



Federal Bar Association

May 7, 2019

The Honorable John Kennedy
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: FY 2020 Funding Request of the Federal Judiciary

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Coons:

We write to express strong support for the federal judiciary's FY 2020 budget request. The request of \$7.6 billion in discretionary appropriations reflects a 4.9 percent increase above the assumed fiscal year 2019 appropriation to support the Constitutional and statutory mission of the federal courts.

Funding for the federal judiciary, a coordinate branch of our federal government, represents less than two-tenth of one penny of a taxpayer's dollar. We urge the Congress to make these modest funds available to assure the federal courts are able to fulfill their constitutional and statutory responsibilities as a co-equal branch of government.

The Federal Bar Association's national membership of nearly 20,000 attorneys represents a major constituency of the Federal court system. Our members daily witness the need for an adequately funded court system that dispenses justice to clients, whether plaintiffs or defendants, who turn to the federal courts with an expectation that their disputes will be fairly and promptly heard.

We are deeply appreciative of your Subcommittee's past support for the federal judiciary's funding requests, matched by your vigilance to assure that appropriate cost containment measures are also in place. The judiciary's FY 2020 request will maintain current services across the judiciary and sustain investment in important new or upgraded program initiatives to support judicial operations. The judiciary's fiscal year 2019 appropriations request totals \$7.9 billion. We note that a significant share of the increase in discretionary appropriations is dedicated toward necessary pay adjustments, inflation and other adjustments to maintain current services throughout the federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court, the regional circuit courts of appeals, district and bankruptcy courts, and probation and pretrial services offices.

Additional funding for defender services, federal court security and juror fees are also included in the appropriations request. The judiciary's request fully funds the defender services program, which

provides court-appointed counsel to indigent defendants. It provides for an increase of \$21.8 million additional positions in the defender services program, including 190 additional positions in federal defender offices to address workload increases and 21 new positions for program support, cybersecurity, and training. Lastly, the Judiciary's request ensures funds are available for criminal and civil jury trials.

We ask your Subcommittee to take into account the commendable actions taken by the Judiciary to continue to implement more efficient ways to administer justice and contain costs. The Federal Bar Association remains committed to doing all we can to continue to support the federal judiciary's role in its stewardship of the finest judicial system in the world.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely yours,



Maria Z. Vathis
President

cc: Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General
Government
The Honorable James Duff, Director, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts