



For Immediate Release  
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**Hearing Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)**  
**Regarding the Nomination of Carolyn Colvin to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security**

President Harry Truman said:

“It has long been recognized as an inescapable obligation of a democratic society to provide for every individual some measure of basic protection from hardship and want . . . . In our own country, the obligation of the Federal Government in this respect has been recognized by the establishment of our Social Security system . . . .”

Today, we consider the nomination Carolyn Colvin to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security.

The Deputy Commissioner is vital to fulfilling Social Security’s mission.

The Deputy Commissioner assists the Commissioner in carrying out the Commissioner’s responsibilities. These include ensuring that the agency’s operations run smoothly.

Ms. Colvin, one of your great strengths is your many years of experience working at the Social Security Administration. You understand the agency’s mission and challenges. You know many of the dedicated civil servants who work there.

These strengths will help you as you deal with the many problems that the agency faces. The talents that you have displayed in your previous jobs will serve you well in your new endeavor.

Social Security faces many challenges. High on the list is the agency’s huge backlog of disability appeals hearings.

The recession has exacerbated the problem, prompting a growing number of people to apply for disability benefits. This has made the job of reducing the backlog more difficult. But the job is not impossible, if Congress provides adequate funding.

The agency has made progress in reducing the backlog. But the agency needs to do much more. As Deputy Commissioner, you will play an important role in this effort.

Another challenge is helping people with disabilities return to work. We need to reenergize the Ticket to Work program, which provides this kind of assistance. Again, you will play an important part.

In recent years, the agency has benefitted from improved technology. These advances can be key assets in the agency's efforts.

But success depends on the agency's approximately 70,000 employees. They must embrace the agency's mission of public service. And they must recognize the importance of their work.

You must lead them. And I am sure that you will.

The management associations and unions are important stakeholders. They need to be heard. I am confident that you will do so.

Social Security is deeply rooted in our society. It must be nourished and cared for, so that it can continue to grow and flourish.

Ms. Colvin, you have been nominated as Deputy Commissioner because the President and we believe that you possess the qualities necessary to strengthen the roots of this agency, to nourish it, and to help it flourish.

And as you do so, you will be helping to preserve and strengthen that measure of protection from hardship and want that America calls Social Security.

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