempting to undermine the rule of law in the United States, enforcing violations of economic sanctions and export controls, and combating transnational repression. For example, in February of this year, the Justice Department seized over \$108 million and 500,000 barrels of fuel that would otherwise have enabled the Government of Iran to further its destabilizing activities, including its support of Hamas, Hizballah, and other Iranian-aligned terrorist groups.

In addition, the Justice Department recognizes the threat posed by nation-states that are using cyber operations to steal our intellectual property, target critical infrastructure, compromise our networks and supply chains, and cause significant economic harm. That is why just last month, we charged seven members of a hacking group backed by the Chinese government for their roles in a years-long scheme targeting U.S. and foreign critics, businesses, and political officials in furtherance of the PRC's economic espionage and foreign intelligence objectives. And, in February 2024, the Department conducted a court-authorized disruption of a botnet controlled by Russian intelligence services.

The Department is also accelerating its efforts alongside its international partners to meet the threat posed by ransomware groups. Two months ago, the Justice Department, together with our partners in the United Kingdom, disrupted the LockBit ransomware group. LockBit was one of the most active ransomware groups in the world and had targeted over 2,000 victims, receiving more than \$120 million in ransom payments and making ransom demands totaling hundreds of millions of dollars. To meet the increasing and evolving cybercrime threat posed by both nation-states and criminal groups, the Justice Department's FY 2025 budget request includes over \$1.3 billion to investigate, prosecute, and fight cybercrime and strengthen the Department's cybersecurity and cyber-resilience. The Department's FY 2025 budget also maintains critical resources for the Criminal and the National Security Divisions, as well as the FBI and our U.S. Attorneys' Offices, to pursue complex intellectual property crime investigations around the world.

The Department has pursued a number of measures to ensure accountability for Russia's full-scale, brutal, and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. The Department launched Task Force KleptoCapture (TFKC) to further leverage our tools and authorities to combat efforts to evade or undermine U.S. sanctions and export controls. We also launched a War Crimes Accountability Team to bring to justice the individuals responsible for committing atrocities in Ukraine and deter future aggression. In December 2023, the Department filed the first-ever charges under the U.S. war crimes statute against four Russia-affiliated military personnel for heinous crimes against an American citizen.

Congress has been an important partner in strengthening these efforts. In January 2023, the President signed into law the *Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act*, which enables the Department to prosecute war criminals present in the United States regardless of where the offense occurs. And on December 29, 2022, the President signed into law the *Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2023*. Among other things, the Act authorizes the Department to conduct transfers of certain forfeited Russian oligarch assets to the Department of State to remediate the harms of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In February 2023, I authorized the first transfer under this new authority.

Combating Violent Crime and Gun Violence, Supporting State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Law Enforcement, and Building Public Trust

The Justice Department's strategy to reduce violent crime and gun violence is rooted in our partnerships: partnerships among federal law enforcement agencies who are assisting in the fight against violent crime; partnerships with the state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies tasked with protecting their local communities; and partnerships with the local communities themselves. We are committed to providing our partners with the resources and tools that they need to keep communities safe and to strengthen the public trust that is essential to public safety.

As part of that strategy, the ATF, DEA, FBI, and USMS are partnering with state and local law enforcement agencies to embed agents, seize and trace guns used in crimes, disrupt violent drug trafficking, pursue fugitives, and provide other necessary support. And our

prosecutors are focusing their resources on finding, arresting, and convicting the individuals who have repeatedly committed violent offenses and criminal organizations that are the principal drivers of violent crime. We have also surged prosecutorial resources to cities that experienced a record rise in violent crime. In Houston, Texas, and Memphis, Tennessee, we launched a Violent Crime Initiative that brought prosecutors from the Department's Criminal Division to work closely with prosecutors already on the ground to target those responsible for the greatest violence. That initiative also engages with community-based organizations that focus on violence prevention, intervention, and reentry programs. Earlier this year, we announced an additional surge of resources to Washington, D.C., to combat violent crime in our nation's capital. Earlier this month, we launched the next phase of our Violent Crime Initiative in St. Louis, Missouri; Jackson, Mississippi; and Hartford, Connecticut.

We have also been bringing to bear our advanced technological tools — ballistics analysis, firearms tracing, gun intelligence centers, and local fusion cells — in our work to disrupt illegal gun trafficking and reduce gun violence. The Department requests an increase of \$18.7 million to enhance ATF's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network and Crime Gun Intelligence Centers.

Our FY 2025 budget request also reflects the Department's commitment to continuing to bring public safety resources to localities across the country that need it the most.

The Department's three grantmaking components, the Offices of Justice Programs (OJP), Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), provide vital support to the Department's state, local, and Tribal partners through more than 200 grant programs.

The Department's FY 2025 budget includes \$2.5 billion in discretionary and mandatory funding for the COPS Hiring Program to enable law enforcement agencies across the country to hire more full-time law enforcement professionals.

Our budget requests needed resources for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to advance community safety and build community trust. Those resources will fund critical longstanding grant programs, including \$524.5 million for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, including resources to fund the Department's Project Safe Neighborhoods program, and resources to fund the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grants. This funding will also support community violence intervention programs, as well as programming that promotes justice and healing for victims of crime. In addition, these resources will support the Department's Officer Robert Wilson III Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Officer Safety and Wellness Initiative, which provides trainings, research, and guidance on preventing violence against law enforcement and supporting officer wellness.

The Department's FY 2025 budget includes resources to support the vital work of OVW to improve the country's response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The Department's request includes \$800.0 million for OVW — an increase of \$87.0 million above the FY 2024 enacted level — to support both longstanding OVW programs and

newer ones, such as those addressing cybercrimes against individuals and trauma-informed training for law enforcement officers. The request includes funding for programs to provide support to local, state, Tribal, and territorial partners, including prosecutors, officers, courts, and victim services, as well as homicide and domestic violence reduction initiatives.

In addition, the Department's FY 2025 budget seeks key resources to protect vulnerable communities and help victims of crime get back on their feet. That includes funding to combat child abduction and exploitation, protect victims of violence and abuse, reform juvenile justice systems, and expand access to sexual assault nurse examination programs. The budget also includes a legislative proposal to ensure stable and consistent funding levels for the Crime Victims Fund over the next decade.

The Department also seeks \$29.1 million for the Community Relations Service to provide mediation and conciliation services to communities impacted by conflict.

Our FY 2025 budget requests funding for the Department to address the unique public safety challenges facing Tribal communities. Last month, I met with Tribal leadership, Tribal law enforcement, and victim services experts on the Crow Indian Reservation and heard about the challenges that Tribal victims of crime face in accessing the services they need to recover and feel safe in their communities. The Justice Department recognizes that more must be done across the federal government to keep Tribal communities safe, and to address the crisis of missing or murdered Indigenous persons. We remain steadfast in our commitment to this work. To that end, we are seeking \$713.2 million for our law enforcement agencies, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, Office of Tribal Justice, and grantmaking components to address the crisis of missing or murdered Indigenous persons, and to combat violent crime and support public safety initiatives in Indian Country. This includes \$261.8 million in grants for Tribal assistance, victim services, Tribal youth programs, and domestic violence reduction programs, including \$25.0 million to help Tribes hold accountable non-Indian offenders who commit certain violent crimes in their communities, such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking.

As part of the Department's work to end the gun violence epidemic, our FY 2025 budget requests resources to continue to implement the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act* (BSCA). Since BSCA's enactment in 2022, the Department has brought charges against more than 420 defendants under the law's new firearms trafficking and straw purchasing criminal offenses.

In the 22 months since the passage of BSCA, the law's expanded background checks have already kept more than 700 firearms out of the hands of young people who are prohibited from having them. Our request seeks an additional \$124.9 million to continue our efforts to disrupt gun violence and implement BSCA. The Department's budget proposes \$884.0 million of mandatory funding for the new Gun Crime Prevention Strategic Fund in FY 2025 and \$4.4 billion in total over the next five years. That Fund will provide grants to support police and prosecutors and provide an infusion of resources to enhance law enforcement access to promising technology and evidence-based training, and to modernize the recruitment and retention of a 21st century law enforcement workforce. In addition, the Fund will provide communities with resources they need to set up and support task forces to bring down homicide and gun violence.

Disrupting Drug Trafficking Networks and Preventing Overdose Deaths

The Justice Department is working every day to get fentanyl and other deadly drugs out of our communities and bring to justice those who put them there. Over the past three years, the Department has zeroed in on the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels, the two largest and most violent drug trafficking operations in the world that have wreaked havoc on American communities. Our agents and prosecutors are working with state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners to break apart every link in the cartels' global supply chains, which includes the cartels' leaders, their drug traffickers, their money launderers, their clandestine lab operators, their security forces, their weapons suppliers, and their chemical suppliers. In 2023, DEA seized more than 79.5 million fentanyl-laced pills and nearly 12,000 pounds of fentanyl powder.

Earlier this month, the Department arrested dozens of Jalisco Cartel associates in Texas on charges of cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, and meth trafficking. In February, in New York, a precursor chemical broker of fentanyl and methamphetamine, who provided chemicals to several cartels, including the Jalisco Cartel, was sentenced to 18 years and eight months in prison. Earlier this year, an associate of the Sinaloa Cartel was sentenced to over 21 years in prison for trafficking deadly drugs into the United States. Late last year, we charged the leaders of the violent Malas Manas cartel with human smuggling and drug trafficking. In October 2023, we announced charges against chemical companies and their employees based in China for trafficking fentanyl and methamphetamine precursor chemicals into the United States. And in April 2023, I announced several significant actions the Justice Department took against the Sinaloa Cartel. This included charges against the cartel's leaders, its chemical suppliers, manufacturers, gun and drug traffickers, and money launderers. In September 2023, Ovidio Guzman Lopez, a leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, and the son of Joaquin Guzman Loera, also known as "El Chapo," was extradited from Mexico to the United States.

To continue this work, the Department's FY 2025 budget requests critical resources to combat violent drug cartels and to stop the flow of deadly drugs into our communities. This includes our request for:

- **\$3.3 billion** for DEA's investigations, counterdrug efforts across 241 domestic offices and 93 foreign offices in 69 countries around the world, and diversion control;
- **\$1.4 billion** for the USMS's efforts to capture drug trafficking fugitives and detain them;
- **\$188.9 million** for the FBI's counterdrug operations, including targeting fentanyl and opioid trafficking on the Dark Web;
- **\$550.5 million** for the Department's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) to combat transnational organized crime, money laundering, and major drug trafficking networks;
- **\$48.0 million** for the Criminal Division's efforts to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking networks; and

- **\$20.2 million** for the Civil Division’s efforts to advance national chain pharmacy litigation and opioid-related cases.

Last fall, I spent a morning with people from across the country who came to Washington, D.C., for DEA’s second annual family summit. They attended the summit because they had lost a loved one to a drug poisoning or overdose and they wanted to do everything in their power to prevent that from happening to another family. I promised them that we would remember the victims of the poisoning and overdose epidemic, and that we would never give up in our efforts to pursue justice for them. I also told them that the Justice Department understands that no one person, and no one family can defeat this epidemic alone. That is why, in addition to our enforcement efforts, the Department is working every day to support communities in their efforts to confront the public health challenges of substance use. For FY 2025, the Department is requesting more than \$490.0 million in grants to address the overdose epidemic, including an increase of \$23.0 million over the FY 2024 enacted level for the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act* (CARA) grants to continue support for the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP), treatment court programs, the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP), the Veterans Treatment Court Program, and Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs.

Protecting Americans from Economic Harm

The Justice Department’s FY 2025 budget request seeks resources to continue our essential work to promote economic competition, prevent the theft of intellectual property, deter and prosecute corporate crime, protect the government against fraud, and combat corruption.

That includes supporting the Department’s efforts to vigorously enforce the antitrust laws that protect consumers from higher prices and fewer choices. In March, the Justice Department sued Apple for monopolizing smartphone markets in the United States, and earlier in the month, JetBlue announced that it had abandoned its \$3.8 billion acquisition of Spirit Airlines after the Department proved in court that a merger between JetBlue and Spirit would have caused tens of millions of travelers to face higher fares and fewer choices.

Our request also seeks resources to continue our work to hold accountable the individuals responsible for corporate crime. In February of this year, officials from a corn milling company were sentenced to federal prison for their roles in a deadly explosion that killed five workers in Wisconsin in 2017. In just the last three months of 2023, we secured the convictions of the CEOs of two of the largest cryptocurrency platforms in the world — FTX and Binance. In total, we charged over 4,800 white collar defendants nationwide in 2023.

We are also dedicating resources to addressing the increasing overlap between our work related to combating corporate crime and protecting our national security, including by investigating and prosecuting terrorist financing, export control circumvention, and sanctions evasion.

And we are devoting resources to recovering and protecting taxpayer dollars from fraud and abuse. Last fiscal year, settlements and judgments under the *False Claims Act* exceeded

\$2.68 billion, and the government and whistleblowers were party to 543 settlements and judgments — the highest annual number of settlements and judgments in history.

Almost three years ago, I established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department, in partnership with agencies across government, to combat, prevent, and prosecute COVID-19 related fraud. Since then, the Task Force has charged more than 3,500 defendants, secured more than \$1.4 billion in forfeiture orders to recover stolen funds, and filed more than 400 civil lawsuits resulting in court judgements and settlements.

The Department supports legislation to extend the statute of limitations for criminal offenses and civil and administrative violations affecting COVID-19 pandemic relief funding. Such an extension is warranted because of, among other reasons, the size and number of the programs affected. Though the COVID-19 health emergency may have ended, the Justice Department’s work to identify and prosecute those who stole pandemic relief funds is far from over.

To continue our work to protect Americans from economic harm, our FY 2025 budget request includes:

- **\$288.0 million** for the Antitrust Division to help promote competition in the American economy and protect workers, consumers, and businesses alike;
- **\$426.4 million** for the U.S. Attorneys’ Offices to support their efforts to bring cases combating civil and criminal fraud and white collar crime;
- **\$502.0 million** for the FBI to support its work investigating corporate crime, fraud, money laundering, intellectual property theft, and other economic crimes;
- **\$256.1 million** for the Civil Division’s efforts to enforce laws that protect the health, safety, and economic security of American consumers;
- **\$91.6 million** for the Criminal Division to support its anti-fraud efforts and their investigations and prosecutions of white collar crime; and
- **\$129.3 million** for the Tax Division, to support its vital work of enforcing our tax laws fully, fairly, and consistently.

Protecting Civil Rights

The Justice Department was first established in 1870, in the wake of the Civil War and in the midst of Reconstruction, with the first principal purpose of enforcing the protections guaranteed by the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. Protecting civil rights remains our urgent charge today. The Department’s FY 2025 budget requests significant investments to advance our essential work to protect voting rights, combat hate crimes, foster trust and accountability in law enforcement, expand access to justice, reform the criminal justice system, defend federally protected reproductive rights, and advance environmental justice and tackle the climate crisis. It

also includes resources to continue our work to enforce federal laws prohibiting discrimination in lending. In February of this year, the Department reached a \$13.5 million settlement with First National Bank of Pennsylvania to expand access to credit services for Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in North Carolina that for too long had been denied to them. With that settlement, the Justice Department's Combating Redlining Initiative has now secured over \$122 million in relief for communities across the country.

To protect and advance civil rights, our FY 2025 budget request includes:

- **\$201.3 million** for the Civil Rights Division — an increase of \$19.7 million or 10.8 percent above the FY 2024 enacted level — to expand its efforts to protect civil rights, including deterring and prosecuting hate crimes, safeguarding fair elections, and combating discrimination;
- **\$114.5 million** for the FBI to support its work to investigate alleged violations of civil rights laws;
- **\$55.8 million** for the U.S. Attorneys' Offices to support their civil rights protection work; and,
- **\$10.4 million** for the Office for Access to Justice to expand equal access to justice for all.

Protecting Voting Rights

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, the right from which all others flow. The Justice Department is continuing to vigorously protect voting rights using all resources and enforcement tools at our disposal. Our efforts have included increasing the number of enforcement attorneys in the Civil Rights Division to scrutinize emerging laws that curb voter access or discriminate against Black voters and other voters of color. Our efforts also include filing lawsuits throughout the United States to protect the right to vote and filing statements of interest and amicus briefs in federal courts to weigh in on critical issues.

Combating Hate Crimes

No person and no community in this country should have to live in fear of hate-fueled violence and other unlawful acts. We have seen a sharp increase in hate crimes in recent years. That is why the Justice Department is bringing its collective tools to bear to prevent, deter, investigate, and prosecute hate crimes, as well as improve hate crimes reporting. The Department's FY 2025 funding request includes an increase of \$6 million over the FY 2024 enacted level for OJP's *Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act* program, and an increase of \$8 million for the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program grants.

Fostering Trust and Accountability in Law Enforcement

The Justice Department is committed to ensuring constitutional policing and to strengthening trust and deepening relationships between law enforcement officers and the

people they protect. Last month, after an investigation by the FBI and prosecution by the Department's Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Mississippi, six former Mississippi law enforcement officers were sentenced to between 10 and 40 years in prison for multiple flagrant felony offenses, including civil rights conspiracy, deprivation of rights under color of law, discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence, conspiracy to obstruct justice, and obstruction of justice. The Department is also continuing its work to investigate allegations of systemic misconduct by law enforcement agencies. We are committed to ensuring that the remedies for statutory pattern-or-practice violations are fair, transparent, and effective.

In June 2021, the Department's federal law enforcement components were instructed to develop plans specific to their unique missions to expand the use of body-worn cameras. The Department's FY 2025 budget requests \$94.0 million in new funding to strengthen trust and accountability in law enforcement by expanding, formalizing, and managing Body Worn Camera programs for the Department's law enforcement agencies.

Additional Areas of Departmental Focus

Administering a Just and Efficient Immigration Court System

The Department's FY 2025 budget requests additional resources to administer our immigration laws. That means ensuring that every case is handled fairly, efficiently, and consistent with due process. The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) needs additional resources to address the backlog of cases in immigration court. Because of historic case volumes, that backlog has been growing for more than a decade, even though immigration judges completed record numbers of cases in FY 2022 and FY 2023. To help reduce this backlog, for FY 2025, the Department requests \$981.1 million — a 16.2 percent increase over the FY 2024 enacted level — to enable EOIR to hire 159 new staff, including 25 new immigration judges. The FY 2025 budget request also seeks funds for EOIR's Digital Transformation Initiative, which, among other things, includes EOIR's partnership with the U.S. Digital Service.

Maintaining a Safe and Humane Correctional System

The Justice Department takes seriously its responsibility to administer safe and humane federal detention and prison systems. The Department's FY 2025 budget requests \$8.8 billion for the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of correctional staff and incarcerated individuals and to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective oversight of all federal prisons and detention centers.

The request includes funding to enable BOP to optimize its hiring efforts, including an increase of \$41.0 million, for a total of \$205.4 million in new hiring and retention incentives. The request also includes funding to enable BOP to address urgent infrastructure needs arising from an inherited backlog of an estimated \$3 billion in facilities maintenance and repairs.

The Department is also requesting \$409.5 million for BOP to fully implement the provisions of the *First Step Act* and increase programming to prepare individuals in federal prison for successful reentry.

In addition, the Department's FY 2025 budget requests \$2.1 billion for the USMS for federal prisoner detention.

Promoting Good Government

The Department's FY 2025 budget request includes funding to promote good government efforts that ensure the responsible and efficient use of taxpayer dollars. The Department's FY 2025 budget requests an increase of \$8.3 million for the Department's Inspector General, to promote integrity, efficiency, and accountability within the Department; and an increase of \$51.5 million for Justice Information Sharing Technology, to ensure continued progress toward the Department's strategic goals of enhancing its cybersecurity posture to better support agents, attorneys, analysts, and administrative staff in furtherance of our mission.

I am extremely proud of the work the Justice Department's employees have done to uphold the rule of law, to keep our country safe, and to protect civil rights. I respectfully ask for your support for the President's FY 2025 funding request so that we may continue and build upon that work.