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Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Markup on IRS, HHS Nominations

As Prepared for Delivery

The committee meets this morning to vote on two important nominations it approved last year.

First is the nomination of Marjorie Rollinson to be Chief Counsel at the IRS. The Chief Counsel's office is responsible for ensuring the agency is implementing tax law by the books. I'm pleased that the President has sent the Finance Committee such a qualified nominee. Ms. Rollinson has decades of tax and management experience in both the public and private sector, including several years at the Office of the Chief Counsel that she has been nominated to run. If confirmed, Ms. Rollison would be the first woman to serve as Chief Counsel.

It's no secret that Democrats and Republicans have differing views about how the IRS should operate. But the position of the Chief Counsel has historically been one that has received bipartisan support, and it is my hope that will remain true today. The last Chief Counsel, Michael Desmond, was reported out of the Finance Committee with a 26-2 vote, and was confirmed by the Senate with an 84-15 vote. I urge all of my colleagues to maintain this bipartisan support.

Second, the Committee has a nominee back for a third vote. Dr. Rebecca Haffajee is nominated to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services.

This is not a policymaking role at HHS. Rather, it's about marshaling the data and research needed to ensure the department is running as effectively as possible.

That includes work supporting some of this committee's biggest priorities in health care -- areas where Democrats and Republicans ought to be able to work together. Ensuring that all Americans can get the health care they need when they need it. Improving health care in rural communities, where people are often underserved and feel forgotten.

Dr. Haffajee is also a highly experienced and qualified nominee. She is an accomplished health policy researcher who has served as the acting Assistant Secretary since 2021.

And because this is not a policymaking role, disagreements over policy should not be a reason for this important post to continue to sit vacant. This is another nomination that has waited long enough. I urge all my colleagues to support Dr. Haffajee's nomination.

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