

Statement by
Vincent J. Ventimiglia, Jr.
Before the
Senate Committee on Finance
Nomination Hearing for
Assistant Secretary for Legislation
Department of Health & Human Services

Wednesday, December 14, 2005
Room 215 Dirksen

Mr. Chairman, Senator Baucus, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to discuss my nomination as Assistant Secretary for Legislation of the Department of Health and Human Services.

My path to this seat in front of you began, as you might expect, with my parents, including my mother, Sandra Prothero, who is in the audience today. It continues to be made possible with the loving help of my wife, Christine and our five children, Marisa, Seth, Liana, Dominic, and Jonas; and with the support of my mother-in-law, Dr. Beatriz Nava -- all of whom also are here today. So many others have played roles in bringing me to this point, but my family's role is unique.

I am humbled by the nomination - and grateful to President Bush and Secretary Leavitt for providing me the opportunity further to serve the country.

Secretary Leavitt has set forth a challenging and exciting agenda for the Department to improve health care and human services in America and abroad. Under his leadership, the Department will work to transform our health care system with the goal of making health care more affordable and accessible. HHS will continue to modernize Medicare and Medicaid so that they more effectively serve seniors, the disabled, and the poor. HHS will advance medical research, while making sure medical products are safe and effective. With state and local partners, the Department will work to secure our homeland against a potential pandemic outbreak or bioterrorist attack. Quite fundamentally, we will strive to protect life, the family, and human dignity and will work to improve the human condition here and around the world.

The Assistant Secretary for Legislation serves as the senior advisor to the Secretary on all legislative matters. If confirmed, my primary responsibility will involve work with this and other committees in support of the Administration's efforts to improve health and human services. In a phrase, I would serve as your liaison to the Department. A critical part of that involves ensuring that you receive the assistance you need to undertake the Committee's legislative and oversight work. Whether you require technical assistance on legislation, policy

input, information or responses to oversight requests, or assistance for constituents, I will strive to be responsive in every way possible.

Having worked in the Senate for a dozen years, at various times since 1985, and in the health policy world most of my working life, I appreciate the importance of expert and close collaboration with Congress: bipartisan engagement; and, above all, high ethical and personal standards.

Again, thank you for taking the time to meet today. I look forward to the opportunity to work together to improve the health and well-being of the people that we serve.

I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.