

Opening Statement of Sen. Chuck Grassley  
Finance Committee Nomination Hearing on  
Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner, Social Security Administration  
Thursday, October 4, 2001

I would like to congratulate you on your nomination as Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

I believe President Bush made a wise choice. You have an impressive array of experience in both the legislative and executive branches of government that will serve you well as you undertake your new assignment.

As you are aware from your work as a member of the Social Security Advisory Board, the Social Security program will face many challenges in the days ahead.

I believe your first challenge will be maintaining the quality and integrity of the current program. Achieving this goal will not only require additional investment in new technology, but it will also require a continued emphasis on good old-fashioned team work. A motivated and experienced workforce is essential to providing today's workers with the level of service they expect and deserve.

The second challenge you will face is helping Congress address Social Security's long-term fiscal problems. Americans are living longer and having fewer children. This demographic shift will force us to think about Social Security in new ways. I believe you can play a vital role in educating the public about the choices we must make.

Developing a plan to protect and improve Social Security will not be easy. But, with your help I'm confident we can succeed.

Once again, congratulations on your nomination. I look forward to working with you.