

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Nomination of Russell Vought to be Director, Office of Management and
Budget, Craig L. Leen to be Inspector General, Office of Personnel
Management**

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS

June 3, 2020

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Thank you, Chairman Johnson, and thank you to the nominees for being here today and for your willingness to serve.

Today we are considering nominees for two very different positions, both critical to ensuring that the federal government is effectively serving the American people.

These are both challenging roles under any circumstances.

As our country faces an unprecedented public health and economic crisis, we need a federal government that works strategically and effectively and that puts the American people first.

States, businesses, workers, and families are looking to the federal government for guidance, resources, and leadership as we work toward safely reopening the economy.

Mr. Vought, you have served as the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, or “OMB,” for the past year-and-a-half. In this role you have helped shape spending and policy decisions government-wide. And you currently play a central role in overseeing how agencies across government are implementing the \$2.2 trillion relief package in the CARES Act.

That responsibility includes swiftly getting economic relief to those in most need while ensuring that taxpayer dollars are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse.

Chairman Johnson and I worked to include bipartisan oversight and accountability provisions in that legislation. And I am disappointed by the Administration’s failure to cooperate with that oversight.

Mr. Leen, if confirmed, you will have a key oversight role.

As the Inspector General for the Office of Personnel Management, you will be the agency’s independent watchdog, charged with rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse.

To be successful, you must be relentlessly independent. You must follow the facts wherever they may lead, and you must not allow political pressure to interfere with your work.

As you know, this may not be easy.

Over the past two months, the President has removed two Senate-confirmed Inspectors General and replaced a number of Acting Inspectors General with political appointees. These actions threaten the integrity and independence of oversight across the federal government.

I encourage you both to look to Congress and to this Committee as a partner.

While we may not always agree on specific measures or policies, we all want to protect the health and safety of the American people and reopen the economy safely.

Mr. Vought, I appreciate the commitments you have made to work with Congress and cooperate with oversight efforts and I hope to see those commitments in action.

Mr. Leen, if confirmed, I hope you will also see this Committee as a resource, especially if you encounter challenges in carrying out your oversight work.

Thank you both again, and I look forward to your testimony.