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Hatch Opening Statement at Treasury, HHS Nominations Hearing

WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) today delivered the following opening statement at a hearing to consider Michael Faulkender to be Treasury Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy and Elizabeth Darling to be Health and Human Services (HHS) Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families:

This morning we are meeting to discuss the nominations of Michael Faulkender, to be Treasury Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy, and Elizabeth Darling, to be Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services.

If confirmed, Dr. Faulkender will support the Secretary of the Treasury directly as one of the foremost economic officials in our government. That role is an important one. And with the important changes from tax reform just starting to take effect, Dr. Faulkender's economic analysis will be key. The Office of Economic Policy in the Department of Treasury analyzes and reports on both current and prospective economic developments in the United States and world economies.

In his role, Dr. Faulkender would lead that office, as well as assist in determining appropriate economic policies and participate in creating the administration's budget. This is a brief overview of a rather complex job, one with serious and critical duties. But I believe Dr. Faulkender is up to the task.

As you will hear in a few minutes when we introduce both of our witnesses, Dr. Faulkender has had a distinguished career in academia where he has risen to the level of an Associate Dean at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business, and won many teaching awards as well.

But as mentioned, we are also here today to consider Ms. Darling. Ms. Darling has a broad range of experience at the federal, state, and local levels, especially in areas fostering collaboration between government and community-based organizations. If confirmed, Ms. Darling will oversee two important child welfare agencies within HHS.

First, the Children's Bureau, which manages the multi-billion-dollar child welfare entitlement programs, including foster care—a program that recently received a significant bipartisan overhaul from Congress. Ms. Darling will also lead the Family and Youth Services Bureau, the office serving runaway or homeless youth and supporting victims of domestic violence.

These are important programs that directly affect the lives of millions of Americans each year. And the work ahead will not be easy. However, I am confident that Ms. Darling's prior experience at HHS under the Bush administration, and her work in Maryland and Texas, make her a qualified candidate for this important position.

Together, the nominations of both Dr. Faulkender and Ms. Darling represent an example of two well-qualified candidates being nominated to key positions within the executive branch, and confirming these two nominees will help us ensure our government can fulfill the promises we have made the American people.

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