

**Prepared Statement of Senator John F. Kerry**  
**March 8, 2011**

Mr. Chairman and Senator Collins, thanks so much allowing me, it's a privilege to be able to introduce Heather Higginbottom to the committee.

In a sense, I feel a special bond with Heather for a lot of different reasons. Her parents, George and Anne, are not here today but they live up on Cape Cod in Yarmouth Port, and I think because of the last minute changes they were not able to be down here. I'm sort of a surrogate in that sense.

She came to my office I think in 1999, fairly fresh from graduate school and college and her early endeavors. She went to University of Rochester and then got a graduate degree in Social Policy and Administration from George Washington University and worked at communities and schools in between on education reform. But I've seen her journey from beginning as a young, idealistic member of my staff when she first came on, moving up to her leadership within my Presidential Campaign where she was Director of Policy. And then became my Legislative Director when I came back to the Senate, and then left my office to join President Obama's campaign and became his first National Policy Director over the course of that campaign, and subsequently went into the West Wing, into the White House, as a Deputy Assistant to the President where she's been for the last two years.

I have been, frankly, continually impressed by her leadership skills, by her knowledge, by her energy and enthusiasm for the public sector. She is smart – very smart – or she never would have survived any of those jobs. But she's also someone that brings a very special understanding of the difficulties – the complexities – of public policy today and the tough choices that we face.

One of the things I think that's interesting is her experience in the campaigns, both mine and President Obama's, have given her a tremendous sense of what this is all about. She has interacted with Mayors, state legislators, Speakers, Senate leaders on the federal, state, and county level all across the country.

When she looks at a budget, she knows the numbers, she understand the choices we've got to face today. She also understands that the budget is a statement of priorities, for the country, and certainly for the President who puts it in. And I think she looks at those with a really critical eye, and she understands that the numbers represent people's lives. And they represent the hopes for our country for where we need to go and how we get there.

We have tough choices ahead of us, and I don't think anybody understands that better than Heather does. We're going to have to deal with Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, these larger issues. And I think you'll find she is very, very knowledgeable and very accepting of the global budget position we find ourselves in and the tough choices we're going to have to make.

She also worked very closely with me across the aisle. And I know Senator Collins, Senator Portman, I think that's important to you, to others. She worked on education and social policy.

We did a lot with Senator Gordon Smith and it was Heather who worked with his staff and worked very closely with them. We worked very closely with Senator Santorum's staff in developing the Workplace Religious Freedom Act. Heather did that, and in addition helped develop my legislation for a Presidential Line Item Veto that we thought was constitutional and she helped to develop that.

So I think all and all the people who worked for her, on my staff, have always found that she is a terrific boss. She is somebody who listens, she doesn't require anyone else to do the work and take the credit. She shares the pain. I remember, for instance, long weekends, if legislation was being developed, Heather would work her heart out with people and then put a note on my desk, "so-and-so worked all weekend, you should let them know and thank them." But it wasn't her who ever sought that recognition.

So, Mr. Chairman and Senator Collins, I really think that given the tough times we find ourselves in and the difficult choices we face, I think that Jack Lew has made a terrific choice and the President has made a terrific choice. I have every bit of confidence that she will deal with us openly, honestly, directly, be available, answer questions, be accountable, but also be driven by the right policy values in the choices she will be required to make in this job. I completely and enthusiastically encourage the Senate to consent to her nomination as rapidly as we can.