

Opening Statement
Nomination Hearing for Matthew Bassett
Senate Finance Committee
Chairman Orrin G. Hatch
August 3, 2017

Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am honored to stand before you as the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services.

First, I would like to take a minute to introduce and thank my family that is here today: my wife Stacy and my son Matthew, Jr. My father David Bassett and my uncle Ben Ash have also joined us, and I must say hello to my mother Georgia who is no doubt one of five people enthusiastically tuning into CSPAN today just to see me.

Senators, having enjoyed the privilege of working in the healthcare industry for over 20 years, I have seen many challenges to our nation's healthcare system firsthand. I have seen these challenges from the patient, provider and payer side; the public and private side; and the state and federal side. I'm of the firm belief that as Americans, we are very fortunate to live in a country that has the greatest, most innovative healthcare system in the world. People from other countries travel to the United States to seek the latest cutting edge care and technologies that don't exist back home. Yet our healthcare system is not without substantial challenges. High-quality, affordable care is at risk for an unacceptable number of Americans and their families.

Addressing these challenges is of acute interest to me and having served as the Chief of Staff at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in the great Commonwealth of Kentucky, I saw firsthand how policy formed on Capitol Hill affects folks back home. At the time I served in this position, Kentucky was experiencing an opioid scourge, imploding individual and small group markets, and a Medicaid program our state could simply not afford. Should I have the honor to be confirmed, I hope to have the opportunity to work with you and your staff as we all face similar challenges today.

And perhaps the most significant qualification for the position to which I have been nominated is the fact that I actually served as a Capitol Hill staffer. Having worked for two members of the House of Representatives, I understand the unique role the Assistant Secretary for Legislation has in working with members of Congress to make sure constituents' voices are heard and their needs are addressed in Washington, D.C.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislation is responsible for the development and implementation of the Department's legislative agenda. As a liaison between HHS and Congress, I would not take this responsibility lightly. I understand that the information you rely on within HHS and all of the agencies contained therein are critical to fulfill legislative duties.

Should I receive the confidence of the Senate to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Legislation at HHS, I pledge to stay true to these lessons learned, and to ensure that each and every day ASL stands as a resource for Congress, reliably and readily bridging these two great bodies to best serve the American people.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear this morning and I look forward to answering your questions.