

## **Crapo Statement on HHS, CMS Nominees**

*April 22, 2021*

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, delivered the following remarks at an executive session to consider the Nominations of Andrea Palm for HHS Deputy Secretary and Chiquita Brooks-LaSure for CMS Administrator.

*The text of Ranking Member Crapo's remarks, as prepared, is below.*

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

“Following last Thursday’s hearing, I had a favorable impression of Ms. Palm and Ms. Brooks-LaSure, the Biden Administration’s nominees for HHS Deputy Secretary and CMS Administrator.

“While I would not necessarily expect to agree with the nominees of a Democrat administration on every issue, they seemed willing to work with states, my Senate colleagues, and me on important health care matters.

“Health care is one of many policy areas where the states and the federal government have unique insights and responsibilities.

“These roles require close partnerships, based on mutual trust, between the states and federal government.

“In any area of public policy, sudden shifts, and the uncertainty these shifts create, can disrupt and fracture longstanding partnerships.

“Moreover, in health care policy, the consequences of such sudden shifts can be dire, especially in the midst of a pandemic.

“For this reason, there is an established precedent that new administrations do not revoke waivers granted by their predecessors.

“Last Thursday, I asked Ms. Brooks-LaSure whether she believed that revoking approved Medicaid waivers, or portions of approved Medicaid waivers, immediately following an election sends the wrong message to the states.

“Ms. Brooks-LaSure replied that she does a great deal of work with the states, and that she understands ‘how much they want certainty from the federal government.’

“She went on to say, ‘If confirmed, I will really work to make sure that states understand decisions and...are part of the decision-making.’

“The next day, CMS revoked Texas’s Medicaid 1115 waiver without warning.

“I will let my colleague, Senator Cornyn, explain what this means for Texas.

“More generally, this sudden policy shift, on the heels of other partial waiver rescissions, sows significant mistrust between the states and the federal government, and could chill cooperation across a range of policy issues.

“I am deeply concerned that the Biden Administration would take such a step with regard to Texas.

“It is particularly confusing that the Administration would do this now, when nominees are before this Committee and they are seeking the advice and consent of the Senate.

“The timing of the decision and widespread reports that this action was part of a broader strategy to incent states to expand coverage through different means are discouraging and raise serious questions about the Administration’s commitment to engagement with states.

“Unfortunately, after CMS’s actions on Friday, I cannot vote in favor of Ms. Brooks-LaSure.

“I am voting in favor of Ms. Palm because she has promised to work with Congress in developing and implementing HHS’s policies.

“Thank you, and I yield my remaining time to Senator Cornyn.”

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