

Opening Statement of Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D.
Nomination of Brian C. Deese to be
Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget
May 13, 2013

We are here today to consider the President's nominee for Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB"), Mr. Brian Deese.

Mr. Deese, if confirmed, will assume the role of second-in-command at the OMB. Strong leadership at the nation's chief budget office is needed now more than ever, as we face a lagging economy, record levels of a spending and borrowing, and a \$16.8 trillion debt.

Washington is nearing a fiscal crossroads and many crucial decisions will be made in the coming months. If confirmed, Mr. Deese will be part of these discussions, as Congress and the administration work together to address various budget and economic issues, including sequestration, the national debt limit, entitlement and tax reform, and many others. It is my hope, if given this opportunity, Mr. Deese will commit to working diligently to find serious and bipartisan solutions to the pressing budgetary and management challenges that lay ahead.

Mr. Deese began working for the President as a member of his campaign. Since that time, he has handled number of economic, budget, and domestic policy initiatives for this administration. If confirmed for this role at the OMB, it will be imperative Mr. Deese take a pragmatic approach to resolving the nation's fiscal challenges, working with me and other members of Congress to find areas of common ground for savings and reform. We can no longer afford for Washington insiders to engage in partisan bickering while retreating from making tough fiscal choices.

A number of areas within the OMB's management portfolio are ripe for reform. The agency is uniquely positioned to work across the government to achieve significant savings from every corner of the federal bureaucracy through management and operational improvements. The OMB should take the lead for the executive branch in implementing many of these reforms, governmentwide, while also working with Congress to assure the permanency of these changes. In many cases, these reforms, such as reducing improper payments, improving grant management and the procurement process, or even simply eliminating excessive travel and conference attendance, will not only modernize government and increase efficiency, but also produce budgetary savings needed to mend our country's fiscal situation.

For example, just last month the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released its third annual duplication report. This one review identified \$95 billion in potential savings to taxpayers over 17 areas of the government and 14 areas of potential cost savings. Both Congress and the administration have fallen short in implementing GAO's recommendations, which could bring about significant savings and reduce federal spending. If he assumes the role of Deputy Director, I expect Mr. Deese to work with us on this initiative and other commonsense, bipartisan areas of government reform.

While I disagree with many of this administration's policies, I will continue to look for every possible opportunity to find common ground. The Senate recently confirmed Mrs. Sylvia Burwell to be Director of the OMB. I committed to working with Director Burwell to find commonsense solutions to streamline government and reduce our nation's deficit. If confirmed, I ask Mr. Deese to join in that commitment and make it his top priority.