

Lynn A. Johnson
Nominee for Assistant Secretary for Family Support (ACF)
Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC
March 20, 2018

Thank you Senators Gardner and Bennet for supporting me today. It is an honor to have you both with me. Thank you Chairman Hatch, Ranking member Wyden and distinguished members of the Finance Committee. It is a tremendous honor and opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary for Family Support.

Before I continue, I would like to introduce you to my family. My husband Lance, encouraged me to accept this nomination so I can serve my Country in the best way I know how. Should I be confirmed, I know that he and the rest of my family will also be serving America. My sons, Greg and Kyle, and my youngest daughter, Brett are all here today. My mother-in-law, Judy from both Arizona and Iowa and my college roommate, Tina who made the trek from Arizona are here with me. My parents, Don and Marilyn from Ohio and Colorado and my brothers, sister, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, my staff and friends are all watching right now. Without all of them, I could not have made this journey through my career. I am thankful for them.

My family moved from Ohio to Colorado when I was young. Growing up in Colorado my parents instilled in me the dedication to serve others. My Mom was a teacher and my Dad served in the Army and loved to play baseball. They are an example of what is great in America. With great pride and humility I want to note many families who have moved themselves out of poverty and have taught me so much about dignity, respect and the valuable voice for our most vulnerable people are watching right now.

Looking back on my Criminal Justice career, I learned lessons from people who made some horrible decisions and suffered the painful consequences of rejection by society. Success stories were accompanied by failures in our criminal justice, education, mental health, and human services systems. Top heavy bureaucracy coupled with the inability of systems to work in harmony let criminal offenders "slip through the cracks", allowed the homeless and hungry to continue to suffer and denied battered children the dignity of help they so rightfully deserved. I cannot imagine ever saying no to an opportunity to serve my country and to dedicate myself to having an impact and to make a positive difference.

Systems are made to be improved. After leaving criminal justice, my fortune led me to work with Governor Bill Owens, known for more action and less talk. He championed successful outcomes for vulnerable populations and challenged me to further the cause. Here I learned policy, politics and how difficult it was to decrease red tape, rules and regulations. I learned that the American people do not want to wait any longer for bureaucracy to plan and plan and plan to make a difference. Children, mothers, fathers are hungry now, so we need to act now.

In 2007 I became the Director of Jefferson County Human Services. This was my PH.D. in serving. I had the opportunity to work with others in the helping professions from staff to partners to the children and families who walk in our doors and to maximize their God-given potential. I didn't waste a single moment. I learned the workforce systems from the Department of Labor, anti-poverty programs from Head Start, child welfare programs, adult programs and all of the eligibility programs from HHS, some of the housing programs from HUD, and the SNAP program from the Department of Agriculture. We continually worked to improve our outcomes. We set a course for community partnerships at the highest levels. We set out to change the culture. We created a power of partnership with over 150 faith based entities serving people first, partnered with nonprofits to maximize resources and most importantly created the Jeffco Prosperity Partnership (JPP). We moved with people from poverty to prosperity. This all was accomplished through a whole family model that has demonstrated great success. JPP started with life coaches wrapping services around Head Start families to ensure children graduate high school and parents achieve self-sufficiency. The highest success is the dignity and respect each family learns and earns moving out of government systems, becoming productive citizens and giving back social capital so others can reach for the American dream. Because of this we are ending poverty in Jefferson County with a goal to end it throughout America.

The chance to serve my country as the Assistant Secretary for Family support is my next great challenge. The challenge is to reduce abuse and neglect, poverty, unemployment, truancy and dropouts in our schools, homelessness, human trafficking and hunger for all of our nation's communities. Based on my journey, I believe we can, and I believe I am up to lead the task at hand. I know that ACF is a large agency that has huge responsibilities. If we don't act now, fast, focused with a definition of success, leaders sitting in these same seats, years from now will be having these same discussions. By working with this esteemed body of government, with the executive branch, state and local governments, businesses, non-profit partners and faith based entities and most importantly by working and doing with, not for our most vulnerable populations, we can make the difference that we will all be proud. Together we can avoid putting Band-Aids on problems and we can eliminate costly root causes. The billions of dollars invested in the United States by government and philanthropy in communities can be reduced because we can show a return on investment that will create a thriving, safe, and healthy society and one that all other countries, worldwide will want to emulate. Every day, I will work to earn your confidence. I will fight so we can say the American people are better off because together we made a difference. I will make it my mission to listen and always value dignity and respect for all of the people, children, and families we serve.

If confirmed, I will be responsive to your intent, follow the laws and will work closely with you to make good things happen. I hope you support me to lead this challenge. I thank you for your consideration and look forward to answering any questions.