

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
Nomination Hearing to Consider Brock Long to be Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Russell Vought to be Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget; and Neomi Rao to be Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.
June 7, 2017

Today the Committee will consider three nominations within its jurisdiction that are integral to the efficient functioning of government and the safety of the American people.

Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The FEMA Administrator serves as the principal advisor to the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary) on emergency management. The Administrator's duties include the operation of the National Response Coordination Center; the effective support of all Emergency Support Functions; and, more generally, preparation for, protection against, response to, and recovery from all-hazards incidents. The Administrator is also responsible for management of the core DHS grant programs supporting homeland security, and for providing an annual estimate of the resources needed for developing the capabilities of federal, state, and local governments necessary to respond to a catastrophic incident. FEMA is 22 percent of DHS's overall budget.

Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

The role of Deputy Director of OMB varies from administration to administration, but is viewed as a general deputy to the Director, assisting the Director in carrying out the President's budget and management agendas across the executive branch. The Deputy Director is primarily responsible for budget development and execution. In addition, the Deputy Director oversees eight OMB offices: General Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Strategic Planning and Communications, Economic Policy, Legislative Reference, Budget Review, and Performance and Personnel Management. The remainder of OMB is overseen by the Deputy Director of Management.

Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), OMB

The OIRA was created as part of the 1980 Paperwork Reduction Act, a law intended to curb the amount of and duplication in paperwork requirements imposed by regulatory agencies on the public. The Administrator oversees requests from agencies for any new information collections and paperwork requirements. The Administrator also oversees and coordinates proposed regulations from agencies.

OIRA also conducts a regulatory review of so-called "significant" rules, ensuring the analysis and legal basis used to justify proposed rules is sound and consistent with criteria established in relevant Executive Orders (going back to 1993). This may include ensuring that cost-benefit analysis uses well-established methods, that the agency considered potential non-regulatory alternatives like market mechanisms, and that the agency clearly identified a problem which justifies regulatory action. The Administrator ultimately may decide to either "approve" the rule or "return" it to the agency with recommended changes.

Brock Long

Brock Long has more than 16 years of experience working in emergency management at the local, state, and federal level. Mr. Long is currently the Vice president at Haggerty Consulting, an emergency management consulting firm in Illinois. Prior to joining Haggerty Consulting, he was the director of Alabama's Emergency Management Agency from 2008 to 2011. While heading Alabama's emergency response, he coordinated 14 disasters and 8 presidentially-declared events. He also helped develop Alabama's response to the H1-N1 influenza, and served as the on-scene State Incident Commander during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Prior to heading Alabama's emergency agency, he spent years as FEMA's Region IV Hurricane Planner and Response Team Leader, and Georgia's statewide Hurricane Program Manager and School Safety Coordinator. Mr. Long received a Bachelor of Science and Masters of Public Affairs from Appalachian State University and an Executive Leaders Certificate from Naval Post Graduate School.

Russ Vought

Mr. Vought is currently a senior political appointee at OMB. Most recently, he was a Vice President at Heritage Action for America, and prior to that worked as the Policy Director for the House Republican Conference and Executive Director for the Republican Study Committee (RSC). Prior to joining the RSC, he worked as a congressional staffer to several members of Congress, including Rep. Jeb Hensarling, Senator Chuck Hagel, Senator Phil Gramm, and Senator Dan Coats.

Mr. Vought received his J.D. from George Washington University Law School and his Bachelor of Arts from Wheaton College.

Neomi Rao

Ms. Rao is currently an associate professor of law at George Mason University. She founded the school's Center for the Study of the Administrative State, and is now the Director of the Center. From 2005 to 2006, Ms. Rao served in George W. Bush White House Counsel's office as Associate Counsel and Special Assistant to the President, and prior to that was an associate at Clifford Chance LLP in London. Ms. Rao also spent a year working as a counsel for nominations and constitutional law on the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. Rao clerked for the Honorable Justice Clarence Thomas on the United States Supreme Court, and Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. She received her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School and her Bachelor of Arts from Yale University.

I'd like to thank the nominees who have volunteered to serve in these important positions, and I look forward to hearing their testimony.