

Today we are considering nominees for five, high-level positions all critical to the American people.

While I thank the nominees for being here today, this rushed hearing limits our ability as Senators to fulfill our constitutional duty of advice and consent.

The nominations process should provide us ample opportunity to do our due diligence and ensure these nominees are fit to effectively carry out the duties of these important offices.

I am concerned this committee's nominations process is becoming a rubber stamp. A way to check the box and push these nominees to the Senate floor without sufficient oversight.

We're straying even further from our traditional open and public process by not having the nominees give opening statements, and by restricting the amount of time for members to ask questions of them.

This not only robs members of the tools to thoroughly evaluate a nominee's qualifications – it also limits transparency for the public. The American people deserve to know whether the President's nominees are up to the task of these serious roles.

While this Committee neglects to hold oversight hearings, the Administration is dismantling key government functions under the guise of restructuring.

Instead of targeting real waste, fraud, and abuse, the Trump Administration is indiscriminately firing personnel and cancelling funding across the federal government, disempowering our agencies and making them, and the American people, more vulnerable to national security threats.

By firing the watchdogs who oversee our government and make sure that it is accountable to the public, the Administration is removing avenues to address any harm or wrongdoing.

These actions will not make the federal government more efficient and accountable.

They will prevent it from effectively serving and protecting the American people.

This committee has a responsibility to conduct thorough oversight, to ensure that only the most qualified nominees assume leadership positions.

The rushed process before us today undermines our duty as senators.

To the nominees, if confirmed, each of you will be in positions of great influence to deliver critical services to the American people.

I sincerely hope you will use your influence to make our government more effective — not tear it apart.

Thank you.