

# Opening Statement of Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D.

Hearing on the Nomination of  
Mrs. Sylvia M. Burwell  
to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Today the committee welcomes Mrs. Sylvia Burwell, the president's nominee to be director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

If confirmed, Mrs. Burwell will be the country's chief budget official and performance officer, responsible for overseeing the fiscal and management functions of the federal government. Given the current financial condition of our nation and the far-reaching scope of the federal government, this will be no small undertaking.

Record levels of unsustainable spending and borrowing have placed the country at a critical fiscal juncture. After four years of trillion dollar deficits and more than a decade of unbridled levels of government spending and borrowing, our national debt now exceeds \$16.7 trillion. Federal spending has doubled since 2000, and Congress now borrows 24 cents out of every dollar it spends, adding to our national debt at a rate of \$32,000 every single second.

The president nominated a qualified and capable individual in Mrs. Burwell. Yet, the challenges with which she will be confronted are stark and sobering. Much work remains to reduce the deficit, eliminate unnecessary duplication, demand discernible results from government efforts, and reform federal operations to increase efficiency and transparency.

Lacking true leadership from both the White House and congressional leaders, Washington continues to stumble its way through a series of budget crises. We've shortchanged taxpayers at every turn, missing countless opportunities to reverse our fiscal course and do better for those that sent us here. Instead, we refused to enact meaningful deficit reduction, failed to reduce government waste and unnecessary duplication, and continue funding thousands of programs with few measurable outcomes. We must do more to guard against waste and ensure those in need of assistance actually receive the benefit of the taxpayers' investment.

Although we have differing philosophies of federal spending and taxation, I am hopeful Mrs. Burwell will use her influence at the Office of Management and Budget to advocate fiscal restraint, deficit reduction, and commonsense reforms for a more efficient government. I will commit to work with her to find bipartisan solutions in every possible arena—from government transparency and placing metrics on government programs to putting the country back on a sustainable fiscal path. At the same time, I will continue to hold this administration accountable for the promises it makes to taxpayers and will work diligently to reduce federal spending.

It is my hope Mrs. Burwell will take to heart the concerns of this committee regarding unsustainable deficits and federal borrowing, government transparency, accountability and efficiency, and commit to working with us to solve many of these challenges, both small and great. I plan to support her nomination and look forward to working together.