

Opening Statement of Richard G. Frank

Nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Senate Committee on Finance

January 30, 2014

Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch, and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me here today. I am honored to have been nominated, by the President, to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and to be appearing before you.

I am currently a Professor of Health Economics at Harvard University Medical School. I have spent my entire career engaged in teaching, research, and service related to economic aspects of health policy. This has included prior service in the federal government, most recently between 2009 and 2011 as a Deputy Assistant Secretary at HHS. I have viewed public service as an important part of my career, since before I had a career. I see the possibility of serving as the ASPE as an enormous opportunity to make a difference and to contribute to American society.

My parents were both immigrants who came to the United States because of the Second World War. My father came to the country in 1939 from Switzerland and was drafted and served in the army in the European theater where he was badly wounded. He went to college on the GI Bill and had a successful career as an engineer. My mother, who is originally French, survived the Auschwitz concentration camp and came to the U.S. to stay with her aunt as her parents, aunts, and uncles in Europe were all exterminated. She has led a rewarding and prosperous life raising two children and helping acclimate foreign students. Both my parents were deeply grateful to this country for offering them safety and opportunity. They regularly reminded me of how fortunate I was to be born here and that we were obliged to give back if we could. They encouraged me to enter the Peace Corps. My time in the Republic of Botswana was my first exposure to national service.

Serving as the ASPE would offer me the possibility to apply all my professional training and experience in economics and health policy to support policy making for health and human services at a time of monumental change that presents an enormous number of challenges. The ASPE serves as the secretary's principal policy advisor responsible for policy coordination, strategic planning, policy research, evaluation, and economic analysis. More than ever key decision makers in the Administration, Congress, and the states are going to need first rate information and analysis to support their choices. I believe my training in health economics and my experience in conducting research related to markets and programs for health and human services have prepared me to lead

the talented team of professionals at ASPE to support HHS leadership. My academic and technical preparation, I believe, are augmented by my service in state and federal government including time at HHS, membership on a state regulatory board, membership on a Congressional Commission, and service as a consultant to a number of state government agencies across the country. I believe this background positions me to lead a team that will provide the Administration and the Congress with technically rigorous, balanced, and policy-relevant analyses.

HHS touches a vast array of populations, programs, and markets ranging from the pharmaceutical industry, to early childhood programs, to programs and regulations aimed at the provision and financing of mental health and substance use disorder care to our public health financing programs; Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP. This requires great breadth of talent. ASPE is staffed by a skilled group of professionals that cover the range of expertise needed to understand, analyze, and evaluate HHS activities. I am deeply committed to supporting the excellence that currently exists at ASPE and to bolstering it so that ASPE can effectively respond to new demands driven by scientific progress, changing financial circumstances, and shifting demographics.

I thank you for your consideration of my nomination and would welcome the opportunity to work with you all.