



Congressman José E. Serrano

Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

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Opening Statement of Chairman José E. Serrano Hearing on the Federal Judiciary's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request March 12, 2008

The subcommittee will hear testimony today on the subject of the fiscal year 2009 budget request of the Federal Judiciary. We all know the important role that an independent Federal Judiciary plays in our constitutional system. The Judiciary, like other government entities, needs sufficient resources to properly function and perform its constitutional duties. This subcommittee, as the provider of those resources, plays an important role in helping to maintain our government's overall system of checks and balances.

For fiscal year 2009, the Judiciary has requested \$6.3 billion in discretionary funding, an increase of nearly \$475 million over fiscal year 2008. I look forward to discussion today on this request; as well as the impact of action this committee took during fiscal year 2008, at the request of the Judiciary, with regards to court security and pay for public defenders.

Joining us today to testify in support of the Judiciary's budget request is Judge Julia Gibbons of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Since 2004, Judge Gibbons has also served as Chair of the Budget Committee of the Judicial Conference. Judge Gibbons has testified before this subcommittee last year, and we are pleased to have her here once again.

Also appearing before the subcommittee today is James Duff, the Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Mr. Duff was appointed to this position in 2006 by Chief Justice John Roberts. In the late 1990s he served for four years as Administrative Assistant and Chief of Staff to Chief Justice William Rehnquist. We welcome you both today, and we very much look forward to hearing from you about the resource needs of the Federal Judiciary, as well as any other thoughts you may have about the Judiciary.

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Congressman José E. Serrano has represented the Bronx in Congress since 1990. He is the Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, which oversees the budget of the Federal Judiciary.