

Testimony of Russell T. Vought
To Be Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget
June 7, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, the Ranking Member, and the Members of this Committee for the honor of appearing before this committee.

I also want to thank and introduce my family who has endured this process with me and the long hours that come with serving one's country in public roles. My wife, Mary, is here, and my daughters Ella and Porter...if you can't see them it's because they are coloring on the floor...I'm also thrilled that my sisters and many friends could be here in support.

It is a joy to "come home" to the United States Senate. I worked the first four years of my career in this distinguished body, mostly for Senator Phil Gramm. I spent hours on the Senate floor, in committee, and at my desk, learning how the Senate works its will with great deliberation. How an institution protects the rights of a Minority to be heard, and how statesmen ought to debate their colleagues to move votes and shape public opinion. And it was here that I developed a love for public policy, seeing how it could be used to help the people of this country live freer and more prosperous lives.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve as the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget. It is a very important job, and I am humbled that President Trump and Director Mulvaney asked me to serve. I know the quality of the men and women who have served previously in this particular role, and I want to join and contribute to that long line of distinguished public service.

My career has readied me for this moment. I spent over 12 years working in the House and Senate, with a specific emphasis in budget policy. I was the Republican Study Committee's Budget Director, writing its budget resolutions. I then served as the Executive Director and the Policy Director of the House Republican Conference under then-chairman Mike Pence. All of these roles afforded me an opportunity to handle a wide range of policy issues and manage policy development processes that ensured a wide variety of viewpoints shaped a final policy proposal. That is very much the job of the Deputy Director of OMB...to build and further a policy process that ensures that the President and his advisors receive the best analysis possible and that everyone is heard so that the best decision can be made.

I also have experience managing a large organization. I spent the last seven years managing many aspects of Heritage Action for America, including staff and 17,000 volunteers across the country. Volunteers are in fact volunteers. They have their own viewpoints and ideas, and you don't get very far working with them if you don't have an appreciation for them as leaders in their own right. That experience has prepared me well for managing the men and women of OMB, who are career experts in their fields and have years of institutional knowledge for this Administration to draw upon.

As for the job to be done, it is immense. Our country faces a \$20 trillion national debt. It will eventually wreck our country if not addressed. That burden will fall on my children and grandchildren if today's policy makers do not change the current trajectory of spending. It will mean a lower standard of living for them and less time for the truly important things in life as more and more of their salary is consumed by government. Their families and communities will be weaker, and they may be the first generation that gets a worse deal than their parents. That is not the American way.

I have spent my entire career caring about taxpayers and their families. I have fought to save them money and ensure that their tax dollars were spent well. I come from a blue collar family. I'm the son of an electrician and a school teacher. I know what they went through to balance their budget and save for the future. My parents worked really long hours to put me through school. But they also worked long hours to pay for the government in their lives, and I often have wondered what they would have been free to build and give without such a high burden. My old boss called them the wagon-pullers in our country. Others have referred to them as the country's forgotten men and women. They have always been my test for federal spending. Did a particular program or spending increase help the nameless wagon pullers across our country, working hard at their job, trying to provide for their family and future, without the luxury of watching CSPAN to know that we might be increasing their burden at that very moment? How would they vote? Yay or nay? I believe that as a country we have too often failed that simple test, and it is the reason that we face a \$20 trillion debt that needs to be dealt with. If the Senate confirms me, I am ready to take up that work again.

Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.