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Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on the Nominations of Kipp Kranbuhl, Sarah C. Arbes and Jason J. Fichtner
As Prepared for Delivery

I plan to support Ms. Arbes's nomination to serve as HHS assistant secretary for legislation. In that role she'll be the key liaison between the Congress and the department. I've talked in this room about the serious problems the Finance Committee Democrats have had getting responses to oversight letters sent to the Trump administration. I appreciate that Ms. Arbes has made an effort to help.

The committee is going to count on her to keep it up. HHS faces a lot of big challenges and serious questions – including when it comes to its handling of the coronavirus. There will be a lot more to say on those subjects in the days and weeks ahead.

I will not support Mr. Kranbuhl's nomination today. He's nominated to a position that has a lot of influence over America's housing policy. In my view, his record shows he'd take housing policy in the wrong direction, making our housing market more volatile and less affordable for working families. His answers to questions on that subject haven't done enough to address those concerns. I believe Senator Brown, who is the top Democrat on the committee that handles housing, will have more to say on this subject.

Finally, the toughest call in my judgement is on Mr. Fichtner's nomination to the Social Security Advisory Board. He has taken positions that I do not agree with. However, that will always be the case with some nominees from the other party.

The advisory board is doing a lot of important work with respect to customer service, IT and the challenges that come with serving some of the most vulnerable Social Security beneficiaries. Mr. Fichtner comes with experience in places that are interested in bipartisanship, which is important to the advisory board's work, so I will support his nomination today.

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