

**Statement of Ranking Member Tom Carper**  
**“Nomination of The Honorable Beth F. Cobert to be Director, Office of Personnel Management”**

**Thursday, February 4, 2016**

*As prepared for delivery:*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today to consider this important nomination. I'm pleased we could quickly reschedule after postponing our hearing last week due to the snowstorm.

Over the years, I've grown frustrated as, too often, senior positions in the federal government have been left vacant for far too long. A lack of critical leadership at agencies like OPM can – and oftentimes does – undermine the effectiveness of federal programs.

We're fortunate, then, to have an excellent nominee before us today in Beth Cobert. Ms. Cobert is well known to this committee already, both from her time at the Office of Management and Budget, and now in an acting capacity in the position to which she's been nominated.

I've been very impressed with Ms. Cobert's work and her leadership in both of the positions she's held in the federal government. We're fortunate that she's willing to continue to serve and that her family is willing to continue sharing her with the people of this country.

As my colleagues know, Ms. Cobert's time as Acting Director of OPM began in the aftermath of one of the worst cyber-attacks committed against our government.

As we learned at a hearing last July, warnings from the Inspector General and other watchdogs about cybersecurity at OPM went unheeded for years, contributing to the attack. If confirmed, Ms. Cobert, you will be inheriting an agency that unfortunately has an exceptionally poor track record of information technology management and cybersecurity.

Given these past failings, the modernization of the agency's information technology infrastructure presents a major challenge. But it also presents a great opportunity. An opportunity to restore the faith and trust of the American people that government can protect them from those that would do us harm.

As you continue the work of improving OPM's technology, Ms. Cobert, it is imperative that we get this right. OPM must upgrade to the best technologies and security tools available, and do so quickly and without faltering as has happened in the past.

Throughout this process, I encourage you to work transparently and in collaboration with all stakeholders: with Congress, with the Inspector General, with the Office of Management and Budget, and with other agencies like the Department of Homeland Security.

This hearing will help us understand your personal involvement in the response to the breach so far, your goals for the coming year if you are confirmed, and your plans for a successful transition a year from now as a new President takes office.

While a strong and secure IT infrastructure at OPM is certainly important and worthy of the attention it has received of late, I don't want to lose sight of the many other roles OPM must play in the coming months in helping the federal government support our federal workforce.

OPM helps to recruit, hire, and train new employees and supports them all the way through their careers and into retirement. I look forward to hearing about some of your plans for improving these services and how we can work with you to help build and continue to develop a strong federal workforce.

For example, I'm interested in hearing how you think we can ensure we're finding good people to fill jobs in key, mission critical areas – including areas like cybersecurity. I'd also like to learn more about how OPM, under your leadership, can help agencies leverage the lessons learned from the Employee Viewpoint Survey and the Best Places to Work rankings to continue to improve morale across government.

In addition, since you began your government service relatively recently, I'm interested to hear about your impressions as you transitioned from the private sector. I hope you can tell us about the things that surprised you most, and also about the best practices both from inside and outside of government you hope to bring to this job.

I appreciate all of the hard work you have already done at OPM. It is my hope that this committee can continue to work closely with you and your team going forward to improve how the government serves taxpayers, the federal workforce, and federal retirees.

Again, thank you for being here, for your willingness to serve, and for your willingness to apply your intellect and impressive experience to the serious challenges facing OPM. I look forward to hearing from you today.