

Opening Remarks by U.S Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa  
Chairman, U.S. Senate Finance Committee  
Hearing to Consider Pending Nominations  
Wednesday, July 24, 2019

Today the Finance Committee will hear from four nominees, three nominees to the Treasury Department, and a nominee to the U.S. Tax Court.

Before I give my full statement, I want to recognize the Majority Leader who is with us this morning to introduce one of the nominees.

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Thank you Leader McConnell.

This morning we first will hear from Brent McIntosh who is nominated to be Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs. This position has a broad portfolio that includes working with many multi-national organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF.

Given this position is related to international affairs, let me take a moment to stress again that Treasury and the Administration should use all available tools under U.S. law to encourage other countries to stop efforts to implement unilateral digital services taxes, like the ones in France and under consideration in the U.K. Instead, our trading partners should focus on the multilateral efforts underway at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

I was pleased to see Treasury Secretary Mnuchin's reported comments after the G7 finance ministers' meeting last week indicating a two-track process with respect to these issues – continuing the section 301 investigation of the French Digital Services Tax while also negotiating with the OECD Inclusive Framework members on a consensus solution to the tax challenges of the digital economy.

Through multiple letters and other communications, Senator Wyden and I together have expressed our bipartisan interest in Treasury continuing its active participating in the OECD negotiations and using all tools available to prevent unilateral measures.

I look forward to any comments our Treasury witnesses would like to provide on this matter.

Our next nominee will be Brian Callanan, who is nominated to Mr. McIntosh's current position as Treasury General Counsel. Since the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was enacted at the end of 2017, the Treasury Department has done a remarkable job of developing the regulations and other guidance to implement the bill. The Office of Treasury General Counsel has been an indispensable part of that process while also fulfilling all its other legal responsibilities at Treasury and its bureaus.

Next we will hear from Brian McGuire, nominated to be Treasury Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. I've talked many times about how important it is that members of this Committee are able to get their questions answered and responses to their letters. I'm heartened that Mr. McGuire has worked so many years for Leader McConnell, so I expect he's learned how important it is for the Executive Branch to cooperate and work with those of us here in the legislature.

Finally, we will hear from Travis Greaves, nominated to a term of 15 years on the U.S. Tax Court. The Tax Court is where taxpayers can turn to settle a disputed liability with the IRS, and without having to pay the disputed tax before their case is heard. If Mr. Greaves is confirmed, along with two other nominees who have already been reported from the Committee in this Congress, 18 of the 19 positions on the Tax Court will be filled.

Thank you all for your willingness to serve and for your testimony here today.

Let me turn to Senator Wyden for his opening remarks.