

September 12, 2017
Opening Statement of Senator Heidi Heitkamp
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Nomination Hearing

Thank you, Chairman Lankford.

I want to begin by saying that our thoughts and prayers are with the people in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, who are recovering from the devastation caused by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

The road to recovery will not be easy, but the good and brave work that is being carried out by local first responders, everyday citizens, as well as the men and women from FEMA is a testament to America's strength and resiliency.

The devastation reminds us of FEMA's critical mission to save and protect lives and help communities recover, and the Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness (PNP) position plays a critical role in those goals.

If confirmed, Dr. Kaniewski, you would oversee the Grants Program Directorate, which administers Federal Assistance grants in an effort to improve emergency preparedness capabilities, and the National Preparedness Directorate, which provides the doctrine, programs, resources, and training needed to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters.

I appreciate the expertise you bring from public, private, and academic sectors, the high regard that the emergency management establishment holds for you, and your understanding of the importance of engaging a diverse group of stakeholders on FEMA initiatives and fostering relationships with state and local partners.

I look forward to learning more about your qualifications and desire to serve.

We also have the privilege today of considering a nominee for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

Jonathan Pittman currently serves as Assistant Deputy Attorney General for the District of Columbia and heads the Civil Litigation Division.

As Assistant Deputy, Pittman oversees the day-to-day operations of the division to develop strategy and court documents for significant cases, advise D.C. officials, manage the division staff and attorneys, and prepare post-litigation reports and appellate materials.

Mr. Pittman, we appreciate your willingness and interest in serving as a judge and we look forward to learning more about your qualifications.

I thank both the nominees for their willingness to serve the citizens of the United States and look forward to their testimony.

Thank you.