



# Richard Shelby

**United States Senator \* Alabama**

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## **SHELBY CHAIRS HEARING ON COMMERCE DEPARTMENT BUDGET**

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Senator Richard C. Shelby (R-AL), Chairman of the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee, today heard testimony from Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez regarding the FY 2006 budget for the Commerce Department. Senator Shelby's opening statement, as prepared, is included here:

"Good Morning. I want to welcome Secretary Gutierrez to his first appearance before the newly created Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies. Thank you for joining us this morning to discuss the fiscal year 2006 budget for the Department of Commerce."

"We look forward to hearing from you about your vision for the Commerce Department, and the challenges you see in the coming fiscal year. Given the tight budget constraints we are facing, this Committee will need your assistance in making some very tough choices about the distribution of resources and your guidance regarding the true priorities of the Department."

"The fiscal year 2006 budget request for the Department of Commerce is \$9.4 billion. This includes \$3.7 billion for the President's Strengthening America's Communities Initiative. With the initiative, the Department's total budget increases by \$3 billion, or 48 percent over last year's funding level. Without the initiative, however, the Department's total budget decreases by \$656 million."

"While this initiative has laudable goals, I believe there may be some obstacles ahead. The program consolidates eighteen federal economic and community development programs from a variety of agencies into a single direct-grant program to be housed within the Commerce Department. Legislation has not yet been introduced to authorize the program and the details of the initiative are still unknown. I hope that today you will provide the Committee some of the details that have been lacking about the initiative as well as your plans to move it forward."

"The Department's budget also proposes significant increases for the Census Bureau, Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), and the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS). I understand the increase for the Census Bureau primarily supports the Decennial Census, and the increase for PTO reflects full access to its fees and will support minimizing application processing time and enhancing the quality of products and services for the patent process and the trademark process. I hope we can discuss these increases in further detail today. We would also like to discuss whether the increases proposed for the Bureau of Industry and Security are sufficient to support BIS' critical mission of regulating the export of sensitive goods and technologies."

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