

## FBI PROBES 530 CORPORATE FRAUD CASES

(By Devlin Barrett)

(WASHINGTON)—The FBI is conducting more than 500 investigations of corporate fraud amid the financial meltdown, FBI Deputy Director John Pistole told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday.

Investigators are tackling an even bigger mountain of mortgage fraud cases in which hundreds of millions of dollars may have been swindled from the system, he told lawmakers.

Pistole says there are 530 active corporate fraud investigations, and 38 of them involve some of the biggest names in corporate finance in cases directly related to the current economic crisis. Additionally, the FBI has more than 1,800 mortgage fraud investigations, more than double the number of such cases just two years ago.

There are so many mortgage fraud cases to investigate, he said, that the bureau is not focusing on individual purchasers, but industry professionals generating fraud schemes that could total as much as hundreds of millions of dollars. "It is a matter of lawyers, brokers or real estate professionals that are systematically trying to defraud the system," Pistole said.

Agents have even seen some instances of organized crime getting involved in mortgage fraud, he said.

Also appearing before the committee was Neil Barofsky, the watchdog of the government's \$700 billion Wall Street rescue package passed last year.

Senate Democrats are urging more spending to expand the ranks of the FBI's financial fraud investigators.

After the 2001 terror attacks, about 2,000 FBI agents were moved to counterterrorism work, and Pistole said they are considering moving some of them back to buttress anti-fraud efforts.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., urged the FBI and the Justice Department to put people who have committed mortgage fraud behind bars. "Most people are honest," Leahy said. "The ones who are not honest in this field are creating economic havoc and I want to make sure that we're able to go after them. "I want to see people prosecuted . . . Frankly, I want to see them go to jail," he said.

Barofsky, who was appointed the inspector general of the ongoing financial bailout plan, suggested the best way to clean up mortgage fraud is to pursue licensed professionals in the industry, and make examples of them. "They have the most to lose, they're the most likely to flip, and they make the best examples," said Barofsky, a former federal prosecutor in New York.

## HEART FOR WOMEN ACT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to share my thoughts as the lead cosponsor on the Heart for Women Act, introduced by Senator STABENOW and myself along with 21 original cosponsors. Heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases are critically important health issues that combined, are the No. 1 cause of death in all American women, taking the life of one female nearly every minute. The Heart for Women Act will decrease the burden of heart disease in women, which coupled with stroke will claim the lives of nearly half a million women in America in 2008; this is more than all deaths from breast, cervical, and lung cancers combined.

A new study shows that while in young men under age 45, the heart disease death rate is declining, the rate in young women has actually increased and is now at its highest level since 1987. We cannot idly sit back and allow more of us to become part of these statistics, so to address heart disease mortality and these significant disparities between men and women, Senator STABENOW and I have introduced The HEART for Women Act.

Our legislation, the HEART for Women Act, does three things: First, it provides the public with better information about safe and effective treatments for women by requiring drug safety information to be stratified by sex, race, and ethnicity. This information will help doctors, researchers, and patients better understand why certain treatments work better in men than in women. Second, this legislation expands the WISEWOMAN Program that provides free heart disease and stroke prevention screening to low-income, uninsured women. This program has been incredibly successful throughout the U.S. three out of four women screened by this program had at least one risk factor for heart disease and stroke. The HEART for Women Act also raises awareness among health care providers about the risk for heart disease and stroke. A 2004 survey found that less than 20 percent of physicians were aware that more women than men die each year from cardiovascular diseases.

After all this, there is some good news—a USA Today article from January 2008 points out that heart disease deaths rates fell among women by almost 27 percent between 1999 and 2005; however, researchers estimate that epidemics of diabetes and obesity could threaten these gains.

I encourage my colleagues to join us and support women's heart health. Passage of this legislation will ensure that providers have greater access to life-saving drugs and screening services to prevent the rise of cardiovascular disease in women.

## PANETTA CONFIRMATION

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I support the confirmation of Leon Panetta to be Director of the CIA. His integrity and independence, his managerial skills, his broad experience in both the executive and legislative branches, and his testimony during his confirmation hearing suggest he is exactly the kind of CIA Director our country needs right now.

First, his statements, in his meeting with me and at his confirmation hearing, provide assurances that he will put CIA activities squarely within the law and refocus the brave and dedicated professionals of the Agency on what they do best, and on what we need them for the most. Not only did he express his commitment to ending an illegal and ineffective interrogation and detention program, but he clearly indi-

cated that the CIA would not conduct extraordinary renditions to secret detentions. Congressman Panetta also committed to ending the Bush administration's practice of using "Gang of Eight" briefings to evade its legal responsibility to brief the full congressional intelligence committees, thereby thwarting oversight. And he assured me that the CIA would cooperate with the Department of Justice as the Department reviews interrogation, detention, rendition and other matters that raise legal questions. These statements, along with his previous condemnations of torture and of warrantless surveillance of Americans, suggest a personal commitment to the law and to our Constitution that will be needed as the CIA faces the challenges ahead.

I have long been concerned that intelligence resources have not been sufficiently allocated toward long-term and emerging threats in places like Africa, and was pleased that Congressman Panetta testified that he shares these concerns. More importantly, he has committed to conducting a review of CIA operations and resources in light of these concerns and to working closely with the committee in the course of that review. Finally, he testified that he agrees with the goal of developing strategies that integrate clandestine collection with the information obtained openly by our government, particularly through diplomatic collection. Last year, the Senate Intelligence Committee passed legislation creating an independent Commission to make recommendations on how to achieve this integration and Congressman Panetta has committed to working with me on that legislation. These commitments give me confidence that Congressman Panetta will work to refocus the CIA on its central mission of protecting our national security.

## IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.