

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Nomination of Paul J. Ray to be Administrator, Office of Information and
Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS
DECEMBER 4, 2019
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you Mr. Ray for being here and for your willingness to serve.

The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, or OIRA, is a small, relatively unknown office in the federal government that has an enormous amount of power.

For nearly four decades, OIRA has managed federal rules and regulations that impact Americans' daily lives in countless ways.

Federal regulations cover everything from protecting clean air and clean water to safeguarding our health and ensuring the cars we drive are safe.

While federal agencies are responsible for proposing and issuing regulations – they all go to OIRA for review before they are finalized and take effect.

In short, it is OIRA's job to ensure that each of those regulations does what it is supposed to, whether that purpose is to promote economic growth, public health or student safety or to safeguard against discrimination, worker exploitation, or harmful chemicals.

Not many people outside of Washington have heard of OIRA.

But individuals across the country know that government regulations can have a dramatic impact on their families, businesses, and communities.

Many people also know too well the impact of halted or delayed regulatory efforts.

Right now, critical protections for lead in drinking water and PFAS contamination are being weakened or remain stalled in the regulatory review process.

Meanwhile, Americans in communities like Flint, Oscoda and Parchment in my home state of Michigan, cannot drink the water from their own faucets without fear of ingesting toxins like lead or PFAS.

People in Michigan and across the country depend on OIRA to work with agencies to efficiently and effectively finalize important safeguards that will help protect the health and safety of all Americans.

OIRA also works with agencies to promote public participation in the rulemaking process, and to provide transparency into regulatory decisions.

Mr. Ray, in many of your questionnaire responses, you acknowledged the critical importance of transparency and accountability in the regulatory process.

Unfortunately, those statements stand in stark contrast to your actions after your nomination in October when this Committee requested relevant information to evaluate your qualifications.

We have asked you multiple times to provide this Committee with information regarding your tenure as the Associate and Acting Administrator, and you have failed to provide us with a sufficient response.

In order for the Committee to thoroughly and meaningfully consider your nomination, we need your full cooperation in providing us with the information we have requested.

As the Senate's primary oversight committee, we are also charged with ensuring that OIRA is operating in the best interests of the American people.

Given the lack of cooperation we have received from you, OIRA, and the Office of Management and Budget during your confirmation process, I have serious concerns about how this critical agency will comply with this Committee's requests if you are confirmed.

My constituents in Michigan, and people across the country, are depending on OIRA to put politics aside and make decisions that are in the best interest of the American people.

I look forward to hearing from you today about how you will prioritize the health and safety of Americans if you are confirmed to lead this vital agency.