

Opening Statement – Kan Nomination Hearing

Thank you, Chairman Johnson, and thank you Mr. Kan for being here today and for your willingness to serve in this important and challenging role.

Today we are considering Mr. Kan's nomination to serve as the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, or "OMB," which shapes budget and policy decisions across the federal government.

For the past several months OMB has been a central part of the Administration's response to the ongoing public health and economic crisis.

Mr. Kan, you have held a senior role at OMB for the past year, including serving as OMB's representative on the White House Coronavirus Task Force. The role of the Task Force, and of OMB in particular, is to ensure coordination across departments and agencies involved in the response to the pandemic.

Unfortunately, since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, a lack of effective coordination and a cohesive strategy has hindered response efforts and contributed to tragic loss of over 120,000 American lives.

Containing, and ultimately defeating, this pandemic will be an enormous challenge.

We should not have to contend with the added challenge of inconsistent and conflicting messages from within the Administration. It should not be a challenge for the American people to get straightforward answers about the government's response. States should not have to grapple with the additional challenge of uncertainty and confusion over how federal resources are being allocated.

Congress and the Administration must work together if we are going to learn from past missteps and effectively address the pandemic moving forward.

Mr. Kan, from your time at the Department of Transportation, I know you to be a talented and thoughtful leader who can work collaboratively with Congress and others to find common ground.

I know we share the goals of containing this deadly virus and safely reopening our economy. To do so, we also need a shared understanding of the facts on the ground and the progress made so far.

I hear regularly from small business owners, hospitals, and vulnerable communities in Michigan who are struggling but are unable to access relief programs we designed specifically to help them.

We need clear information about how resources are being allocated. We need data to understand whether relief is reaching those most in need – and to fix programs that are not working.

I am pleased that OMB has begun taking steps to cooperate with the Government Accountability Office's oversight of the Coronavirus response, and I appreciate OMB's work with Congress on previous Coronavirus relief legislation.

But we have a lot more work to do.

I hope that if you are confirmed, you will be a champion for transparency and oversight both within OMB and throughout the Administration.

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