

1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATIONS
2 OF CHRISTOPHER A. PADILLA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF
3 COMMERCE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE; CHRISTINA H. PEARSON,
4 TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT
5 OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; BENJAMIN ERIC SASSE, TO BE
6 ASSISTANT SECRETARY PLANNING AND EVALUATION, U.S.
7 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; AND CHARLES E.F.
8 MILLARD, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY
9 CORPORATION
10 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2007
11 U.S. Senate,
12 Committee on Finance,
13 Washington, DC.

14 The meeting was convened, pursuant to notice, at
15 3:55 p.m., in The President's Room, The Capitol, Hon. Max
16 Baucus (chairman of the committee) presiding.

17 Present: Senators Rockefeller, Conrad, Bingaman,
18 Kerry, Lincoln, Wyden, Schumer, Stabenow, Cantwell,
19 Salazar, Grassley, Hatch, Lott, Snowe, Kyl, Smith,
20 Bunning, Crapo, Roberts, and Ensign.

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1 The Clerk. Mrs. Lincoln?

2 Senator Lincoln. Aye, aye, aye, aye. You all have
3 a Merry Christmas.

4 The Clerk. Thank you.

5 Senator Roberts. Armed Services, Intel, and
6 Agriculture, all the staff are together and hold hands.
7 This is great. I like the way that works.

8 The Clerk. Mr. Roberts, aye.

9 Senator Crapo. I just have to say "yes" once or
10 four times?

11 The Clerk. Once.

12 Senator Crapo. Yes.

13 The Clerk. Mr. Crapo, aye.

14 Senator Crapo. Thank you.

15 The Clerk. Thank you.

16 Mr. Ensign?

17 Senator Ensign. Aye.

18 The Clerk. Aye.

19 Mr. Conrad?

20 Senator Conrad. What is this? I was told there was
21 going to be a buffet of some kind in here. [Laughter].
22 You know, you have disappointed me so many times on this.

23 The Clerk. I'm so sorry, Senator.

24 Senator Conrad. There's never been a Senate
25 breakfast buffet. There's never been a single dinner

1 buffet. There's never been a single luncheon buffet.
2 And you're in charge of this whole thing. You look like
3 you're sitting in the middle of the table, you have the
4 documents in front of you.

5 The Clerk. You're absolutely right. I'm so
6 ashamed. [Laughter].

7 Senator Conrad. What if I don't want to vote for
8 one or more of these people?

9 The Clerk. Then we'll split it up.

10 Senator Conrad. You're going to split it up. What
11 if I don't want to vote for any of them?

12 The Clerk. It's your prerogative.

13 Senator Conrad. What if I want to vote for all of
14 them?

15 The Clerk. That's fine, too. That works.

16 Senator Conrad. I mean, any of these options are
17 open to me. Am I right?

18 The Clerk. Absolutely.

19 Senator Conrad. All right. I'll vote "aye".

20 The Clerk. Mr. Conrad, aye.

21 Senator Conrad. Aye, aye, aye. There are four,
22 right?

23 The Clerk. It's en bloc.

24 Senator Conrad. What's "en bloc"? It's all
25 together. So I only needed to say "aye" once. If you

1 say "aye" more than once does that in any way depreciate
2 the value of the first vote? [Laughter].

3 Senator Grassley. I vote aye.

4 The Clerk. Mr. Grassley, aye.

5 Mr. Lott?

6 Senator Lott. For the last time, I think I vote
7 "aye".

8 The Clerk. Mr. Lott, aye. Good luck, you.

9 Senator Lott. Yes. I've got to go get a real job.
10 This has been fun.

11 The Clerk. Mr. Smith?

12 Senator Smith. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

13 The Clerk. Mr. Smith, aye.

14 Senator Lott. All right. Good luck. See you all
15 later.

16 The Clerk. Good luck, Senator.

17 Mr. Bingaman?

18 Senator Bingaman. Any of these controversial?

19 The Clerk. No, sir.

20 Senator Bingaman. Okay. I vote "aye" for all of
21 them.

22 The Clerk. Thank you, sir. Mr. Bingaman, aye.

23 Mr. Bunning?

24 Senator Bunning. Aye.

25 The Clerk. Mr. Bunning, aye.

1 Senator Bunning. On all.
2 The Clerk. Thank you, sir.
3 Senator Snowe. Aye.
4 The Clerk. Ms. Snowe, aye.
5 Senator Stabenow. Aye.
6 The Clerk. Ms. Stabenow, aye.
7 Mr. Kyl?
8 Senator Kyl. On?
9 The Clerk. En bloc.
10 Senator Kyl. Is it a slated block?
11 The Clerk. Yes, sir.
12 Senator Kyl. Aye.
13 The Clerk. Mr. Kyl, aye.
14 Senator Wyden. Wyden, aye.
15 The Clerk. Mr. Wyden, aye.
16 Mr. Hatch?
17 Senator Hatch. Aye, aye, aye.
18 The Clerk. En banc.
19 Senator Hatch. En banc.
20 The Clerk. Mr. Hatch, aye. Merry Christmas, sir.
21 Thank you, sir.
22 Ms. Cantwell?
23 Senator Cantwell. Aye. Do I have to say it four
24 times?
25 The Clerk. No, ma'am.

1 Senator Cantwell. All right. But there are four
2 nominees, right?

3 The Clerk. Yes, ma'am.

4 Senator Cantwell. Thank you.

5 The Clerk. Ms. Cantwell, aye.

6 Mr. Chairman?

7 The Chairman. Aye.

8 The Clerk. The Chairman votes "aye".

9 The Chairman. Is this the whole bunch of them?

10 The Clerk. Yes, sir. Four, en banc.

11 The Chairman. Great. Thanks.

12 The Clerk. We're missing Rockefeller, Kerry.

13 Mr. Kerry, aye.

14 Senator Kerry. Is that en banc?

15 The Clerk. Yes, sir.

16 Senator Kerry. Thank you.

17 The Clerk. Mr. Schumer?

18 Senator Schumer. Aye, aye, aye, aye, aye. We have
19 four votes?

20 The Clerk. Yes, sir.

21 Senator Schumer. I did five. One aye for next
22 time.

23 The Clerk. Mr. Salazar?

24 Senator Salazar. Aye.

25 The Clerk. Thank you. Mr. Salazar, aye.

1 Senator Salazar. For all four of them.

2 The Clerk. Yes, sir.

3 Senator Rockefeller. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

4 The Clerk. Mr. Rockefeller, aye. Thank you.

5 [Whereupon, at 4:45 p.m. the meeting was concluded.]

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Nominations
Statement of Senator Max Baucus
December 13, 2007

Mr. Padilla's nomination comes at a pivotal time in U.S. trade policy. Negotiators from the United States and the 150 other members of the World Trade Organization are trying to reach a deal by the end of the year. At the same time, the administration is pushing Congress to approve new trade agreements with Peru, Panama, Colombia, and Korea. And the administration seeks renewed fast-track authority to negotiate even more agreements.

But continued support for trade is dependent upon the United States enforcing the trade agreements that we already have. And support for trade is also dependent on reauthorizing and expanding Trade Adjustment Assistance to make sure that we extend a helping hand to those whom trade leaves behind. It's hard to imagine how we can move ahead on our trade agenda until we meet this critical objective.

The second and third nominations before us today are for the Department of Health and Human Services. HHS is the largest non-defense agency in the Federal Government. It is charged with protecting the health of all Americans. It is charged with providing essential human services, especially for the most vulnerable among us.

The first of the two HHS nominees whom we will consider is Benjamin Sasse to be Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. This person advises the Secretary of HHS on policy developments in all areas of the Departments' work.

And planning based on that information can have long-term implications. I am concerned that Federal funds are being directed toward research with political objectives, rather than scientific importance. I expect Dr. Sasse to work to craft a research agenda that is politically unbiased and scientifically relevant and accurate. Americans want to have their tax dollars directed toward research that really works to find cures for diseases. Our children and seniors deserve it.

Christina Pearson has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of HHS for Public Affairs. This position carries significant responsibility. It's a serious job to manage the Department's public face and translate its policy into digestible messages for the American people.

Americans respect and believe information transmitted by the Secretary. I expect Ms. Pearson to be accurate and factual. I expect her to put politics aside in the conduct of her job. Americans deserve the real deal, not information twisted for political gain. Our nation's health and wellness depend upon it.

Mr. Millard is the first nominee for PBGC Director subject to Senate confirmation. Last year, in enacting the Pension Protection Act, we upgraded the position to a Presidential appointment subject to Senate confirmation, and made it one of the few positions in government subject to confirmation by two committees — Finance and HELP.

The position's new status reflects how important we consider the person responsible for making sure that our workers receive their pensions. And it reflects the great concern by both Committees about the financial health of the PBGC and the defined benefit pension system.