

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Nomination of John Michael “Mick” Mulvaney to be
Director, Office of Management and Budget
January 24, 2017**

Ranking Member Claire McCaskill

Opening Statement

Since November 9th Americans have been searching to understand what is next for this country. The growth of our economy and the jobs of so many Americans, depend on our country remaining a stable and relatively predictable place to do business – where businesses and the federal government alike have the ability to plan for the future. Despite this, to date, the Trump Administration’s plans for the economy change with each news cycle, and the strategy appears to shift depending on the member of the transition team that is speaking.

Just last week at a hearing, Mr. Mnuchin, the nominee for Secretary of the Treasury, said that after the inauguration, the Trump Administration would speak with QUOTE “a unified voice.” Four days ago President Trump was sworn in and the Trump Administration began. Despite the transition of power and the start of a new Administration, on issues like Social Security, healthcare, Medicare, and taxes, we have yet to hear that “unified voice.”

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget is charged with implementing and articulating the President's policy agenda. If confirmed, Representative Mulvaney, you will hold a post that influences policy proposals, budget appropriations, the management of federal workers, and the safeguarding of our regulatory processes. Your core job will be to take the President's ideas and make them clear and cohesive policy. Despite your willingness to serve, I can't help but question how will you achieve this when the views that you have expressed for so long do not align with those of the President or other members of the Cabinet.

You are a self-described QUOTE "hardcore conservative." You support cuts to Medicare and Social Security and drastically shrinking the size of government through the elimination of agencies, federal programs and federal workers. You have voted for and supported the shutdown of the federal government several times, and you have dismissed concerns about failing to lift the debt ceiling as QUOTE "just posturing."

You have said that QUOTE "[w]e have to end Medicare as we know it" and have advocated cuts and full scale overhauls of the program. Meanwhile, during his campaign, President Trump said that he would make no changes to Medicare. Representative Price, the nominee for Secretary of HHS, who has also advocated

for changes to the Medicare system, told a Senate Committee last week the President's plan remains the same. The situation is almost exactly the same on Social Security. You have advocated changes and cuts, even calling Social Security a "Ponzi Scheme" while the President said during his campaign he would not alter Social Security at all.

In voting against emergency funding after Hurricane Sandy, you said "[w]e've mismanaged our own finances to the point where we are now no longer capable of taking care of our own." The President has made clear that he intends to increase spending by initiating massive infrastructure projects such as the Wall and, as promised on Friday during his inaugural address, building "new roads, and highways, and bridges, and airports, and tunnels, and railways all across our wonderful nation."

After this hearing we will know more about your background and beliefs, but we may not have a better understanding of how and whether those beliefs will shape the Trump Administration. How will we know which policies will be implemented when the President and his Cabinet have such different views on such important topics?

Not only am I worried that we will not have the stability we are looking for from the incoming Administration, I am not certain that you, a man who has stuck

to his principles and has not often been forced to compromise, fully grasp the responsibilities of the position for which you have been nominated. Many of your proposals – like your willingness to allow the federal government to default on its obligations – would have far worse implications than you are willing to concede. In fact, you once said that you had “yet to meet someone who can articulate the negative consequences” of the United States failing to raise the debt ceiling. If that’s the case, you simply haven’t been listening to the economists, Treasury Secretaries, and even former OMB Directors who tell a very different story. But perhaps there was comfort in being able to say these things knowing that cooler heads would prevail and nobody would ever need to find out the consequences of your rhetoric.

But now you are seeking confirmation to a Cabinet-level post with great responsibility. What will happen if your views and proposals are adopted wholesale? If that happens, I fear that the American people and the global economy are in for a rude awakening.

Throughout this hearing I will be listening closely to better understand how you will reconcile your beliefs with those of the President, and how, as Director of the Office of Management and Budget you will implement the vision of a Trump

Administration that speaks with a “unified voice.” I look forward to hearing your answers.