

Opening Statement of Mr. Kenneth J. Kies
Nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury
United States Senate Committee on Finance
April 10, 2025

Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Wyden, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today. I feel privileged to have been recommended by Secretary Bessent and nominated by President Trump to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax Policy.

As a former Chief of Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, I have deep respect both for this committee and the institution of the Senate.

I would like to thank my family, who have been a constant source of inspiration and support for me throughout my career – my wife, Kathy; my two children, Kylie and Katherine, and my granddaughters, Chloe and Natalie. I would like to express my thanks to those members and staff with whom I have been able to visit over the past couple of weeks.

I grew up as the son of a career Army officer, Colonel Robert H. Kies. My father was a true American hero, severely wounded and a prisoner of war in Korea and two tours in Vietnam in 1961 and 1968. His experience in Korea is recounted in David Halberstam's book "The Coldest Winter." He was nominated by Senator Rick Scott for the Medal of Honor but unfortunately died on December 7, 2023, having lived a very full 97 years. He truly inspired me to work hard on my education and my career. His life is recounted in his autobiography "Zero to 90." My mother, Ruby Kies, who gave me undying support, would be particularly proud of this moment.

I was born at Fort Benning, Georgia; moved to Mainz, Germany; Fort Ord, California; Santa Barbara, California; Fort Wainwright, Alaska; and then Great Falls, Virginia before going to college at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

I stepped down as the Managing Director of the Federal Policy Group, LLC on March 14, 2025, a position I had held since February 2002.

Prior to the Federal Policy Group, I was Co-Managing Partner of the Washington National Tax Services office of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

Prior to joining Price Waterhouse, I served as the Chief of Staff of the Joint Committee from 1995 until 1998.

During my tenure as Chief of Staff, I oversaw development of major tax legislation, including the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 (the first net tax cut since the 1981 Act), the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. I also helped design and negotiate the IRS Restructuring Act of 1998 with Congressman Rob Portman (R-OH), Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), and Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin. In 1997 I initiated a year-long project to analyze the potential to do macroeconomic estimates of major tax policy changes that resulted in the publication of the Joint Committee on Taxation Tax Modeling Project in December 1997. At its time, it was the most significant project of its kind

and was the beginning of the effort to bring this estimating capability to the Joint Committee that exists to this day. I was Co-Chair with Michael Boskin (former Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers for President George H.W. Bush) of the 1996 Ways and Means Retreat on Tax Reform under Chairman Bill Archer (R-TX).

While I left the Joint Committee in January 1998, I continued to serve at the request of Speaker Newt Gingrich and Chairman Archer in an effort to negotiate a permanent long-term solution to the solvency of Social Security with the Clinton Administration, in particular with Gene Sperling and Larry Summers. That effort culminated in my participation in the December 1998 White House Conference on Social Security along with fellow panelists Martin Feldstein (former Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers under President Ronald Reagan), and Robert Reischauer (former head of CBO). This project is recounted in a book on the history of the Social Security system entitled "The People's Pension." This effort to permanently restore the solvency of the Social Security system, after making significant progress, foundered due to political developments.

Prior to becoming Chief of Staff of the Joint Committee, I was the firm wide Chair of the Tax Practice for BakerHostetler.

From 1981 until 1987, I served as Chief Republican Tax Counsel to the Ways and Means Committee. During my tenure, I was actively involved in the development of all tax legislation, including the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 and the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Prior to joining the Ways and Means staff, I was a tax associate with BakerHostetler, where I began the practice of law in 1977 in Cleveland after graduating from the Ohio State University College of Law.

Through these career opportunities, I have worked on virtually every aspect of the tax code.

If confirmed, it would be an honor to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax Policy. Thank you.