

## Opening Statement

### Hearing before the Homeland Security And Government Affairs Committee

Wednesday, May 23rd, 2018 at 2:30 PM

Good afternoon. Today we will consider three nominations: Mr. Emory Rounds to be Director, Office of Government Ethics; and Ms. Kelly Higashi to be an Associate Judge on the Superior Court for the District of Columbia; and Mr. Frederick Nutt to be the Controller, Office of Federal Financial Management which is in the Office of Management and Budget.

The Committee takes these nominations very seriously, so we are pleased to have three strong nominees before us today.

Mr. Emory Rounds is nominated to be the Director of the Office of Government Ethics. Mr. Rounds earned his B.A. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and his J.D. from the University of Akron Law School. Upon completion of law school, Mr. Rounds began his active duty Navy career, where he advanced from attorney to a Military Judge in his 22 years of military service to his country.

After a very brief retirement, Mr. Rounds rejoined the federal government as an ethics attorney, first with the Department of Commerce and then as Associate Counsel to President George W. Bush in the White House Counsel's Office.

Mr. Rounds joined the Office of Government Ethics as an Associate General Counsel in 2009, the position in which he serves now.

Committee staff spoke to Mr. Rounds' colleagues in the ethics community and at OGE, who spoke highly of his experience as an ethics lawyer and his commitment to the mission of the Office of Government Ethics. The committee is confident Mr. Rounds is qualified to be the Director of the Office of Government Ethics.

Ms. Higashi earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania and her J.D. from the George Washington University School of Law. Ms. Higashi has had a legal career steeped in criminal law.

After law school, Ms. Higashi clerked for the Honorable Frederick Weisberg of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Ms. Higashi then joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia in 1994.

Early in her career with the U.S Attorney's Office, Ms. Higashi rotated through several sections, gaining experience in the Misdemeanor Trial Section, and Felony Trial Section, the Grand Jury Section, and the Narcotics Section.

However, for the last fifteen years, Ms. Higashi's work has focused on the difficult work of the Sex Offense and Domestic Violence Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. Ms. Higashi is currently the Section Chief of this section.

Committee staff reached out to numerous colleagues of Ms. Higashi, and the comments were highly positive, with specific praise given to her intelligence and hard work; her people skills and leadership as a Section Chief; her ability to manage difficult cases and make hard decisions every day; and her humanity in dealing with the victims of crime.

The Office of Federal Financial Management provides direction to our federal financial systems. The Controller coordinates the work of the Chief Financial Officers of the major federal agencies. The Controller also coordinates the work of Senior Real Property Officers. This position provides a unique opportunity to help make our federal government run efficiently and effectively by implementing policies that support sound budgeting, cost management, effective financial reporting, and "right-sizing" federal real properties.

Frederick Nutt graduated from Virginia Tech and has spent much of his career serving in the federal government. Mr. Nutt has worked in both Houses of Congress, and has held several financial and management roles at the Environmental Protection Agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

Committee staff spoke with former colleagues of Mr. Nutt, and they speak highly of his professionalism and the varied experience he has gained within the federal government and how he could bring that understanding of different federal organizations to bear in this role.

Staff interviewed the nominees on an array of issues, and each has thoughtfully and competently answered each question.

To date, the Committee has found you to be qualified for the position you have been nominated. I look forward to speaking with each of you more today on your experience and accomplishments and how you intend to bring them to bear for the federal government and the District of Columbia.

I now recognize Ranking Member Jones for his opening statement.