

TESTIMONY

OPENING STATEMENT
FOR
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Thank you, Chairman Thompson, Senator Lieberman, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide a brief opening statement. I am honored to be President Bush's nominee as Administrator of OIRA at OMB and look forward to the opportunity to work with each of the members of this Committee. Some say that I am not practicing risk analysis in my own life, since the risks of this job may far outweigh the benefits. Yet I take a more optimistic view and aspire to working on behalf of taxpayers to improve the regulatory system in the USA.

Since 1985 I have taught risk analysis, risk communication, and cost-benefit analysis to graduate students at the Harvard School of Public Health. In 1990 I also launched the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, where teams of faculty and students apply analytic tools to issues in medical technology, food safety, automotive safety, and environmental protection.

If I am confirmed as OIRA Administrator, I will be making a major change in my professional role and my responsibilities will be quite different. I will be responsible for enforcing the laws of the land as Congress wrote them. I will advise the OMB Director and the President on future legislation. I will implement the President's policies and advocate the President's priorities. I will lead a team of fine analysts at OMB, and work with Congress and the public on issues regarding regulation and information.

One of my chief roles will be to stimulate more analytical thinking about major regulatory decisions in the federal government --decisions that affect State and local governments, small and large businesses, and the public at large. My responsibilities will also include paperwork reduction, information policy, and statistical policy.

Mr. Chairman, the subject of openness in regulatory review at OMB has been a concern of this Committee for more than 15 years. Progress has been made in recent years and I pledge to continue that progress while protecting the ability of OMB staff to do their jobs efficiently. If confirmed, I will work to achieve regulatory reviews that are timely, transparent, and rigorous. I understand that openness does not necessarily create agreement. Yet I also hope that we will find issues where the spirit of openness permits dialogue and a narrowing of policy disagreements.

Since my nomination in March, some have charged that I and the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis have a pro-business bias. I respectfully disagree. Sometimes the findings of our studies have supported the interests of sponsors. Sometimes the findings of our studies have supported stricter regulation of business. And sometimes our studies offer public health insight but do not affect business interests one way or another. Our Center has simply followed the scientific data and analysis, wherever they happened to lead us.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this opening statement and I look forward to the opportunity to respond to questions.

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