

Statement of Heather A. Higginbottom
Nominee to Serve As
Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget
Before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
March 8, 2011

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to come before you as President Obama's nominee to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

I would like to thank Senator Kerry for taking time from his busy schedule to introduce me to the Committee. For over seven years, I had the privilege of serving in several capacities for Senator Kerry; and in many ways, what I have learned about public service and government I learned in this body working for him. I am grateful for that, and I am confident I would not be before the Committee today without the opportunities those experiences afforded me.

I am also deeply grateful to President Obama, not just for nominating me for this position, but also for the tremendous opportunity he gave me when I joined his campaign as policy director four years ago. Over the course of the campaign and for the past two years in the White House, I have had opportunities to contribute to the nation in ways I could never have dreamed of.

Mr. Chairman, the serious fiscal challenges facing the country make this an extraordinarily important and humbling time to be nominated to join the Office of Management and Budget. We have only recently turned the tide on the worst economic downturn in a generation and once again the economy is growing and the private sector is creating jobs. The policies deployed to rescue the economy necessarily added to this deficit in the short-term. As the economy strengthens, it is time to make the tough choices necessary to place the country on a responsible fiscal path and focus on our long-term challenges. This means cutting where we can and making the investments necessary to foster continued economic growth and job creation for our long-term global competitiveness. It also means managing the resources of the Federal Government in a way that gets the most from every taxpayer dollar, cuts waste, boosts efficiency and effectiveness, and gives all Americans the means to see how their money is being spent and to hold their government accountable for its actions.

The Federal budget is an articulation of the President's agenda, which requires making choices among competing interests, within the constraints of a recovering economy, and with the best interest of the taxpayer in mind. In each position that I have held - as Legislative Director in Senator Kerry's office, managing policy for two presidential campaigns, and for two years in the White House Domestic Policy Council - I have worked on a wide range of areas, from economic policy to national security to domestic policy, and I have had to work through the budgetary implications of each. I have guided processes that made choices about what we could afford, what programs and initiatives were the most cost-effective, and how to implement them. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will bring this experience developing policy within our budgetary constraints to OMB and the Deputy Director role.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Director, Jack Lew, and the Deputy Director for Management and Chief Performance Officer, Jeffrey Zients, to help our government run as efficiently and effectively as possible. And I also look forward to working with all of you on this shared goal.

Thank you for your consideration today. I would be pleased to address any questions you may have.