



Department of Justice

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF

**ERIC H. HOLDER, JR.
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ENTITLED

“OVERSIGHT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE”

PRESENTED

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**Statement of
Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice**

**Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate**

**“Oversight of the U.S. Department of Justice”
June 12, 2012**

Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Grassley, and distinguished Members of the Committee. I’d like to begin by thanking you for your support – and continuing partnership – in advancing the Justice Department’s critical efforts. I’m grateful for the chance to appear before you today to highlight some of the key accomplishments that have distinguished the Department’s work under this Administration.

I am particularly proud of – and grateful for – all that’s been achieved by the 116,000 men and women who serve in Justice Department offices around the world. Their dedicated efforts – and those of our government and law enforcement partners at every level – have allowed me to fulfill the commitments that I made during my first appearance before this Committee as Attorney General more than three years ago. That day, I pledged that the Department would move quickly, and that my colleagues and I would work tirelessly, to protect the American people from terrorism and other threats to our national security; to ensure that every decision would be guided exclusively by the facts and the law; to move swiftly and aggressively in preventing and combating violent crime and financial fraud; to seek justice for victims, protect the environment, and safeguard the most vulnerable among us; and to uphold the essential civil rights of *all* citizens.

I am proud to report that the Department has made extraordinary – and, in many cases, historic – progress in each of these areas.

Nowhere is this more clear than in our national security efforts. Over the last three years, the Department has secured convictions against scores of dangerous terrorists. We’ve uncovered – and prevented – multiple plots hatched by terrorist groups abroad, as well as extremists here at home. And we’ve strengthened essential surveillance and intelligence-gathering capabilities in a manner that is not only consistent with the rule of law – but with our most sacred values.

Last month – in federal court – we secured our seventh conviction in an al-Qaeda-sponsored plot to conduct coordinated suicide bomb attacks in the New York subway system. Approximately two and a half weeks ago, we obtained a guilty verdict in the case of a former U.S. service member who planned a bomb attack against American soldiers at a restaurant in Killeen, Texas. And on the same day, a federal judge sentenced another Texas man to 20 years in prison for attempting to join al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

I would also like to briefly discuss the steps the Department has taken in response to recent allegations regarding possible unauthorized disclosures of classified information. These allegations are of great concern to me personally, and I know they concern all of you.

On Friday, I assigned two experienced and highly respected United States Attorneys to lead separate criminal investigations being conducted by the FBI of potential unauthorized disclosures. In carrying out their assignments, these United States Attorneys are fully authorized to consult with members of the Intelligence Community, to follow all appropriate leads, and – ultimately – to prosecute any criminal violations to the fullest extent of the law.

Let me be clear: unauthorized disclosures of classified information could jeopardize the security of our nation, and risk the safety of the American people. They will not be tolerated. The Department will continue to take any such disclosures extremely seriously. And as our investigations unfold, I will provide more information to members of the Judiciary and Intelligence Committees, as appropriate.

In addition to our significant national security achievements, the Department has taken decisive action to prevent and combat a wide range of financial and health-care fraud crimes. We've taken bold steps to address the contributing factors and consequences of the recent economic crisis. And I am happy to report that – across the country – this work is paying dividends.

Last year alone, the Department's Consumer Protection Branch – in cooperation with our U.S. Attorneys' Offices – attained an astounding 95 percent conviction rate; secured more than \$900 million in criminal and civil fines, restitution, and penalties; and obtained sentences totaling more than 130 years of confinement against more than 30 individuals. By working closely with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and a bipartisan group of 49 state attorneys general, we achieved the largest joint federal-state settlement in history – totaling \$25 billion – with five of the nation's top mortgage servicers. Through the President's Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force – which was launched in 2009 – we've obtained prison sentences of up to 60 years in a wide range of fraud cases. And we've created two new Working Groups to enhance civil and criminal enforcement of consumer fraud, and to bring federal and state authorities together in investigating and prosecuting misconduct by financial institutions in the origination, securitization and servicing of mortgages that contributed to the financial crisis.

Alongside key partners like the Department of Health and Human Services – and many others – we've also made tremendous gains in our efforts to fight against health-care fraud. Over the last fiscal year alone – by utilizing authorities provided under the False Claims Act and other important statutes – we recovered nearly \$4.1 billion in cases involving fraud on federal health-care programs. That's the highest amount ever recovered in a single year. And for every dollar we've spent combating health-care fraud, we've returned an average of *seven* dollars to the U.S. Treasury, the Medicare Trust Funds, and others.

Put simply, our resolve to protect American consumers has never been stronger. And – as recent achievements prove – the same can be said of our efforts to safeguard our citizens and law enforcement officers from violent crime.

Through innovative programs such as our Defending Childhood Initiative and National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, we've developed comprehensive approaches for addressing the causes and consequences of violence among, and directed toward, our nation's

young people. We've forged and strengthened essential partnerships between federal, state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement officials and our U.S. Attorneys' Offices – and, as a result, we are working more effectively than ever before to confront gun-, gang-, and drug-fueled violence. In cooperation with key law enforcement allies – and our counterparts in Mexico and other countries – we've orchestrated coordinated strikes against violent drug cartels, arrested thousands of cartel members, and seized billions of dollars in assets. And we're implementing strategic, desperately-needed plans to address the shocking rates of violence that plague American Indian and Alaska Native women.

Now, I know many of you have worked to raise awareness about the tragic fact that violence against law enforcement officers is approaching the highest level we've seen in nearly two decades. And in response to this crisis, my colleagues and I are using every tool and resource at our disposal – including the power of research and scientific analysis – to protect America's law enforcement community.

As the brother of a retired police officer, I am proud that the Department has taken robust action to turn back this rising tide, and to meet increased violence with renewed vigilance. Throughout my tenure as Attorney General, I have met frequently with law enforcement leaders – and established an open line of communication with police chiefs and sheriffs nationwide – to ensure that the Department understands, and can respond effectively to, their concerns. This has led to the development, implementation, and enhancement of a host of important programs – from the VALOR Initiative, which is providing our law enforcement partners with the latest in training and cutting-edge technologies – to our Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program, which has helped more than 13,000 jurisdictions purchase lifesaving bullet- and stab-resistant equipment – in order to protect the brave men and women who routinely put their lives on the line to keep us safe.

In addition, the Department has identified new ways to help strengthen the rule of law across the country – and beyond our borders – by reinforcing global alliances. This is allowing us to be more effective than ever before in combating intellectual and financial property crimes, child pornography rings, organized criminal networks, and terrorist threats. And it has led us to work closely with Members of Congress to advance important changes in policy and legislation – from historic hate crimes prevention legislation to the reduction of the unjust and unfair crack/powder cocaine sentencing disparity – a landmark achievement that this Committee helped to make possible – to our ongoing efforts to ensure the reauthorization of the critical Violence Against Women Act and our strong support for the renewal of essential authorities such as those included in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments of 2008.

Since the start of this Administration, the Department also has taken critical steps to safeguard the most vulnerable members of society – and to uphold essential civil rights protections. Over the past three years, our Civil Rights Division filed more criminal civil rights cases than ever before – including record numbers of human trafficking cases. And we've taken significant actions to make certain that – in our housing and lending markets; in our workplaces and military bases; in our immigrant communities and our voting booths; in our schools and places of worship – the rights of *all* Americans are protected.

I am proud of these – and the Department's many other – achievements, and I hope to spend our time together discussing how we can build upon this progress, take our fight against

terrorism, crime, fraud, and other threats to a new level; and join with members of this Committee in making good on our nation's founding promise of equal justice under law.

In advancing this vital work, my colleagues and I are grateful for your continued support. We are eager to move forward together to achieve our shared priorities. And I am happy to answer any questions you may have.