

NOMINATION OF CAROLYN W. COLVIN

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON THE

NOMINATION OF

CAROLYN W. COLVIN, TO BE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL
SECURITY, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

DECEMBER 9, 2010



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**NOMINATION OF CAROLYN W. COLVIN,
TO BE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
OF SOCIAL SECURITY,
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2010

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:28 a.m., in room SD-215, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Max Baucus (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Bingaman, Stabenow, Carper, Grassley, Hatch, Snowe, Ensign, and Enzi.

Also present: Democratic Staff: Bill Dauster, Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; Alan Cohen, Senior Budget Analyst; Tom Klouda, Senior Staff Member, Social Security; Claire Green, Detailee; and Mary Baker, Detailee. Republican Staff: Nick Wyatt, Tax and Nominations Professional Staff Member; and Robert Donovan, Detailee.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAX BAUCUS, A U.S. SENATOR
FROM MONTANA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

This morning, before we turn to our previously scheduled business, we have a very important task, with a tribute to our beloved and accomplished colleague, Chuck Grassley. We do so today because this is the committee's last public meeting of the year, and this year Senator Grassley completes 10 years of service as either chairman or ranking member of the committee. Today we celebrate a decade of his leadership.

Senator Grassley served a little less than half that decade as chairman, and a little more than half that time as ranking Republican member. With this decade of service, Senator Grassley joins an exclusive club. In the history of the Senate, only 13 Senators have served more than a decade as either chairman or ranking minority member of this committee.

The sheer numbers are impressive. Senator Grassley has chaired 148 hearings and 58 days of mark-up. He served as ranking Republican member at another 175 hearings and 51 days of mark-up. On nearly every week of a decade, Chuck and I met once a week. We have met every Tuesday at 5 in the afternoon whenever the Senate was in session. We would get together to go over matters to mini-

mize misunderstandings and to work together just to help make this place work.

Neither of us is very partisan. We are both quite pragmatic and practical. We just want to get things done in a fair, honest, straight way, and that has been the hallmark of our relationship. I can tell you there is no one more fair, more decent and straight, who wants to get things done, than Chuck Grassley.

For most of those years, those meetings have been in my office. That is probably because my office is a little bit bigger. But there is another real reason: Senator Grassley is notoriously frugal with his office expenditures. [Laughter.]

So I think that is the real reason that Chuck comes to my office, and as Chuck often reminds me—in fact, daily when we meet: “Max, I like coming here. Your coffee is free.” [Laughter.]

This year, Senator Grassley completes 30 years in the Senate. Today we celebrate 3 decades of service to the Senate. Of a large class of 19 Senators who took office in 1981, Senator Grassley is the sole remaining Senator still in the Senate. Only one Senator from the Hawkeye State has served longer. Over the course of the last 2 centuries, nearly 2,000 men and women have served in the Senate. Fewer than 30 Senators have cast more votes than Chuck Grassley.

At age 25, the people in Iowa elected Chuck to a seat in the Iowa House, and Iowa voters have been reelecting him ever since. This year, Senator Grassley completes 51 years of public service to the people of the Hawkeye State, and of course the people of America.

Today we celebrate more than half a century of public service. One of the reasons for Chuck’s success is that Chuck Grassley never loses touch with the people of Iowa. Never. Every year of those 30 years of Senate service, Senator Grassley has visited each of Iowa’s 99 counties at least once, and for a town meeting, not just a drive-by. That was just something that he promised himself, and that is yet another promise that Chuck Grassley has kept.

Senator Grassley and his wife Barbara are also justifiably proud of 56 years of marriage, their 5 children, and many grandchildren. It is simple, really. The more you get to know Chuck Grassley, the more you like him. He passes the airport test. That is, if you are stuck in the airport with somebody, do you like the guy you are sitting next to or not. [Laughter.]

He is decent, he is honest, he is unpretentious, he is grassroots Iowa. I might say in passing that yesterday I had a conversation with Secretary Vilsack, and someone asked Secretary Vilsack at the signing ceremony yesterday on the Pigford-Cobell settlement, “Why is Chuck Grassley so insistent in getting this Pigford legislation passed when there are really only about two or three African-Americans in Iowa?” “He calls me all the time,” Secretary Vilsack said. “Yes, he’s called me all the time, too,” said Attorney General Holder. “But why is Chuck so insistent in getting justice for those few African-Americans who live in Iowa, and also the rest of the country?” The answer is, from Tom Vilsack, “He is just, at root, a very, very fair man.” That’s the definition of Chuck Grassley. If Chuck sees something that is not fair, Chuck wants to correct it.

And so, Chuck, we are very honored to be with you today. I feel so honored to serve with you, and more importantly, I am very,

very grateful and very proud to have you as a very close friend. Congratulations. [Applause.]

I now recognize Senator Hatch before I recognize you. [Laughter.]

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ORRIN G. HATCH,
A U.S. SENATOR FROM UTAH**

Senator HATCH. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you summed up Chuck's service here very, very well. In fact, both of you have so honorably served on this committee and throughout the Senate, and I just have a very deep reverence for both of you.

This is likely our last meeting this year, as you say, and probably the last time our esteemed colleague, Senator Grassley, will preside over the Republican side of the committee. I certainly wish to join you and other committee members in paying respect to this wonderful man.

I have been privileged to be a member of the Finance Committee now for 20 years, nearly 20 years, and for a good portion of that time I have been honored to sit right next to this distinguished Senator from Iowa, and it has been a privilege for me. He is like a brother to me, and certainly an example as a mentor. His wife Barbara is a terrific human being.

I wish we had the time to go through and discuss the many attributes that are worthy of emulation, but I know that some of our colleagues would like to say a few words today in celebration of this really great human being.

Now, I could speak for a long time on his leadership qualities and the many landmark legislative issues on which we have worked together in this committee and with you, Mr. Chairman, for whom I have great respect. And so could we all. I could relate some of the many funny incidents that have occurred right here over the years, and Senator Grassley's keen sense of humor; I think so could we all. I still recall every time he has yelled at me. [Laughter.]

We all understand that Grassley yells, but it is something I have really enjoyed through the years, between you and me. [Laughter.]

I could talk a long while about the basic decency of this wonderful man, his love and concern for his fellow Iowans. You hear "Iowa, Iowa, Iowa" all the time, just as you should. And how he fights like a tiger for the interests of his constituencies, and again, so could we all.

But there is one quality of Chuck Grassley that I think must be highlighted because it is so important and it is so much a part of his character, and that is honesty. He is a truly honest man, as the distinguished chairman has said. As much as with any person I have ever known, when Senator Grassley gives you his word, it means something, and it is like a bar of gold: you can take it to the bank.

I have known and loved this fine man since he began serving the people of Iowa in this body in 1981. In fact, when I ran in 1976, I did not know anybody. I was a citizen candidate. I had never run for office before. I met with two people when I came back here to Washington. I did not even know where to go. One was Chuck Grassley in the House, and the other was Barry Goldwater in the Senate. Chuck was a leading member of the House at that time.

I have worked right next to him for many years, not just on this committee but also on the Judiciary Committee. We sit side-by-side on both committees.

I have seen him up close and in all kinds of stressful situations. In all the ups and downs, in good times and bad, I have never known Chuck Grassley to be anything but a man of integrity and of his word. I think he would rather die than be dishonest and break his word. Now, that has been my impression, and certainly I know it is true. If just this one quality were universal, our world would be much better off. Now that his term as ranking Republican on this committee is ending, I want to pay particular tribute to these two really fine men. I have seen them work together time after time after time. I have seen them get along together. I have seen Chuck yell at Max, too. [Laughter.]

And it has been good for Max, as it has been good for me. [Laughter.]

All I can say is, these are two really fine people, and I have great abiding respect for both of them. I think it has been one of the privileges of my life to sit next to Chuck on this committee, and also in the Judiciary Committee. As he takes over the ranking member position on the Judiciary Committee, as a non-lawyer, by the way, I can tell you he will run that committee very, very well from the Republican standpoint. I think Max, my esteemed chairman, will miss him greatly on this committee as far as being his side-by-side sidekick. I hope he will be able to tolerate and stand me. It is hard, I know. [Laughter.]

But that is good, too. Max needs somebody who will keep his blood rushing all the time so we can keep him alive for a long, long time, and I am very good at that, aren't I?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Senator HATCH. Yes. All right. [Laughter.]

I love both of them, I respect both of them, and I am so glad that I have known Chuck Grassley and Max Baucus for so long, two really, really fine people.

So I have talked so long, but I just wanted to kind of pay tribute here to a truly honest and decent man whom I happen to love. Thanks so much. [Applause.]

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA**

Senator GRASSLEY. I hope it will be all right if I stand in this particular instance. First of all, before I start to speak, you do not know this, but these folks had the benefit of knowing what was going to happen and they had prepared remarks, and I do not have any prepared remarks. First of all, the nice things that were said, I just wonder if you realized I was reelected, and I am going to be around for a while. [Laughter.]

I see faces out there, and as I look at one person, and one person, and one person—but I have not been able to look at the faces of all of you—there are a heck of a lot of employees and former employees and associates of mine, and I want to thank you very much for coming. How come nobody, including my wife, told me this was going to happen? [Laughter.]

Because my staff has heard me say this: in this town, if more than one person knows something in this town, it is no secret. But obviously this was a well-kept secret. So, I appreciate the kind remarks.

Reflecting on what you said, I would go back to one of these town meetings several times, and it probably happens in Montana too. Constituents will be irate about the great deal of partisanship that they see on television going on in Washington. I try to answer the question this way to satisfy them, that maybe there is not quite as much partisanship as they see on television. That is the first thing I tell them: you know, controversy makes news. So obviously, if there is a lot of partisanship, it is going to make news.

Secondly, there probably is not as much partisanship as you think there is, but there is probably more than there ought to be. I said you never hear about Chuck Grassley and Max Baucus working together, and I usually use the figure of 4 or 5 bills over the course of 10 years. Except for 4 or 5 bills, everything that has been done in this committee has been done on a bipartisan basis, and everything that has gotten out of committee has been signed by the President, except one that was vetoed, but it was still a bipartisan bill, and how we worked together. But you would never hear about Chuck Grassley and Max Baucus working together back in the grassroots of America, because we are getting along. If we were fighting every day, you and I would make more news. [Laughter.]

So I tried to use our working relationship, which I have to give 100-percent credit for the idea to Max Baucus. When I took over the chairmanship in 2001, he asked to meet with me in the members' dining room. I suppose he paid for it, because I probably would not have. [Laughter.]

Anyway, he suggested that we meet once a week when we are in session, and so we have done that very, very regularly. There have hardly been times that we have not met, and if there have, it is because something else has come up. It is always our intention, from 5 to 6 on Tuesdays, to work through the work of this committee to see what we can do to make the work be productive, because that is what the Senate is all about, trying to get things done, not trying to stop things from being done. I think we have been very, very successful. But the people of Iowa and Montana and around the country do not hear about it because, as I said, we are not battling each other.

So that is the working relationship that I have had and the working relationship that I intend to continue to have with him, even though I am not ranking member, in the sense of trying to get things done. I know that Senator Hatch will work the same way to get things done, because that is the way Senator Hatch is. I do not regret anything about the work of this committee. It has always been a helpful, productive, and pleasant environment. That is because of the personality of Max Baucus.

I did not know his predecessor, but I think Mike Mansfield was of the view that the Senate was for the purpose of getting things done. I see that. I have never heard him describe it this way, but that is the way I kind of sense that it is in the spirit of Mike Mansfield, that you see Max Baucus being a productive member of the U.S. Senate.

And so I want to thank you very much for this honor. I wish Republicans did not have these silly rules of 6 years. [Laughter.]

It shows we are not smarter than the Democrats. And that is not because I do not want you to have the opportunity, but I just love this committee, and I am going to continue to be very active, even though I suppose being a non-lawyer working with all those lawyers, I will have a hard time keeping up. But I am going to do the best I can.

Thank you all very much. [Applause.]

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAX BAUCUS, A U.S. SENATOR
FROM MONTANA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

The CHAIRMAN. Now we get down to the business. Now everybody can get back to work.

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 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 of 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, and 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 its 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. It is worse now; the lines are longer. This has made the job of reducing the backlog even more difficult.

I might say, I have been working to reduce that backlog for years. I have worked very hard to reduce it. I think it is just an outrage, how long it is. I thank you for your efforts to reduce it. But the job of reducing the backlog 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.

Another challenge is helping people with disabilities return to work. We need to re-energize 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, and I am confident that you will do that, too. You will listen. 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. 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.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Baucus appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. I will now turn to Senator Grassley for any statement he may want to make.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
A U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA**

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And congratulations on your nomination, Ms. Colvin. It is a privilege to have you before the committee. Of course, I know you are eager to get started in this new position. As Deputy Commissioner, you are a person who has certain responsibilities and duties that the law and the Commissioner give you to do, but you are also a person who has to be ready to take over at any time that the Commissioner position would not be filled.

As Deputy Commissioner, you have the opportunity to participate in key decisions at the highest levels. Your previous experience at Social Security will serve you well in your new position. Your advice and leadership will contribute greatly to the success of the agency.

Of course, these are challenging times for the Social Security Administration. Rising unemployment, the retirement of baby boomers, and the aging of its workforce have all forced the agency to do more with less. Of course, with the rising concerns about the Federal debt, there is a desire to find ways of seeing how much more efficient any agency can be, not just yours.

I know the efficiency and the administrative overhead of Social Security is probably less than any other department of government, but still those are fiscal obstacles that we have to overcome and do as much as we can. If you are confirmed, I look forward to working with you as a member of this committee to protect and improve the Social Security program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

[The prepared statement of Senator Grassley appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. I would now like to turn to our witness. But as our witness hails from the great State of Maryland, I note the presence of the senior Senator from Maryland, who would like to introduce our witness.

Why don't you proceed?

**STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
A U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

Senator CARDIN. Well, Senator Baucus, first of all, thank you very much for the courtesy of allowing me to present Carolyn Colvin.

And Senator Grassley, let me join in the tribute of your extraordinary service here on the Senate Finance Committee. We are all very proud of your record. I, too, have questions about the wisdom of term limits, but I will get to spend a little bit more time with you in the Judiciary Committee, so I know that we will have our opportunities to continue to work together on the Judiciary Committee. I again congratulate you on your service.

Senator Baucus and members of the Senate Finance Committee, it is really my honor to present Carolyn Colvin. I have known Carolyn for a long time, and she is a person who has devoted most of her life to public service. We are very proud that she hails from Maryland. I first want to thank her and her family for her willingness to continue in the public sector, using her talent to help in one of the most important programs in the history of America, the Social Security Act.

She has her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Business Administration from Morgan State University. She currently serves as the Special Assistant to the Maryland Secretary of Transportation, and prior to this position she served as CEO of America Group Community Care, which is a company dedicated to caring for financially vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities through publicly funded programs. So her background is ideally suited to be Deputy Commissioner.

But before joining Amerigroup, Ms. Colvin served as director of Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and as director of the Department of Health and Human Services for the District of Columbia, so she brings that experience also to this position, heading one of the largest counties in the country and one of the most difficult jurisdictions, the District of Columbia.

She also will be returning to the Social Security Administration, as you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, where she served 6 years in key executive positions as the Deputy Commissioner for Policy and External Affairs from 1994 to 1996, and Deputy Commissioner for Program and Policy from 1996 until 1998, and then as Deputy Commissioner for Operations from 1998 to 2001.

She is an exceedingly effective strategic manager of personnel, fiscal, and material resources, and her communication skills are simply outstanding. She is highly persuasive in presenting policy and technical topics to colleagues, the media, large and small groups, and one on one.

I was very pleased to see the President nominate her to be the Deputy Commissioner for the Social Security Administration, and if confirmed, I am convinced that she will continue her great legacy of public service.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Before we proceed, Ms. Colvin, I will give you the opportunity to introduce any friends or family you may have with you here today.

Ms. COLVIN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Ms. COLVIN. I do not have family present today. My one son resides in Houston, TX and was not able to get in. I think I have some colleagues in the back. I will ask them to stand.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you, please? Yes, have them stand.

Ms. COLVIN. Stacy Rodgers is the current Deputy Secretary of the Maryland State Department of Human Resources, the agency I formerly led. In addition, Rufus Mayfield, standing next to her, is one of my staff from DC government when I was the director of the Department of Human Services there.

In the front, I have Karen Gooden, who is currently the Assistant Secretary of Administrative Services in the Maryland Department of Transportation, where I am currently employed. So I want to thank them very much for their support and coming out this morning.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you all very, very much. Give our very best to your son.

Ms. COLVIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. It is unfortunate he was unable to make it.

I do note the presence of someone sitting behind you, the Commissioner. Would you stand, Commissioner? Commissioner Astrue, the Commissioner of Social Security. Thanks for being here. I appreciate it very much.

As is our practice, as I am sure you may know, Ms. Colvin, we will submit your statement automatically into the record and encourage you to summarize it in, say, 5 minutes, roughly. We will go to questions after that.

You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF CAROLYN W. COLVIN, NOMINATED TO BE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, BALTIMORE, MD

Ms. COLVIN. I do, before I start, want to thank Commissioner Astrue for being here to support my nomination. I have had the opportunity to talk with him on a number of occasions and look forward to working with him. I also want to thank Senator Cardin, although he has left. As he has indicated, he has known me for many, many years, and I wanted to just publicly thank him for his support.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Grassley, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Deputy Commissioner of Social Security. If confirmed, I will welcome the opportunity to work with you, President Obama, and Commissioner Astrue to help meet the challenges that the Social Security Administration is facing, and ask for your support.

I have spent my career leading Federal, State, and local organizations through development, change, and innovation. My prior work experience, especially the experience I have gained in social service agencies, has taught me about our obligation as a Nation to the well-being of our constituents. It has taught me that government can take measured, responsible steps to assist those less fortunate than ourselves, while also promoting the kind of earned right social insurance programs that America's workers deserve in retirement.

My years of public service have taught me that I may not always have all of the answers, but at least I know the right questions to ask. In my tenure as the Deputy Commissioner for Operations at the Social Security Administration, I provided executive leadership and directed the work of nearly 50,000 employees serving in headquarters support functions, the regional offices, SSA's 1,300 field offices, tele-service centers, and program service centers.

In addition to my service as the Deputy Commissioner for Operations, I also served nearly 4 years as the Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Programs, so I have extensive experience in performance management and leadership of the disability determination process and what was then called the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

Despite significant challenges, I can see many innovative developments at SSA that have occurred over the last 9 years, especially in the areas of Internet and cyber services. When I left SSA in 2001, we were proud of the fact that we had over 10 million Internet users, a number that has grown exponentially. I am excited about the iClaims process, other new online business processes, video service delivery, and changes in SSA's national 800-number network.

I was pleased to discover that the Immediate Claims Taking Process which was initiated during my tenure has grown tremendously. But the Social Security Administration faces many challenges, as you have mentioned. With this committee's help and increased funding supported by Congress, Commissioner Astrue has made significant progress with the disability backlogs, but it is clear that more needs to be done.

No one in SSA could have predicted the economic downturn that has diminished the progress that SSA had hoped to make in reducing the backlogs. Disability and retirement claims are increasing at a rate not expected 15 months ago, and, in the inevitable chain reaction, SSA is seeing increases in initial disability claims pending and hearing receipts.

I look forward to being a part of the solution to these problems that are so important to the people of our great Nation. If confirmed, my primary goal would be to find common ground to support the President's initiatives to strengthen SSA's efforts to carry out its mission. The President's fiscal year 2011 budget request supports increases in staffing, which will help to process the spikes in initial retirement and disability claims, as well as disability appeals.

The President also supports dedicated funding for improved program integrity. This investment will help to assure that the government is spending tax dollars efficiently and that benefits are paid only to eligible beneficiaries in the correct amounts. These activities are critical to the American taxpayer. To quote the President: "Social Security is indispensable to workers, the disabled, seniors, and survivors, and is probably the most successful program that our country has ever established."

One of the great fortunes of my life has been that my career path has allowed me to work on so many of the issues I care most about. Human service issues give me a renewed sense of purpose every day. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the President and

the Commissioner as they work together with this committee to continue to ensure that Social Security programs will be preserved, protected, and improved for future generations.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Colvin appears in the appendix.]

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much, Ms. Colvin.

I have three standard questions to ask, which we ask all nominees.

Ms. COLVIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. First, is there anything that you are aware of in your background that might present a conflict of interest with the duties of the office to which you have been nominated?

Ms. COLVIN. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know of any reason, personal or otherwise, that would in any way prevent you from fully and honorably discharging the responsibilities of the office to which you have been nominated?

Ms. COLVIN. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you agree, without reservation, to respond to any reasonable summons to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of Congress, if you are confirmed?

Ms. COLVIN. Yes. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

My question: why do you want this job?

Ms. COLVIN. This is a job that I have worked for all of my life.

The CHAIRMAN. Why in the world, with all the problems, all the things you can do, why in the world do you want this job?

Ms. COLVIN. Because I think that I can continue to make a difference. As you have mentioned, Social Security probably touches the lives of more Americans than any other program. I think that these are very challenging times, and we must be able to maintain the public trust. We need to be able to improve the services that we provide, and it is a lifetime opportunity to be able to do that. So I am very excited about the opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN. What do you think your best qualities are that you would bring to this job? What are your best qualities? When you think to yourself, boy, I am really good at that, what is that?

Ms. COLVIN. I am an excellent manager. I am a strategic thinker. I am a problem-solver. I care about people whom I work with. I care about the people whom I serve. I think the strengths that I have developed over the years in strategic planning and performance management are some of the skills that I would bring to this job.

The CHAIRMAN. What are your shortcomings?

Ms. COLVIN. Probably impatience. It takes longer to do things that need to be done because we just have to go through the system. I try to temper that, but I think that would probably be my biggest challenge, to continue to create a sense of urgency. We serve people whose needs are great. When they come to us, we are the last resort in many instances, and they need to be served quickly.

The CHAIRMAN. So, as you look at the agency—you touched a bit on this in your statement—what do you see? I am going to ask the question in two categories. One, what are some of the issues that

are most urgent and you must act on right away? Another category, addressing your strategic thinking: what are some of the issues that are urgent, that do not have to be solved today but are still on your to-do list to get done soon?

Ms. COLVIN. I think my greatest concern will be to focus on the disability backlog. The agency has certainly made progress, but, because of the unexpected increase in the caseloads, the backlogs are greater than we had anticipated. There is also the concern relative to the length of time it takes to actually have a claim processed, especially if there is an appeal. I am very concerned about program integrity.

We must find a way of reducing and recovering the improper payments that occur in the programs. I am also concerned about the solvency of the programs. I think that it is very important that the issues of solvency be addressed sooner rather than later so that there is adequate time to phase in those changes that may occur and more time for individuals who are going to be impacted to plan for those impacts.

The CHAIRMAN. What are the three major components to addressing the backlog problem? I assume resources is one, but what others?

Ms. COLVIN. I think that there have been a number of things that current Commissioner Astrue has initiated. Certainly, resources would be the first issue in resolving the backlog. I do want to thank this body and the President for the budget support that you have given to the agency to make that happen.

But there is also the need to accelerate the Internet and cyberspace issues, with the number of individuals who are going to be utilizing our services in the future. We are certainly going to have to be dependent upon Internet usage, and that is beginning. I think that we must focus on performance management. As you know, many of the employees at the agency are eligible to retire within the next 5 years. Social Security is a very complex program, so, when we hire, it takes time. When the agency hires, it takes time for them to be able to fully process claims.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Carper? You may, in fact, finish up, because there is a phone call we have to take right now.

Senator CARPER. All right.

The CHAIRMAN. But thank you. We wish you very, very good luck.

Ms. COLVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. COLVIN. Thank you so much.

Senator CARPER. Senator Grassley is back.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Grassley? I am sorry. Senator Grassley has walked in.

Senator GRASSLEY. I am going to have to submit two questions for answer in writing because I want you to give them some thought.

[The questions appear in the appendix.]

Senator GRASSLEY. I have one question that I think you can answer right now. That is, your affiliation with the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. There is nothing

wrong with your affiliation with that, but, since that organization actively lobbies Congress on legislative issues, can you give us your assurance that you have severed all ties with the organization and will avoid any future involvement in its activities?

Ms. COLVIN. Yes, Senator Grassley. I resigned from the organization October of 2009 when I was being considered for this position.

Senator GRASSLEY. All right.

Ms. COLVIN. And so I have no involvement at this point.

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you very much. That is the only question I had.

Senator Carper?

Senator CARPER. Senator Grassley, some of us had hoped we would have a chance to say a word or two in your defense earlier today when you were being applauded for your years of service. A number of people sort of kidded him about his fiscal discipline, about his ability to spend money wisely, including his own. [Laughter.]

I just want the record to show, in 2001 I had been a new Senator here for a month or two, and I spoke to him and introduced myself. I said I would like to have the opportunity to come by just to visit with him in his office. He said, "We will do better than that." I said, "How is that?" He said, "Why don't you come to the Senate dining room and we'll have breakfast together, and I'll buy." And I want the record to show that he bought for me a bowl of oatmeal, and was good enough, when I asked also for the waitress to serve me half a grapefruit, a glass of orange juice, and toast, he sprung for that as well. It has been a joy working with you ever since. I owe you a bowl of oatmeal. [Laughter.]

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you.

Senator CARPER. I have just one or two points I would like to raise. We are about to start voting, in fact, almost any minute.

Senator GRASSLEY. I have to go.

Senator CARPER. I would also say, Senator Grassley, before you leave, my mom used to say to me, and these are good words for you to keep in mind on a day like today when everybody is just loving you to death, that the flattery will not hurt you if you do not inhale. [Laughter.]

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you.

Senator CARPER. You mentioned two words that the folks behind me here and my staff have spent a lot of time and energy on. Those words are "improper payments." During the first term of President George W. Bush, he signed into law legislation, I think it was called the Improper Payments Act of 2002, something like that. The law directed Federal agencies, Federal agency heads, to begin reporting improper payments. Over time some did; a number did not.

Senator Tom Coburn, with whom I serve on the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, and I began an effort to hold hearings and to put a spotlight on those that were complying, and also to put a spotlight on those agencies that were not. We worked together to pass legislation that I introduced, signed by the President earlier this year, updating the Improper Payments Act. The legislation says not only do we want Federal agencies to report improper payments, we want them to stop making them.

We also, in addition to that, want agencies to go out, where practicable, and recover monies that have been improperly paid. The legislation also indicated that we felt that agency heads, those in authority, when they were evaluated, part of that evaluation should reflect their compliance with the spirit of this legislation.

Would you just talk a little bit more about the three aspects, or four aspects: (1) reporting improper payments, the requirement to report; (2) the requirement to stop making them; (3) the requirement to go out and recover monies as best we can; and (4) the evaluation of agency heads, which would in part reflect their compliance with that level? Would you just speak to that, please?

Ms. COLVIN. Well, Senator, as you may know, I am not at the agency yet. I know that the agency has already developed targets relative to reducing payments and recovering payments. As you know, the executive order requires that there be an official accountable for that, and that official must be Senate-confirmed. At this point, Commissioner Astrue is the only confirmed member at the department.

It is my hope that, if I am confirmed, he will allow me to take that responsibility on. That is something that I think is extremely important, so I would be prepared to provide you with information later about what the agency is doing. But I think that the law is important, and we will certainly, if I am confirmed, be complying with it.

Senator CARPER. That is good to hear. I saw a thumbs-up as well, so I take that as a good sign.

Within the last month or so, Congress received a report from the executive branch that improper payments, I guess, for the past fiscal year exceeded \$100 billion. Most of those were overpayments, and some of them were pretty small, and they are hard to recover. But a lot of them are not. We made \$30 or \$40 billion of improper payments that are actually probably attributable to Medicare, and others to Medicaid. In a day and age when we have a government this large, you know and I know that it is not sustainable.

In a day and age when the Medicare trust fund is expected to pretty much run out of money by the end of the next decade, that is not sustainable. At a time when we are doing a lot of evaluation and we are having big deficit commissions looking at Social Security, we want to make sure the Social Security trust fund is going to be around for as long as we have a country. That is not sustainable.

Another thing I want to ask is, can you give us—this Deficit Reduction Commission has recommended, among other things, extending the full retirement age, I think, by 2050 up to, I want to say, 68, and to extend the full retirement age for Social Security by 2075 to age 69, and to also move up the early retirement ages by a year, I think for each of those two dates, to age 63, maybe 64, respectively.

They have also given some thought to modifying the COLA that is used to award update benefits at the beginning of each calendar year. The term “chained COLA” was used in the recommendations. Can you tell us what that means? Just give us some idea of how that is different from our current approach to COLA.

Ms. COLVIN. I do not think that I am prepared to answer that question now. I think that all of the options that have been proposed need to be looked at very carefully and examined to see what the impact will be—what the cost will be first of all, or what the savings will be, and what the impact will be on the individuals.

Senator CARPER. Again, I am not asking you to say whether it is a good idea or a bad idea. Could you just take a moment and just explain to us what is meant by the term “chained COLA?”

Ms. COLVIN. To change the COLA?

Senator CARPER. Chained, C-H-A-I-N-E-D. Chained COLA is the term that was used in their report.

Ms. COLVIN. I am sorry, I cannot answer that.

Senator CARPER. Could you just answer that for the record for us, please?

Ms. COLVIN. I am not able to answer that. I do not think I know what—

Senator CARPER. No, no, no. Not today, but just for the record.

Ms. COLVIN. Oh, yes. Definitely. I will get back to you.

Senator CARPER. Yes, if you would. And to explain what is meant by that, and how does it differ from the current approach to a COLA, if you would.

Ms. COLVIN. Definitely.

Senator CARPER. All right. Thanks.

Seeing no other members of the committee who are here, let me ask the staff, is there a period of time during which the record would be left open for folks to submit questions? And for what period of time would that be, do you know? Noon Friday. So that is noon tomorrow. All right.

Well, for the next 24 hours and 44 minutes, members of this committee, I think, are entitled to submit questions to you. If they do, we just ask you to respond to them promptly.

Ms. COLVIN. I will do so.

Senator CARPER. All right. Thanks for your willingness to serve.

Ms. COLVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator CARPER. We welcome, as well, your colleagues, including the thumbs-up that we saw there in the front.

Ms. COLVIN. Thank you.

Senator CARPER. Thanks so much.

With that, this hearing is adjourned. Thanks so much.

[Whereupon, at 11:18 a.m., the hearing was concluded.]

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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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Statement of Carolyn W. Colvin
Nominee for
Deputy Commissioner of Social Security
Before the Senate Finance Committee

December 9, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Senator Grassley, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Deputy Commissioner of Social Security. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with you, President Obama, and Commissioner Astrue to help meet the challenges that the Social Security Administration is facing, and I ask for your support.

I have spent my career leading Federal, State and local organizations through development, change and innovation. My prior work experience--especially the experience I have gained in social service agencies--has taught me about our obligation, as a Nation, to the well being of our constituents. It has taught me that government can take measured, responsible steps to assist those less fortunate than ourselves, while also promoting the kind of earned-right social insurance programs that America's workers deserve in retirement.

My years of public service have taught me that I may not always have all the answers, but at least I know the right questions to ask.

In my tenure as the Deputy Commissioner for Operations at the Social Security Administration, I provided executive leadership and directed the work of nearly 50 thousand employees serving in headquarters support functions, the regional offices, SSA's 1,300 field offices, teleservice centers and program service centers. In addition to my service as the Deputy Commissioner for Operations, I also served nearly four years as the Deputy Commissioner for Programs and Policy. So I have extensive experience in performance management and leadership of the Disability Determination process and what was then called the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

Despite significant fiscal challenges, I can see many innovative developments at SSA that have occurred over the last 9 years, especially in the areas of Internet and cyber services. When I left SSA in 2001, we were proud of the fact that we had over 10 million Internet users; a number that has now grown exponentially. I am excited about the iClaim process, other

new online business processes, Video Service Delivery, and changes in SSA's National 800 Number Network. I was pleased to discover that the Immediate Claims Taking Process, which was initiated during my tenure, has grown tremendously.

But the Social Security Administration faces many challenges. With this Committee's help and increased funding supported by Congress, Commissioner Astrue has made significant progress with the disability backlogs. But it is clear that more needs to be done. No one at SSA could have predicted the economic downturn that has diminished the progress that SSA had hoped to make in reducing the backlogs. Disability and retirement claims are increasing at a rate not expected even 15 months ago. In the inevitable chain reaction, SSA is seeing increases in initial disability claims pending and hearings receipts.

I look forward to being part of the solution to these problems that are so important to the people of our great Nation. If confirmed, my primary goal will be to find common ground to support the President's initiatives to strengthen SSA's efforts to carry out its mission. The President's FY 2011 budget request supports increased staffing, which will help to process the spikes in initial retirement and disability claims, as well as disability appeals.

The President also supports dedicated funding for improved program integrity. This investment will help to assure that the government is spending tax dollars efficiently and that benefits are paid only to eligible beneficiaries in the correct amounts. These activities are critical to the American taxpayer.

To quote the President, "Social Security is indispensable to workers, the disabled, seniors, and survivors, and is probably the most successful program that our country has ever established."

One of the great fortunes of my life has been that my career path has allowed me to work on so many of the issues I care most deeply about. Human service issues give me a renewed sense of purpose every day. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the President and the Commissioner as they work together with this committee to continue to ensure that Social Security programs will be preserved, protected and improved for future generations.

Thank You. I would be happy to answer any questions.

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION REQUESTED OF NOMINEE

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Name: (Include any former names used.)

Carolyn Watts Colvin (former names: Carolyn Valetta Watts; Carolyn Valetta Porter)

2. Position to which nominated:

Deputy Commissioner, Social Security Administration

3. Date of nomination:

October 1, 2009

4. Address: (List current residence, office, and mailing addresses.)

Current residence:

Office:

5. Date and place of birth:

May 27, 1942
Arnold, MD 21012

6. Marital status: (Include maiden name of wife or husband's name.)

7. Names and ages of children:

8. Education: (List secondary and higher education institutions, dates attended, degree received, and date degree granted.)

a. I attended Wiley H. Bates High School from 1953 until 1959. I received my high school diploma in 1959.

b. I attended Morgan State University, in Baltimore, Maryland from 1959 until 1973. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1971. I received a Master of Business Administration degree in 1973.

9. Employment record: (List all jobs held since college, including the title or description of job, name of employer, location of work, and dates of employment.)

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------|
| a. | Special Assistant to Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076 | 06/2009 to Present |
| b. | Executive Coach/Trainer
Rosborough Communications
811 Cromwell Park Drive, Suite 107
Glen Burnie, MD 21061 | 12/2008-06/2009 |
| c. | Consultant
Public Consulting Group
148 State Street
Boston, MA 02109 | 01/2009-03/2009 |
| d. | CEO
AMERIGROUP Maryland, Inc.
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002 | 05/2007-07/2008 |
| e. | Director
Montgomery County Department
of Health and Human Services
401 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850 | 03/2003-12/2006 |
| f. | Director
DC Department of Human Services
64 New York Avenue, NE, 6 th fl.
Washington, DC 20002
(relocated from 3700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20032) | 02/2001-03/2003 |
| g. | Deputy Commissioner of Operations
Social Security Administration
6400 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235 | 04/1998-02/2001 |
| h. | Deputy Commissioner
of Policy and Programs
Social Security Administration
6400 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235 | 05/1996-04/1998 |

- i. Deputy Commissioner
of Policy & External Affairs
Social Security Administration
6400 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235 08/1994-05/1996
- j. Secretary
MD Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, MD 21201 02/1989/07/1994
- k. Deputy Secretary
MD Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, MD 21201 11/1988-02/1989
- l. Deputy Commissioner of Administration
Baltimore City Health Department
303 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21201 06/1984-02/1989
- m. Director of Field Operations
Office of Senator Paul S. Sarbanes
Federal Office Building – Hopkins Plaza
Baltimore, MD 21201 01/1983-06/1984
- n. Training Consultant
MD Department of Personnel
2100 Guilford Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21218 1983
- o. Field Director
Citizens for Sarbanes
33rd St. & Greenmount Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21218 1982
- p. Director of Administration & Management
Baltimore City Health Department
303 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21202 07/1981-06/1982

- q. Executive Director 04/1980-07/1981
Neighborhood Adolescent and Young Adult
Drug Program
Baltimore, MD
- r. Consultant 1980-1983
Walker Monroe, Inc. (Diversified Systems)
4612 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
- s. Insurance Agent 1979-1980
Aetna Life Insurance Co.
40 W. Chesapeake Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21204
- t. Chief, Home Health 01/1979-05/1979
Constant Care Community Health Center
100 Metro Plaza
Baltimore, MD 21216
- u. Deputy Director, 04/1976-08/1978
Neighborhood Services Administration
Baltimore City Department of Housing
and Community Development
Baltimore, MD
- v. Independent Contractor 1976-1980
Princess House
North Dighton, MA 02764
- w. Project Director 02/1974-04/1976
Baltimore City Health Department
Baltimore, MD
- x. Program Manager 12/1971-02/1974
Senior Administrative Assistant 03/1970-12/1971
Administrative Assistant 04/1969-03/1970
Baltimore City Department of Housing
and Community Development
Baltimore, MD
- y. Principal Stenographer 02/1966-04/1969
Bureau of Library Services
Baltimore City Department of Education
Baltimore, MD

- z. Senior Clerk Stenographer 10/1964-02/1966
School #452
Baltimore, MD
 - aa. Clerk Stenographer 08/1963-05/1964
Social Security Administration
6400 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235
 - bb. I held various temporary and part-time positions as a young adult. I cannot recall the dates and I am not certain if the list is all inclusive. Those I recall include:
 - 1. Clerical Worker
Able Temporaries
2 N Charles Street
Baltimore, MD
 - 2. Registration Clerk
Mercy Medical Center
301 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
 - 3. Library Clerk
Sinai Hospital
2401 W. Belvedere Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215
 - cc. Between approximate 1978 through 1980, I was an independent contractor for AMWAY (address unknown). Also, between approximately 1969 through 1979, I was an independent contractor for Success Motivation Institute, located in Waco, Texas. I have not had any involvement with either organization for several years.
 - dd. I have been a licensed real estate agent since 1987, working with Grempler Realty, 400 East Joppa Road, Towson, MD, and ABC Realty, located at 5528 Belair Road, Baltimore, MD. ABC Realty is now Premiere Real Estate Company. I intend to keep my real estate license current, but I do not intend to utilize my real estate license during the time I serve as Deputy Commissioner.
10. Government experience: (List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above.)
- a. Gubernatorial Commissions (during period of employment with Governor William Schaefer, between 1989-1994)
 - 1. Governor's Advisory Council on Acquired Immune Deficiency

2. Governor's Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse
 3. Governor's Commission on Welfare Reform
 4. Governor's Commission on Women's Health
 5. Governor's Employment and Training Council
 6. Governor's Task Force on Self Esteem
 7. Governor's Workforce Investment Board
 8. Governor Elect's Transition Task Force on Health
- b. Mayoral Committees (during period of employment with Mayor Schaefer, between 1981-1988)
1. Commission for Children and Youth
 2. Fish and Wildlife Commission
 3. Mayor's Cable TV Advisory Committee
 4. Mayor's Conservation Task Force
 5. Mayor's Human Services Network for District IV
 6. Mayor's Poverty Discussion Group
 7. Mayor's Implementation Committee
 8. Project Area Committee Coalition Coordinator
11. Business relationships: (List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, other business enterprise, or educational or other institution:)
- a. Current Board Membership
1. Arundel Community Development Services
2666 Riva Road, Suite 210, Annapolis, MD 21401
Board Member
 2. National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
10 G Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002
Board Member/Secretary
 3. National Committee Foundation
10 G Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002
Board Member/Secretary
- b. Former Board Membership
1. AMERIGROUP Maryland, Inc.
750 First Street, NE, Suite 1120
Washington, DC
Vice-President, 05/2007-12/2007

2. AMERIGROUP Virginia, Inc. - -
750 First Street, NE, Suite 1120
Washington, DC
President, 05/2007-12/2007
 3. American Public Human Services Association, 1990-93
(formerly the American Public Welfare Association)
Washington, DC
 4. Associated Black Charities, Baltimore, MD, 1993-94.
 5. Center Stage, Baltimore, MD
 6. Community Relations Commission, Baltimore, MD
 7. Friends of the Family, Baltimore, MD
 8. House of Ruth, Baltimore, MD
 9. Mental Health Association, Baltimore, MD
 10. Mercy Medical Center, Baltimore MD, 1993-94.
 11. Montgomery Alliance, Montgomery County, MD, 2004 through 2006.
 12. Municipal Employees Credit Union, Baltimore, MD
 13. National Forum for Black Public Administrators, MD Chapter, Baltimore,
MD
 14. North Baltimore Youth Services Board, Baltimore, MD, 1982-84
 15. Outward Bound, Baltimore, MD
 16. USO of Central Maryland, Annapolis, MD
12. Memberships. List all memberships and offices held in professional, fraternal, scholarly, civic, business, charitable, and other organizations.
- a. Current
 1. AARP
 2. Leadership Maryland
 3. Morgan State Alumni Association

4. NAACP
5. National Forum for Black Public Administrators
6. Wiley H. Bates Alumni Association

b. Former

1. American Business Women's Association - 1979
2. American Red Cross Community Program Committee - 1974
3. American Society for Training and Development, 1976-80
4. Association of MBA Executives - 1980
5. Baltimore Commission on Aging,
Health and Social Services Consortium - 1974-1976
6. Baltimore Community College, Health and Human Services Advisory
Council
7. Baltimore Life Underwriters Association - 1980
8. Baltimoreans for Children's Survival
9. Black Health Study Group
10. Center of Women's Health & Medicine Community Advisory Board
11. Child Welfare Center - 1994
12. Enterprise Housing Plus Advisory Committee
13. Executive Women's Network
14. Family Development Center
15. Family Violence Task Force
16. Glen Oaks Improvement Association - 1980
17. Helping Unite People (HUB), 1990
18. Information Technology Board
19. Judicial Nominating Committee, Baltimore City - 1987-89
20. Leadership Baltimore - 1985
21. Maryland Black Congress on Health, Law and Economics
22. Maryland Commission on Infant Mortality
23. Maryland Conference of Social Concern
24. Mental Health Laws Advisory Council
25. National Academy of Social Insurance - 1995-2000
26. National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities
Services -2001-2005
27. National Coalition of 100 Black Women, 1988-89
28. National Caucus on the Black Aged - 1974-1976
29. National Council for the Aging-1974-1976
30. Urban League
31. Women Executives in State Government

13. Political affiliations and activities:

- a. List all public offices for which you have been a candidate.

None

b. List all memberships and offices held in and services rendered to all political parties or election committees during the past 10 years.

1. Volunteer in the 2008 Obama for President Campaign
2. Volunteer in the 2005-06 Doug Duncan for Governor Campaign
3. Volunteer in the 2002 Tony Williams for Mayor Campaign

c. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$50 or more for the past 10 years.

1.	07/10/09	DCCC	\$100
2.	03/23/09	- Democratic National Committee	100
3.	01/13/09	- Democratic National Committee	100
4.	09/08/08	- Democratic National Committee	100
5.	06/21/08	- Obama for President	500
6.	07/20/08	- Obama for President	500
7.	05/07/08	- Hillary Clinton for President	500
8.	10/02/06	- Friends of Ike Leggett	500
9.	08/22/06	- Halter for Arkansas	200
10.	08/03/06	- Friends of William Donald Schaefer	200
11.	07/29/06	- Friends of Stuart Simms	250
12.	05/07/06	- Friends of Doug Duncan	1,000
13.	04/26/06	- Citizens to Elect Linda Cropp Mayor	100
14.	10/15/05	- Friends of Doug Duncan	100
15.	07/06/05	- Friends of Ike Leggett	500
16.	01/07/05	- Friends of Doug Duncan	1,000
17.	05/24/04	- Mikulski for Senate	500
18.	06/03/04	- Friends of William Donald Schaefer	250
19.	01/13/03	- Friends of Pete Rawlings	125
20.	11/04/02	- Committee to Reelect Tony Williams	900
21.	10/10/02	- Sandy Allen's Constituency Fund	100
22.	09/03/02	- Ward 8 Democrats	240
23.	08/19/02	- Committee to Reelect Tony Williams	1,000
24.	07/30/02	- Friends of Lisa Gladden	100
25.	06/15/02	- Committee to Reelect Tony Williams	100
26.	06/04/02	- DC Democratic Party	200
27.	02/28/02	- Friends of Major F. Riddick	50
28.	02/05/01	- Democratic National Committee	100
29.	11/11/00	- MD Legislative Black Caucus	100
30.	11/03/00	- Friends of Shirley Nathan Pulliam	60
31.	10/30/00	- DNC Federal Account	400
32.	09/29/00	- DNC Federal Account	200
33.	12/29/99	- Friends of Pete Rawlings	100
34.	12/21/99	- MD Democratic Party	200

35. 10/23/99	-	Friends of Shirley Nathan Pulliam	50
36. 07/08/99	-	Friends of William Donald Schaefer	250
37. 03/26/99	-	MD Democratic Victory Fund	200

14. Honors and Awards: (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and other special recognitions for outstanding service or achievement.)
- a. 2005 – Maryland’s Top 100 Women – Awarded by the Daily Record
 - b. 2005 – Women of Achievement Award – Awarded by Suburban Maryland Business & Professional Women
 - c. 1992 - Women Executives in State Government Fellowship – Senior Executives in State and Local Government
 - d. 1985 – Certificate – Greater Baltimore Leadership Program
15. Published writings: (List the titles, publishers, and dates of all books, articles, reports, or other published materials you have written.)
- a. None
16. Speeches: (List all formal speeches you have delivered during the past five years which are on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated.) Provide the Committee with two copies of each formal speech.
- a. None
17. Qualifications: (State what, in your opinion, qualifies you to serve in the position for which you have been nominated.)

I previously served as Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration from 1994-2001, responsible for Policy, External Affairs, Programs, and Operations. I have served on the Board of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare since 2006. I have served as a Senior Executive to a Governor, three Mayors, and a County Executive, leading large governmental agencies at the local and State levels. At the local and State agencies, I was responsible for administering disability and other health and social service programs.

Over the span of my career I have demonstrated success in leading governmental agencies through development, change, and innovation. I have strategically and effectively managed personnel, fiscal and material resources to achieve organizational goals.

I am passionate about the Social Security programs. I have seen first-hand the importance of both the disability and retirement programs in the lives of my own family and friends. If confirmed, I will bring the experience gained from my previous service at

the Social Security Administration, as well as over thirty-five years in positions of responsibility in the public and private sectors, to help meet the challenges facing Social Security.

B. FUTURE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

1. Will you sever all connections with your present employers, business firms, associations, or organizations if you are confirmed by the Senate? If not, provide details.
 - a. Yes.
2. Do you have any plans, commitments, or agreements to pursue outside employment, with or without compensation during your service with the government. If so, provide details.
 - a. No.
3. Has any person or entity made a commitment or agreement to employ your services in any capacity after you leave government service? If so, provide details.
 - a. No.
4. If you are confirmed by the Senate, do you expect to serve out your full term or until the next Presidential election, whichever is applicable? If not, explain.
 - a. Yes.

C. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated.
 - a. I have consulted with representatives from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics and the Designated Agency Ethics Official for the Social Security Administration regarding potential conflicts of interest regarding my investments, obligation, liabilities or other relationships and the position to which I have been nominated. I have signed an ethics agreement that details the actions I will take to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. I have provided a copy of the agreement with this questionnaire. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.
2. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the past 10 years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as

an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position for which you have been nominated.

- a. In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Social Security Administration's designated agency ethics official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of an ethics agreement that I have entered into with the Department's designated agency ethics official and that has been provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.
3. Describe any activity during the past 10 years in which you have engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy. activities performed as an employee of the Federal government need not be listed.

None

4. Explain how you will resolve any potential conflict of interest, including any that may be disclosed by your responses to the above items. (Provide the Committee with two copies of any trust or other agreements.)
- a. In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and the Social Security Administration's designated agency ethics official to identify potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of an ethics agreement that I have entered into with the Department's designated agency ethics official and that has been provided to this Committee. I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest.

5. The following information is to be provided only by nominees to the positions of United States Trade Representative and Deputy States Trade Representative:

Have you ever represented, advised, or otherwise aided a foreign government or a foreign political organization with respect to any international trade matter? If so, provide the name of the foreign entity, a description of the work performed (including any work you supervised), the time frame of the work (e.g. March to December 1995), and the number of hours spent on the representation.

- a. Not Applicable.

D. LEGAL AND OTHER MATTERS

1. Have you ever been the subject of a complaint or been investigated, disciplined, or otherwise cited for a breach of ethics for unprofessional conduct before any court, administrative agency, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other

professional association disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If so, provide details.

a. No.

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority for a violation of any Federal, State, county, or municipal law, regulation, or ordinance, other than a minor traffic offense. If so, provide details.

a. No

3. Have you ever been involved as a party of interest in any administrative agency proceeding or civil litigation? If so, provide details.

- a. In 1984, my son missed payments on a car loan for which I was a co-signer. A civil judgment in the amount of \$2,226 was entered against me as a result. The judgment was satisfied in full.
- b. I am told that Maryland records show a 1989 civil judgment in my favor related to a car accident in 1984. I have no recollection of this litigation or this accident.
- c. In 1992 or 1993, a civil judgment for approximately \$285 was entered against me for dental work arising from a car accident. I had believed my insurance company had covered the costs. I paid the amount due in 1993 upon learning of the judgment.
- d. In approximately 2006, I brought a complaint against a tenant in a building I own for breach of lease because the tenant had stopped paying rent. Around the same time, this tenant filed a civil complaint seeking return of a deposit. (The tenant had placed deposit on the property, with an option to buy, with the understanding that the funds would go toward the purchase price or would be forfeited if the tenant did not purchase the property.) In December 2006, the case was settled by a court mediator.
- e. In 2004, a civil complaint was filed against me for a municipal infraction, failure to provide access to a rental property, after a tenant in a building I own did not allow a local inspector to enter the tenant's home. The case was dismissed in March 2004 because I had not received prior notice from the Housing Department of the inspection.
- f. During my career in federal, state, and local government agencies, I have been named as a party in routine civil suits relating to the work of these agencies. To the best of my knowledge, none of these suits alleged any personal wrongdoing by me.

4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or nolo contendere) or any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, provide details.

a. No

5. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be considered in connection with your nomination.

a. None

E. TESTIFYING BEFORE CONGRESS

1. If you are confirmed by the Senate, are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so.

a. Yes.

2. If you are confirmed by the Senate, are you willing to provide such information as is requested by such committees?

a. Yes.

United States Committee on Finance Hearing
Hearing To Consider the Nomination of Carolyn Colvin
To Be the Deputy Commissioner of Social Security
Carolyn Colvin's Responses to Submitted Questions

Questions for the Record—Senator Chuck Grassley

- 1. In the course of vetting your nomination, bipartisan Committee nominations staff discovered that passive losses were claimed on your 2006 Federal tax return that should have been claimed on your 2005 Federal tax return. As a consequence it appeared that your 2005 federal tax return reflected an overpayment of roughly \$24,000 and your 2006 federal tax return reflected an underpayment of roughly \$28,000.**

- (a) Please explain how these passive losses were generated and why were they claimed in 2005 instead of 2006.**

I have always used the services of a CPA, so I was surprised when Committee staff identified this error.

I sold rental properties in 2005, and as I understand it now, all passive losses which had accumulated on those properties should have been claimed when the properties were sold.

- (b) Did you file amended Federal tax returns once this situation was brought to your attention? If not, please explain why not.**

My CPA realized the error had been made on the 2005 return as he was preparing the 2006 return. He advised me that it was not necessary to file an amended return for 2005, and that he would claim the losses in 2006.

- (c) How did you resolve this situation to ensure that taxpayers are not our any revenues as a result of your error?**

I contacted IRS to determine how to rectify the error. Even though IRS indicated that I did not owe anything because the statute of limitations had expired, I still sent them a check to cover the full amount that would have been due had the tax returns been prepared correctly.

- 2. The specific duties of the Deputy Commission are not defined in statute. Instead, the law authorizes the Commissioner to delegate such responsibilities. Given**

your knowledge and experience within the agency, can you identify some duties you would like the Commissioner to delegate? Regarding these duties, what goals or objectives would you hope to achieve?

If confirmed, I hope to work closely with Commissioner Astrue on priorities such as reducing the disability backlog and ensuring that the Agency continues to build on its improvements so that we can reach the goal of entirely eliminating the disability backlog within the next two years. I also believe that, if confirmed, my strengths as an effective and efficient administrator will be an asset in addressing a wide variety of challenges facing SSA.

If confirmed, I also anticipate that I will have lead responsibility for overseeing SSA's efforts to identify, prevent, reduce and recover improper payments. I agree with the President that thorough identification of improper payments promotes accountability of Federal spending. Effective program stewardship means that waste, fraud, and abuse will not be tolerated.

The Executive Order that the President issued last November requires agencies to designate an official accountable for meeting specified targets for reducing and recovering improper payments. The executive order requires the accountable official to be in a Senate-confirmed position. Commissioner Astrue is the only current official at SSA in a Senate-confirmed position and, as such, he is SSA's accountable official in addition to all of his other duties as Commissioner. He has indicated that if I am confirmed, he would like me to assume that role.

Maintaining the public trust in Social Security programs through vigorous stewardship and program integrity activities is a primary goal for SSA. I understand that the agency has developed targets for reducing and recovering improper payments as required by the Executive Order, and I anticipate that I will be deeply involved in leading agency efforts to ensure that SSA meets those targets.

- 3. In light of the report from President's Fiscal Commission, there has been a renewed focus on the need for Social Security reform. Can you explain how you see your role within the agency with respect to any legislative effort to reform Social Security?**

Under a longstanding arrangement within both the current and previous Administration, the White House and Department of the Treasury have the leads in addressing issues relating to solvency. My understanding is that SSA will continue to provide cost estimates and technical assistance on specific legislative proposals relating to reform, but any policy decisions would come from the White House and Treasury.

Questions for the Record—Senator Michael B. Enzi

1. **Given the nation’s fiscal situation, government agencies like the Social Security Administration (SSA) will need to continue to provide high-quality service with the same, or perhaps less, resources. Based on your previous experience with the SSA, what are a few of the ways in which the SSA can streamline its operations and still provide the high-quality services needed by social security beneficiaries around the country?**

I understand that SSA is looking thoroughly at its operations in light of diminishing resources. I know that SSA employees pride themselves on providing excellent service to the American people and will strive to continue to do so, even under less than ideal circumstances. Technology can help. During my previous tenure at SSA, we worked to improve the 800 number services. I understand that those services have been expanded further, and that SSA now has a robust system to provide callers with quick and accurate information. Individuals are also able to file for benefits over the internet, and there has been a significant increase in retirement claims filed using this method, often called I-Claims. Being able to use the telephone and internet to conduct business with SSA not only is convenient for the public, it also eliminates the need for people to come into SSA field offices.

Further, I understand that SSA continues to consider administrative and policy simplifications that would make the operations of social security programs more efficient.

Having to do more with less is inevitable. However, we still have the responsibility to be effective stewards of the trust funds. Therefore, if confirmed, I can assure you that I will explore all options for improving ways to carry out SSA’s important mission and to make sure that we spend taxpayer dollars as efficiently as possible.

2. **In its December 1st final report, the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform recommended a gradual increase in early and full retirement ages, based on increases in life expectancy. After the Normal Retirement Age (NRA) reaches 67 in 2027 under current law, the proposal would index both the NRA and Early Eligibility Age (EEA) to increases in life expectancy, effectively increasing the NRA to 68 by about 2050 and 69 by about 2075, and the EEA to 63 and 64 in lock step. The Bipartisan Policy Center, in its November 17th report, recommended that beginning in 2023 the benefit formula be indexed for increases in life expectancy and require the SSA to ensure that early retirees understand that they are opting for a lower monthly benefit. According to the report, these changes would increase the incentive to work longer, while not changing either the age of full retirement or the early retirement age from those in current law. Please provide your thoughts on these recommendations, and what other considerations you believe should be taken into account in this context as part of the discussion on the solvency of social security.**

The changes you reference are among many options that need to be considered. In fact, all options to address the financing problem facing Social Security must be on the table for consideration. I look forward to the Administration and the Congress working together on this important issue.

I am not able to comment on specific proposals relating to Social Security solvency. Under a longstanding arrangement with both the current and previous Administrations, the White House and Department of the Treasury have the leads in addressing issues relating to solvency.

Although I will not be working on solvency policy if confirmed, I expect to have the leadership role in assuring program integrity and stewardship, and a significant role in helping the Commissioner with his priority of reducing the disability and hearing backlogs.

Questions for the Record—Senator Tom Carper

1. **Improper Payments—Two programs run by the Social Security Administration are on the list of federal programs that report high levels of improper payments. The SSA reported that the Old Age and Survivors and Disability Insurance programs had improper payments estimated at more than \$3.1 billion dollars for 2010. The Supplemental Security Income Program had estimates reported of more than \$4.8 billion. Of course, improper payments are overpayments or other payments made improperly by a federal agency. These improper payments have been the focus of Government Accountability Office audits and hearings by the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee.**

Please see subsequent responses that address these facts.

2. **Do you feel that the improper payments estimates reported by SSA represent a serious problem that needs attention by the Social Security leadership?**

Improper payments are always serious and I believe that it is a primary function of government to take every possible step to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent properly. If confirmed, I will work with the Commissioner and other SSA officials to explore every possible avenue to prevent, reduce, and recover improper payments in both the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income programs.

3. **The SSA Performance and Accountability Report for FY2010 lists some steps that SSA plans to take in order to address improper payments, called “corrective actions.” Beyond the corrective actions listed, are their additional solutions you feel that SSA should consider to address improper payments within SSA programs? For example, have you considered preparing proposals to Congress for statutory or other changes that would curb improper payments (not just**

budgetary changes)? Could SSA make more expanded or improved use of the Automated Earnings Reappraisal Operations (AERO) program data, the National Directory of New Hires, or other databases such as those for federal employment?

I believe it is always appropriate to examine new solutions to the improper payments problem. If confirmed, I will review the current corrective actions as well as explore other steps that might be taken to improve the payment process. I will certainly examine how the AERO data and the other databases you mention might be used, and what information we might be able to obtain from those sources. Should we find a need for legislative changes in order to implement improvements, we will certainly bring those proposals to the Congress.

- 4. Social Security Administration Death Master File--The Death Master File, maintained by the Social Security Administration to track the deaths of citizens and residents of the United States, is a key database not only for the work of the SSA, but many other agencies. This database's level of accuracy is critical for ensuring that the federal government can determine the eligibility of beneficiaries and providers of services. By checking the Death Master file, an agency can ensure that an individual is alive, and therefore people's identities are less likely to be stolen or misused for fraudulent purposes. For example, the Death Master File is used to update the list of providers and beneficiaries under the Medicare and Medicaid programs.**

Please see response to questions below.

- 5. Are there proposals that SSA could pursue to improve the accuracy and availability of the Death Master File data? Could SSA increase the frequency of updates to the Death Master File? Are there proposals that Congress should consider to improve the submission of information to the Death Master File by the States or other sources?**
- It is my understanding that the Death Master File (DMF) is very accurate. The SSA Inspector General audited the accuracy of the DMF in 2008 and reported that it was 99.59% accurate. If I am confirmed as Deputy Commissioner, I will review with appropriate SSA officials any additional steps that might be taken to improve this rate.
 - I understand that SSA now updates the DMF every week. As you note, Federal and State benefit paying agencies use the DMF to prevent fraud. These agencies receive the information from SSA at no cost. For commercial users, such as banks and insurance companies, which use the DMF to prevent identity fraud, the DMF can be purchased from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The DMF sold by NIST is provided by SSA and is updated weekly.

- o I know that SSA receives death information directly from family members and from funeral homes as well as from State vital statistics departments. I also know that more than 30 State and local vital statistics departments are reporting this information electronically to SSA. If I have the opportunity to serve as Deputy Commissioner, I will review with SSA officials how the DMF obtains information from the States and other reporters and examine whether there may be ways to improve the speed and accuracy of the information obtained from these sources. I will also work to see if there are additional steps SSA might take to encourage the remaining States to participate in the sharing of death information electronically with SSA. My understanding is that the main barrier to full State participation is the limited available funding for HHS to provide grants for this purpose.

[NOTE: Although not part of the questions for the record submitted by **Senator Carper**, I agreed during the hearing to provide for the record a response to his question about the chained CPI.]

The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform proposed using a chained formula to calculate future cost-of-living increases. Would you explain the difference between the chained CPI and the current formula?

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. When a cost-of-living increase is payable, the Social Security Administration (SSA) adjusts beneficiaries' monthly benefits based on any increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). The Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)—not SSA—calculates this index. BLS would be the best source for information on the chained CPI. However, here is my understanding of the issue.

In 2002, BLS started publishing a Chained Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. The index, designated the C-CPI-U, supplements existing indexes already produced by the BLS: the CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) and the CPI-W. The CPI-U and C-CPI-U are indexes that measure price changes faced by urban consumers, while the CPI-W measures price changes faced by urban wage earners and clerical workers (a subset of the population measured by the CPI-U). The raw data used to measure the CPI-U and CPI-W are the same; population coverage is the only difference.

The feature that makes the C-CPI-U different from the other indexes is that it uses a different mathematical formula to adjust the CPI to reflect the effect of any substitution that consumers may make in response to changes in prices between CPI categories. For example, if the price of beef rises but the price of pork does not, consumers may choose

to purchase less beef and more pork. The C-CPI-U better reflects the effect of this substitution. As mentioned above, BLS would be in the best position to explain precisely how the C-CPI-U formula differs from the CPI-W formula used to calculate the Social Security COLA.

SSA's Office of the Chief Actuary has estimated that using the chained CPI for purposes of the Social Security COLA would result in approximately a 0.3 percentage point smaller COLA each year.

Senator Chuck Grassley
Senate Committee on Finance
Hearing on the Nomination of Carolyn Colvin
Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration
December 9, 2010

Ms. Carolyn Colvin has been nominated by the President to be the next Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

I would like to welcome you to the Finance Committee today. I know you are eager to get started in your new job.

The position of Deputy Commissioner is like the position of Vice President. You must be prepared to take charge at a moment's notice. But absent an unfortunate vacancy at the top, you have such duties and responsibilities as the Commissioner shall delegate.

As Deputy Commissioner you will have the opportunity to participate in key decisions at the highest levels. Your previous experience at Social Security will serve you well in your new position. Your advice and leadership will contribute greatly to the success of the agency.

These are challenging times for the Social Security Administration. Rising unemployment, the retirement of the baby boomers, and the aging of its workforce have all forced the agency to do more with less. Unfortunately, growing concerns about the rising federal debt have limited the prospects for increased administrative funds. I look forward to hearing your ideas to find new ways to reduce overhead and improve efficiency.

If you are confirmed I look forward to working with you as a member of this Committee to protect and improve the Social Security program.

**SENATOR BARBARA A. MIKULSKI
STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
CAROLYN COLVIN FOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SSA
CONFIRMATION HEARING
FINANCE COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 9, 2010**

I enthusiastically support Carolyn Colvin for Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

I have known Carolyn Colvin for many years, and am so impressed by her commitment to public service. Over a 25-year career, she has served in management positions at the Baltimore Health Department, the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the DC Department of Human Services, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services – and the Social Security Administration. She has an extraordinary breadth of experience managing large agencies at the federal, state, and local government levels.

In these positions, she has gained the experience and the expertise needed for this important position at the Social Security Administration. Her years of service overseeing the programs and policy of Social Security as well as the operations of the agency have given her an institutional knowledge that is uniquely well-suited to benefit the agency.

Ms. Colvin is known for her intelligence, her commitment to public service, and her work ethic. Her academic and professional background is outstanding. She has been recognized and awarded for her excellence in leadership.

Working Americans have paid a portion of their salaries into Social Security over their lifetimes and they depend on it when they retire. More than 50 million seniors count on Social Security – to pay their bills, buy their food, and get their prescription drugs. The promise of Social Security is a guaranteed, lifetime, inflation-proof benefit. And promises made must be promises kept.

Seniors who worked hard, raised families, and played by the rules have seen their pensions and retirement savings significantly hurt by the difficult economy we are currently facing. That is why it is so important that we have excellent leadership and management at the Social Security Administration to serve our seniors today and preserve Social Security for the future.

Ms. Colvin has my full support and confidence. She has the skills, experience, and integrity we need at the Social Security Administration. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this nomination.

