

Statement of Andrew LaMont Eanes
Nominee for
Deputy Commissioner of Social Security
Before the Senate Finance Committee

February 4, 2016

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Wyden, and Members of the Committee, thank you for scheduling this hearing. It is an honor to be here today as President Obama's nominee for Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

I grew up in the Midwest – in Ohio. I received my undergraduate degree in political science from Ohio Northern University and an M.B.A. from Baldwin Wallace College. I also completed marketing and management programs at Duke University, the University of Kansas, and Columbia University. I have spent the past 25 years of my career in the private sector and have performed nearly every function in an enterprise. My career path has led me to experiences and places beyond Ohio's borders, including Kansas, Missouri, Florida, Massachusetts, Maryland - even to Europe, Asia, and Australia.

Prior to joining the Social Security Administration, I served in progressively responsible roles, including Vice President Consumer and Business Markets (1995-1999), Vice President Human Resources (1999-2000), General Manager (2000-2003), Executive Vice President Technology/Service Operations (2004-2006), and Chief Operating Officer (2006-2012). I also co-founded two small businesses. I have demonstrated managerial expertise in finance and operational roles, focusing on improving workforce efficiency and productivity through strategic planning and technology adoption.

I am now at a point where I believe that my experience, dedication and ingenuity can be an asset to the public sector.

For the past 14 months, I have served as a Senior Advisor to the Acting Commissioner of Social Security, Carolyn Colvin. Acting Commissioner Colvin asked me to lead efforts in succession planning, online 1099 replacement, standing up a program management office, better prioritizing information technology projects, addressing improper payments and improving telecommunications. I have worked side by side with the dedicated employees of SSA. Every day, I am impressed by their tireless efforts and determination to serve the American public with care and compassion.

The amount of change and progress the world has witnessed in technology in the last few decades—even in the last 10 years—is staggering. If Social Security is to meet service expectations for generations to come, the Agency will have to be inventive, bold, and thoughtful in new ways. I truly hope to be able to contribute to SSA – by building upon its successes of the past with innovative strategies of the future. This is the lesson I took from my private sector experience, and what will guide my work at SSA: no matter how good we are today, we can be better tomorrow.

I have applied this simple philosophy to every job I have held in finance and budgeting, service delivery, strategy development, human resources, and other areas. No matter the job, I believe that we can always work to do it more efficiently and effectively.

This opportunity with the Social Security Administration would be a great professional honor, as SSA's mission is indeed closely aligned with my personal goals. I hope to pair my career experience with my passion for serving the underprivileged and vulnerable children in our communities. I have previously served on community and civic organizations, including the United Way; the Parent-Child Home program for early literacy and school readiness; the Ozanam Home for at-risk youth; The Love Fund for Children; and, Life Concepts Inc. helping people with disabilities achieve their goals. My efforts in these areas have only enhanced my awareness that service to our fellow citizens – especially those in need – is perhaps the greatest good we can accomplish.

The Social Security Administration provides an amazing opportunity to make a difference. The programs the Agency administers provide benefits to about one-fifth of the American population providing financial protection in retirement or in the event of a serious disability for those who have paid into the program and earned their benefits.

The Agency is rethinking the way it conducts its business. It is developing innovative ways to meet the increasing workload demands and provide customer-driven options for service delivery by providing more choice. These upgrades are important and necessary. At the same time, SSA must prepare for the anticipated wave of retirement at all levels within the Agency, while addressing its aging IT infrastructure. These are opportunities that could benefit from an outsider's perspective.

I believe my philosophy of continuous improvement would pair well with the Agency's "can-do" spirit. If confirmed, I will work to leverage my private sector experience. I will strive to help the Agency in its work to adopt new technology, not just for technology's sake, but in ways that will have real and measurable effects on the agency's operations and for the American taxpayer.

I will do my part to help the Agency face its challenges and support the open government principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration.

As the President recently said, Social Security is now more important than ever. If confirmed, I will bring the full measure of my business experience toward the continued success of this enduring promise. I want the American people to be confident that those receiving benefits have earned them by paying into the system and that their Social Security system is administered effectively and efficiently. Finally, I would like Americans to be confident that Social Security will be there for all of us, today, tomorrow and into the future.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.