



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Opening Statement of Sen. Chuck Grassley, Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
Nomination Hearing
Tuesday, May 24, 2005

This hearing is convened to consider five presidential nominations to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and the International Trade Commission. First I want to congratulate the nominees and thank them for the service they will perform for their country. Our first panel will consist of The Honorable Alex Azar and Mr. Timothy D. Adams.

Alex Azar, who already has a distinguished career in public service, has been nominated to be the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, a position for which he currently is serving in an acting capacity. Prior to his current role, Mr. Azar was the Department's General Counsel. He has a tremendous breadth of legal experience on a range of issue areas, including food and drug administration law – which is of particular interest to me these days. I am confident that his experience will enable him to fulfill the broad ranging responsibilities of the Deputy Secretary's office.

Our next nominee is Timothy Adams, who has been nominated to be the Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs. Mr. Adams will bring a wealth of experience to this important position. In addition to a distinguished career in business and financial consulting, Mr. Adams also served as Chief of Staff to two Treasury Secretaries, Paul O'Neill and our current Secretary, John Snow. In 2003, Mr. Adams was awarded the Treasury Department's highest award, the Alexander Hamilton Award. Mr. Adams' diverse professional experiences and dedication to public service will benefit the Treasury Department greatly.

Our second panel will consist of Suzanne DeFrancis, The Honorable Charles Johnson, and Ms. Shara Aranoff. Our first nominee on this panel is Suzanne Cox DeFrancis to be the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs of the Department of Health and Human Services. The Assistant Secretary's office will be deeply involved in the campaign to educate beneficiaries, their families and caregivers, as well as physicians and pharmacists about the new Part D drug benefit that will become effective next year. Ms. DeFrancis has held several positions in the field of communications both in the private and public sectors. This combination to work with different audiences will undoubtedly serve her well in the role of Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs.

Our next nominee is Charles Johnson to be the Assistant Secretary for Budget, Technology and Finance of the Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Johnson also has had a distinguished career in both the public and private sector. As Assistant Secretary, he will have

responsibility for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. I am pleased that the Administration has devoted resources to this important work. We need to be able to harness the potential that health information technology holds to improve quality and efficiency. I am confident that Mr. Johnson is up to that task.

Our final nominee is Shara Aranoff, who has been nominated to be a Commissioner on the International Trade Commission. Ms. Aranoff has practiced international trade law for over 15 years, both in private practice and in government. In fact, Ms. Aranoff spent over 7 years working in the ITC's Office of General Counsel, so she is quite familiar with the work of the Commission. And, for the past 4 years she has ably served Senator Baucus as International Trade Counsel.