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## **Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on Trump Administration Nominees**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

The Committee meets this morning to discuss four nominations. Deputy United States Trade Representative covering Asia and a number of key sectors of the economy including textiles and intellectual property; the Treasury Department's point person for Congress; the General Counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources at HHS.

Based on the answers the Committee received in staff discussions with a number of the nominees, I am worried that Americans are going to get hurt on their watch, if they are confirmed. At this point the burden of proof is on the nominees to show they will bring a fresh approach to a presidential administration that has made chaos and pain its calling card.

I'm going to start off with the nominee to be General Counsel of HHS, Michael Stuart. The health department's top lawyer is responsible for calling balls and strikes and making sure the Department follows the law. Needless to say, Robert Kennedy and Donald Trump have shown little interest in doing that. This administration's slash and burn approach to running the country may satisfy right-wing influencers, but it's causing real harm to communities and families.

Republicans have now dealt the biggest blow to Medicaid in history.

Robert Kennedy is gutting the federal bodies that decide which vaccines Americans get and which preventive tests like cancer screenings are encouraged.

They've ended funding for cancer research.

They are systematically dismantling Head Start, threatening the early education that starts kids in families walking economic tightropes off on the right foot.

Donald Trump and Robert Kennedy have already shown that they have little interest in upholding federal law under EMTALA to protect women and mothers.

And Robert Kennedy has kept up DOGE's chaos by playing "52 card pickup" with agencies and federal workers who are responsible for keeping seniors, kids, Americans with disabilities and working families healthy and safe.

Trump's health department is in court right now, on the taxpayer dime, defending these reckless actions. This is the direct result of HHS's flawed interpretations – and sometimes disregard – of federal law. Mr. Stuart would be squarely responsible for advising the department about these legal questions.

But the real question is, how does somebody approach the role of being in-house counsel for an administration that has turned violating the law into an Olympic sport? I'm going to be looking for evidence today that the nominee is not going to be another rubber stamp for Robert Kennedy's crusade against health and science.

Next up, Gustav Chiarello's nomination to be the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources at HHS. The nominee will be responsible for the department's substantial budget, as well as the distribution of grants and other financial issues.

Looking over Mr. Chiarello's resume, I'm concerned about his lack of background managing the finances of any organization, let alone one of the largest in the nation. Given the Trump administration's self-proclaimed interest in the federal budget, I would have thought they could have found a nominee with more of a background in that area. It's an important role, especially in light of the administration's weaponizing of federal grants to punish and pressure political opponents. Members of this committee ought to be looking for impartiality and independence from political influence for a role that touches the lives of so many communities across the nation.

Now to Bryan Switzer, who is nominated to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative with jurisdiction over Asia, textiles, investment, services, and intellectual property.

From day one, Donald Trump's trade agenda has been nothing short of disastrous. Between flip-flopping on tariffs, to his tantrums on Truth Social, Trump is leaving American farmers, businesses, and workers in limbo. American families and businesses need to be taken off this financial rollercoaster of uncertainty. What I'll be looking for today is any indication from this nominee that he will bring transparency or consistency to the Trump administration's chaotic and damaging trade agenda.

That brings us to Derek Theurer, who is nominated to serve as Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

During his first six months in office, Donald Trump has managed to weaponize nearly every corner of the Treasury Department to target his enemies or those that disagree with him. Legitimate oversight from Democrats has been met with delayed responses, lawyerly nonanswers, and in some cases, outright lies from the Administration.

Mr. Theurer is well known to this committee. I certainly hope that helps us in the long run. But the reality is, among the current class of Trump appointees, even the familiar nominees who come before this committee and say all the right things have ended up betraying their commitments. Unfortunately, trust is long gone with this Treasury Department that is turning the IRS against taxpayers and looking out for the wealthy and powerful at everybody else's expense. The Committee will have questions for Mr. Theurer today.

I want to thank all four nominees for joining the Committee here today. I look forward to Q&A.

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