



Nomination Hearing Opening Statement
April 30, 2009

Thank you Chairman Baucus. Today the Finance Committee is considering the nominations of three individuals; Mr. Bill Corr, Mr. Demetrios Marantis and Dr. Alan Krueger . First, the nomination of Mr. Bill Corr to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Thank you Mr. Corr for your willingness to serve your country.

If confirmed, you will be leading over 64,000 employees and in charge of an annual budget of about 700 billion dollars. The Department of Health and Human Services and its operating divisions serve many vital functions to promote the health and well being of all Americans. For example, just this past week, the country has turned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to respond to the serious problem of Swine Flu. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provides health care to about 100 million Americans through the Medicare, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, sometimes better known as CHIP. Americans also rely on the Food and Drug Administration to ensure the safety of food, drugs and devices that are consumed and used every day. And the National Institutes of Health is the principal driver of basic and applied biomedical research. It is good that you will be bringing your experience working for congress to the department. I hope your knowledge of what we do in the legislative branch will lead to a constructive relationship as we move forward on the difficult challenges of health care reform. I also appreciate your history and tenacity on oversight issues. This is a passion that we share and I can assure you that I will be asking you to help me in my efforts. Mr. Corr, you come at a time when we face many significant challenges in the health care arena. I want to thank you again for your willingness to serve and express again, that if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to meet these challenges in the days and months ahead.

We will also consider the President's nomination of Mr. Demetrios Marantis to be Deputy United States Trade Representative in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Mr. Marantis is well known to all of us on the Finance Committee. For four years, he has ably served Chairman Baucus on the Finance Committee staff, most recently as the Democratic Chief International Trade Counsel. So he has played a central role in all of our efforts on trade. He's been a firm advocate for the Chairman's views, and although I haven't always agreed with those views, he's always worked with me and my staff in good faith. Demetrios brought a genuine spirit of bipartisanship to his job, and I'm sorry to see him depart. Not only is he very smart, he's also one of the nicest staffers I've met, and he will be missed. But if he is confirmed for this new position, I fully expect that we'll continue to see him on a regular basis.

The Finance Committee is also considering the nomination of Alan Krueger to be Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy at the Department of the Treasury. If confirmed to this position, Dr. Krueger will be responsible for analyzing and reporting on economic developments in the U.S. and the whole world. This entails the collection and comprehension of significant amounts of data. For the occupant of this position to succeed, this must be done with the sole objective of finding robust answers that stand up to scrutiny that are not subject to political manipulation. Everyone wants our economy to flourish, and for that to happen we all require accurate data on the situation we are facing, and the impacts certain policy changes are likely to have. While I don't expect to agree with every conclusion reached by this office, I do expect that this office will be receptive to questions and be willing to explain how they reached their conclusions. Thank you all for appearing here today, and I look forward to your testimony.