

Opening Statement of Chairman Thomas R. Carper
“Nomination of Hon. Shaun L. S. Donovan to be Director,
Office of Management and Budget”
June 11, 2014

Prepared for delivery:

We convene today to consider the nomination of Shaun Donovan to be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Our previous OMB director, Sylvia Matthews Burwell, has been confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services. In the past, this might have left us with a vacancy at the top of OMB for months or even years. Fortunately, in this case, the President moved promptly to nominate a replacement for Secretary Burwell.

Our Committee has, in turn, moved forward with a similar sense of urgency. I want to thank Dr. Coburn and his staff for working with us on a bipartisan basis to move quickly but with due diligence. Our nation’s fiscal crisis may have receded from the headlines in recent months, but in fact we’re still dealing with the same challenges we’ve faced for years now.

As I’ve stated before, our country needs a comprehensive, long-term budget plan that includes three essential elements. It must address both spending and revenues in a balanced approach. It must rein in the cost of entitlement programs in a way that does not harm the poor or the elderly. And it must demand that, through better management of government programs, we deliver better services to the American people at a lower cost.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget is a critical player in making progress in each of these areas and in putting our nation on a responsible long-term fiscal path. We need a leader in this role who will be a strong voice for fiscal responsibility and for effective government management. We had that in Sylvia Mathews Burwell, who played an integral part in achieving the bipartisan budget deal reached late last year.

I believe we have that same kind of leader in Shaun Donovan as well. To those of us in Congress, and to many other Americans, Secretary Donovan is a familiar face, having served as the Secretary for Housing and Urban Development since 2009.

From his work there, we know that he can take on and solve tough problems. During his time at the Department, he has guided federal housing programs through the economic crisis and helped millions of Americans modify their mortgages and avoid foreclosure.

He has also demonstrated an ability to cut through red tape and find ways for agencies to work together more effectively. He did this when President Obama asked him to chair the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force. And he has done so on a number of other issues, including transportation, energy efficiency, and veterans homelessness.

Secretary Donovan's tenure at the Department of Housing and Urban Development gives him a strong foundation when it comes to understanding how agencies tick. He also knows how the federal budget process works. But just as importantly, he has also worked in local government, and in the private and non-profit sectors. He knows from those experiences how decisions at the federal level can impact communities, businesses, and individual citizens.

In each job he has held, Secretary Donovan has earned a reputation as someone who uses data and evidence to get better results, and to save money for taxpayers. He's someone who wants to find out what's working and do more of that, and to find out what isn't working and do less of that. Secretary Donovan is also someone who values strong public-private partnerships. He has consistently championed ideas that further the public good while also spurring economic development.

This Committee works in close partnership with the Office of Management and Budget in all areas, but especially as we try to identify areas where we can achieve results throughout the federal government while spending fewer taxpayer dollars. Based on his previous experience and our past conversations, I know Secretary Donovan is committed to continuing these efforts at OMB.

Everything I know about Secretary Donovan's accomplishments and commitment to public service tells me that he is going to be a strong and effective leader at the Office of Management and Budget, and a good partner with this Committee. His predecessor at OMB is an exceptional leader, and she left big shoes to fill at the agency. But Secretary Donovan is ready to hit the ground running.

I expect Secretary Donovan to work just as hard, and to continue the same bipartisan approach. I look forward to his testimony today, and I hope that the full Senate can consider his nomination as soon as possible.

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