November 19, 2026 Nominations Hearing
Ranking Member Gary Peters Opening Statement
As Prepared for Delivery

Welcome to the nominees and your family members who are joining you today. Congratulations on your nominations.

It's disappointing though that – yet again – this committee is holding a rushed and overcrowded hearing to consider **thirteen** nominations. Each of these nominations for top oversight and national security roles across government deserve thoughtful and serious consideration.

To cram so many nominees into such a short hearing, and to limit the amount of time Senators have to ask questions of them, does a great disservice to these nominees and to the American people.

Since I do not have enough time here to discuss all 13 of these nominees, I will instead focus on the most problematic ones before us today.

To begin, the Director of the Office of Government Ethics is meant to prevent financial conflicts of interest and promote compliance with ethics rules across the executive branch.

I have serious concerns that today's nominee has a long track record of one-sided oversight, calling for accountability for his political opponents and ignoring blatant conflicts and corruption by his allies, including President Trump.

Inspectors General are supposed to root out waste, fraud, and abuse at their agencies, yet two of the nominees before us today have presented serious questions about conflicts of interest and lack of the impartiality that is needed to fairly carry out oversight responsibilities.

I detailed particularly concerning whistleblower allegations of misconduct during Mr. Priebe's tenure as Acting Inspector General in a July letter I shared with all of the members of this committee. Those allegations have not been fully investigated or resolved, but this committee is poised to advance his nomination anyway.

Turning to the critical nomination of Director of CISA, over the past week, we have seen widespread outages that have disrupted communications, banking, and nationwide air travel.

Now more than ever, we need a qualified leader at CISA who can effectively navigate and coordinate with stakeholders across all levels of government and the private sector. But we have limited time to determine the qualifications of a nominee – selected just last week – and who has zero experience working across government to address cybersecurity threats, and I would say does not appear to meet the statutory requirements of this position.

It's truly a shame that this committee is devoting so little time to ensuring that the people nominated for these critical roles have the qualifications, background and temperament needed to successfully carry out their significant responsibilities.

And on top of the processing of so many unqualified nominees, it is absolutely shocking that the committee is moving forward with consideration of the nominee for Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office, or GAO.

GAO is the independent, nonpartisan watchdog that conducts investigations and audits for Congress. It's a position that serves Congress and Congress alone.

Whether in the majority or minority, we have all relied on GAO's nonpartisan, rigorous work.

Because of GAO's importance to every Member in the legislative branch, Congress passed a law to ensure that Congress would drive the process for selecting a new Comptroller General.

The law requires a ten-member bipartisan commission representing minority and majority parties in both the House and Senate to identify and recommend candidates to the President. Since its creation in 1980, the commission process has always resulted in the nomination and confirmation of a Comptroller General with **unanimous,** bipartisan support.

I want to be very clear: that did not happen here. Not only is Eric Ueland not a bipartisan choice, he is not even Congress' choice!

He was hand selected by President Trump and nominated three days ago – without ever speaking to a single member of Congress about his potential nomination.

Only after the White House had already decided that Mr. Ueland would be the nominee, did Chairman Paul's office even seek suggestions for potential candidates for the role.

His staff sent mine an email on Veteran's Day, a national holiday, and gave us less than 24 hours to submit names for Chairman Paul to pass on to the White House.

And when Chairman Paul and the Republican members of the commission submitted their own list of names to the White House – they did so without any input from Democratic members of the commission. And as Chairman Paul himself stated, he submitted Mr. Ueland's name **at the direction of the White House**.

My office has been pressing for more than a year for the Chairman to start the Comptroller General's commission process. Every time we asked, we received no response from the Chairman or his staff. They never said they planned to abandon the legally-required bipartisan process. They never said "find your own candidates" or "make your own list."

There has been no process at all. It's just a sham to install a political appointee from President Trump's Administration as the head of one of the last government offices that is still willing to hold the Administration accountable.

I recognize that Mr. Ueland is a smart, long-time public servant. But his record as a top political official at the Office of Management and Budget, an agency that routinely flouts Congressional

oversight, has stonewalled GAO audits, and defied Congress' constitutional authority to direct spending undercuts any credibility he could possibly have to lead GAO. Someone with this partisan record deserves *more* scrutiny – not less.

These actions are embarrassing and shameful for anyone who cares about the independence of the legislative branch.

And if this committee moves forward with this nomination, it will do irreversible damage to GAO, and to Congress's ability to provide a meaningful check on this and future presidential administrations.

This committee has a long history of championing strong, independent oversight, and pursuing bipartisan reforms to strengthen guardrails against fraud, waste and corruption.

I hope that the incoming Chair and Ranking Member are able to put this Committee back on a constructive path.

I hope you are able to do the hard, often thankless work of seeking out common ground, and engaging with *all* Members to make government more accountable.

Just a few weeks ago, the American people resoundingly said that they want more accountability from their elected leaders.

They don't want a box-checking exercise to rubber stamp President Trump's unqualified nominees.

I urge all of my colleagues to reject efforts to short-circuit careful consideration of *any* nomination, and to instead push for a robust process that ensures the American people will get the right people for the job.