

Testimony of Michael B. Stuart
Nominee of President Trump to be
General Counsel for the Department of Health and Human Services
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
July 31, 2025

Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Wyden, Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and for considering my nomination to be the General Counsel for the Department of Health and Human Services.

I want to begin by thanking President Trump for his confidence in me and for nominating me to this important role to support his vision for America.

I want to thank Secretary Kennedy for his support and confidence and his leadership to Make America Healthy Again.

I also want to thank all the men and women of HHS who work hard each day in capacities that touch nearly every aspect of American life.

Finally, I would not be here today as a nominee without the strength and encouragement of my family. Family, in many ways, defines who I am. I want to thank my wife, Katrina, who is here today and who had no idea what this journey called “life” would be nearly three decades ago. We are blessed to have two amazing daughters, Bella, a student at the Marshall University School of Medicine, who is with me today, and Audrey, a capital analyst with RBC in New York City who was not able to be with us today- she is working- but who is watching this hearing right now.

My nomination and the opportunity to be here today as a nominee is a testament to the opportunity of America.

If you were to have told me as a young boy that one day I would be sitting here testifying before members of the United States Senate in consideration of a position in a President’s Administration, well, I would have told you “Impossible.” Nothing, however, is impossible in America.

I am the proud son and grandson of West Virginia coal miners and I was blessed with great parents. My dad would go to work in the dark, come home in the dark, and he worked more than 50 years in the coal mining industry. My mom went to vocational school, became an LPN, and worked nearly 40 years as a nurse.

My grandfathers served in the military, one fought on the beaches of Normandy, and both spent decades as coal miners.

After being nominated by President Trump in 2017, I had the distinct honor of being confirmed and serving as the United States Attorney for the Southern District of West Virginia. While I may have left the role of United States Attorney, my experiences in that role will never leave me.

Our work was significant. For the first time in West Virginia history, my office prosecuted members of the West Virginia State Supreme Court, established a landmark settlement for children with disabilities, and our focus on healthcare fraud resulted in the largest Medicaid fraud prosecution in the history of West Virginia.

I worked on the front lines of the opiate scourge. During my term, we took enough fentanyl off the streets to kill more than 40 million people in a state of only 1.75 million people.

Still today, I carry a wallet in my pocket filled with the beautiful faces of the opiate epidemic from my term as the US Attorney. These are the pictures that haunt me in the silence of the dark of night. Young people like Joel Archer and Victoria Douglas. I have gotten to know too many of the moms and dads at the point of their greatest grief. Moms like Stacy Archer and Melody Douglas.

As a State Senator, I represent one of the districts hit hardest by the technological revolution, changes to the American industrial economy, and a population exodus. In the Senate, I have led efforts on child welfare, foster care reform, substance abuse, and the opiate crisis. My experience as a State Senator gives me a true appreciation of the role of elected bodies like Congress for the establishment of public policy, constituent representation, and oversight priorities.

Given my background, I have a unique perspective and appreciation for the importance and role of rural healthcare. I care deeply about issues like Medicaid and SNAP because the recipients are my friends, neighbors and constituents. They are the people I attend church with on Sunday. I know the importance of the effective delivery of services. I also understand the impact of fraud and its harm to those who most need support.

As General Counsel for HHS, I will place a priority on developing an effective team with a focus on continual improvement and training. I will build multi-disciplinary teams to address critical issues. I will place a heavy priority on identifying and eliminating fraud. Finally, I will work earnestly to build a spirit of collaboration with members of Congress. All of this we will do with a sense of urgency. I want you to have confidence in me and the Department.

As General Counsel for the Department of Health and Human Services, I will bring the totality of my experiences – personal and professional- to the role to help President Trump and Secretary Kennedy do the work of the American people.

If I were to define in a single word how I feel today, well, it would be the word “grateful.” I am grateful for this opportunity and for the countless generations of American heroes upon whose shoulders I stand today. Heroes like my mom and dad, my grandparents, and my family.

To all of you, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination.