

**United States Senate Committee on Finance  
October 29, 2025**

**Hearing to Consider the Nominations of Arjun Mody, of New Jersey, to be Deputy Commissioner Social Security for the term expiring January 19, 2031, vice David Fabian Black, term expired; Jeffrey Goettman, of Virginia, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative (Africa, Western Hemisphere, Europe, the Middle East, Environment, Labor, and Industrial Competitiveness), with the Rank of Ambassador, vice Jayme Ray White; Julie Callahan, of the District of Columbia, to be Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Office of the United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Douglas J. McKalip, resigned; Thomas Bell, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, vice Christi A. Grimm**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Senator Grassley.**

For the last two decades, I've conducted oversight and called for transparency into Medicaid programs leveraging additional federal dollars into state Medicaid programs outside the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) contribution rate, specifically through provider taxes and supplemental payments. Recently, I wrote to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) raising concerns about states' use of provider taxes to pay for illegal immigrant health care and called on the HHS OIG to investigate the matter.

Question 1:

- Do you find that the use of provider taxes to pay for illegal immigrant health care is taxpayer abuse?
- Will you commit to making sure this matter is reviewed?

**Response: Yes, I agree taxpayer dollars should not be funneled to illegal aliens. Yes, I commit to reviewing this matter and ensuring HHS is following the law.**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which was passed during the COVID-19 pandemic, on a temporary basis, increased the premium tax credit (PTC) eligibility for those making over 400 percent of the federal poverty limit and provided greater cost-sharing reductions for those who are enrolled in a health insurance plan through Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces. According to CMS and other reporting, fraudulent enrollments occurred because insurance agents and brokers exploited vulnerabilities in the ACA's design. According to a Paragon Institute study, in 2024, taxpayers reportedly paid for approximately \$20 billion in improper Obamacare subsidies.

For years I've raised concerns about the failures to adequately oversee ACA subsidies to prevent fraud.

Question 2:

- If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to identify, investigate, and prevent fraudulent activity by insurance agents and brokers in the ACA marketplace?
- How will you work with CMS to ensure that improper or fraudulent payments are properly identified to recover fraudulent payments?
- How do you see that the HHS OIG should be holding agencies, like CMS, accountable for strengthening processes to curb fraud?

**Response: Ending fraud, waste, and abuse of the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and Medicaid is one of my top priorities. I look forward to working closely with your team to determine the most effective plan to deliver justice to the American taxpayer in this area.**

For nearly two decades, I've engaged in bipartisan oversight of the organ transplant system and the government offices tasked with ensuring patient safety. Recently, Ranking Member Wyden and I wrote Secretary Kennedy regarding reports that a Kentucky organ procurement organization attempted to recover organs from an individual that awoke on the operating table. Our letter also highlighted a similar case of patient endangerment in Mississippi.

Question 3: If confirmed, what steps will you take to properly oversee the organ procurement industry?

**Response: I look forward to investigating credible reports of misconduct and will work with you and your team to hold organ procurement organizations accountable.**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Senator Cornyn.**

**Question 1:** Only about half of every dollar spent on brand medicines goes to the entities who actually made them. Rebates, discounts, and other payments from brand manufacturers to PBMs and others have more than tripled in the last decade, reaching \$356 billion in 2024. However, the amounts that PBMs collect are frequently obscured. In Texas, officials found that several PBMs obscured amounts paid for pharmacies.

- What steps can HHS OIG take to ensure that patients are the ones benefiting directly from savings?
- Additionally, what else can HHS OIG do to increase the understanding of evolving PBM and affiliate business practices?

**Response: I will do everything in my power to ensure PBMs are following the law and delivering savings to the American consumer.**

**Question 2:** In September 2025, HHS OIG issued a report, identifying significant increases in Medicare Part B expenditures for wound-care products, known as skin substitutes. OIG also noted that skin substitutes are particularly vulnerable to fraud.

- As Inspector General, how will you work with CMS to address concerns about wasteful spending and potential fraud as it relates to skin substitutes?

**Response: I commit to working with your office and CMS to root out fraud in the skin substitutes market.**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Senator Tim Scott.**

Question 1: What role do you see for the HHS OIG in detecting as well as preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid?

**Response: Ending fraud, waste, and abuse of the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and Medicaid is one of my top priorities. I look forward to working closely with your team to determine the most effective plan to deliver justice to the American taxpayer in this area.**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Ranking Member Wyden**

1. The Inspector General Act protects IG independence and prohibits removal without cause. The U.S. District Court for D.C. noted that it was “obvious” that President Trump had violated the law when he fired your predecessor, Christi Grimm, without providing the legally mandated 30-day notice to Congress, alongside nearly twenty other Inspectors General in January 2025.
  - a. At several points during your confirmation hearing, you stated that the job of the Inspector General is to be a student of the laws passed by Congress. Based on the information available to you, yes or no, do you believe President Trump violated the Inspector General Act when removing Christi Grimm as HHS Inspector General?
  - b. Yes or no, do you believe your nomination itself is consistent with the law?

**Response: I support President Trump’s decision in this matter.**

2. Yes or no, did Joe Biden win the 2020 presidential election?

**Response: Congress certified the electoral result for Joe Biden on January 7, 2021.**

If confirmed, will you commit to following HIPAA, federal privacy protections and established whistleblower and safety protocols before issuing subpoenas involving any health care providers?

**Response: I commit to following the law, including HIPAA.**

3. During your Senate Finance nomination hearing, you stated that investigating abortion clinics is “exactly the kind of thing that the inspector general must have the courage to do.”
  - a. Please cite the specific statutory authority that gives the HHS IG power to independently investigate abortion clinics absent a criminal claim.

**Response: I will follow the law and investigate the wrongdoing of any entity under the purview of the HHS IG.**

4. Mr. Bell, you are currently leading a highly partisan House investigation targeting ActBlue, an investigation coordinated with the Judiciary and Oversight Committees, involving multiple subpoenas, public accusations, and ultimately, a Department of Justice

referral from the Committees. If confirmed, you would oversee politically sensitive criminal investigations and whistleblower complaints across HHS.

- a. How can you credibly claim you would operate as an independent, non-partisan watchdog when you are, *right now*, engaged in an investigation that is clearly politically motivated?

**Response: The Committee on House Administration is letting the facts inform the investigation. If confirmed, I will follow the law.**

5. In your written testimony for HHS Inspector General, you committed that if confirmed you would “examine, evaluate, audit, and investigate to support the initiatives of President Trump and Secretary Kennedy.” The role of an Inspector General is to be an independent watchdog of the executive branch. Sen. Grassley described this role succinctly in a May 18, 2020 letter to President Trump, stating “IGs are intended to be equal opportunity investigators and are designed to combat waste, fraud, abuse, and misconduct without regard to political affiliation.”
  - a. How does pledging to support Trump’s policy agenda comply with the statutory requirement that an Inspector General operate independently from political influence, including the President and cabinet members, the IG may be required to investigate?
  - b. Yes or no, if an investigation uncovers, waste, fraud and/or abuse connected to an initiative of Trump or Kennedy, would you commit to issuing reports and audits even if those findings contradict the Administration's agenda you pledged to support?
  - c. Will you commit in writing that you will not share, preview, or coordinate IG work products with political appointees before they are delivered to Congress?

**Response: I will let the facts inform my investigations. I am confident Secretary Kennedy and President Trump will welcome my feedback.**

6. Medicare and Medicaid Fraud investigations often involve politically powerful actors, such as private insurance companies, hospitals and nursing homes, and state governments. Given your record of partisanship, how will you investigate such entities fairly and without political interference?

**Response: I will let the facts inform my investigations.**

7. Crisis pregnancy centers, which you supported while at HHS Office of Civil Rights, are known to provide misleading or medically inaccurate information to patients. If confirmed as IG, would you commit to investigating misuse of federal funds by such centers?

**Response: I will follow the facts with regards to investigating any entity under the HHS OIG’s purview.**

8. Will you commit to investigating complaints of hospitals that violate EMTALA by failing to provide emergency medical treatment, including emergency reproductive health care?

- a. Will you commit to issuing clarifying guidance to hospitals, physicians, and other providers if you determine that this is necessary to ensure that health care providers follow requirements as outlined under EMTALA?

**Response: I will follow the facts with regards to investigating any entity under the HHS OIG's purview.**

9. Are you supportive of HHS granting the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) access to Medicaid beneficiaries' personal health data for immigration enforcement purposes? How would such an action align with your duty, if confirmed, to protect patient privacy and program integrity?

**Response: I will seek to protect patient privacy, under the law, through my work as HHS OIG.**

10. Private equity (PE) and other private investment in nursing homes and other health care providers is growing. Research indicates that the acquisition of nursing homes by PE is associated with a 10 percent increase in short-term mortality rates and lower staffing levels, which negatively affects health outcomes. Nursing homes are required to disclose their ownership structures to HHS, but independent analyses from GAO identified limitations with relying on nursing homes to report accurate data on their owners and using CMS information to verify that this information is correct.
  - a. Will you commit to hold nursing homes accountable for disclosing their ownership structures?
  - b. Will you commit to investigating the quality of care in nursing homes owned or backed by PE and other private investments?
  - c. Will you commit to working with Congress to identify policy solutions to improve federal data sources used to verify the accuracy of ownership information that nursing homes report?

**Response: I commit to investigating credible reports of misconduct by entities under the purview of the HHS OIG.**

11. Can you commit that, regardless of Administration priorities, you will not initiate audits, law enforcement referrals or compliance actions based on political considerations, ideological targets or pressure from HHS, the White House or congressional allies?

**Response: I will follow the facts and law with regard to investigating any entity under the purview of the HHS OIG.**

12. OIG has authority to audit PBMs and investigate spread pricing and rebate schemes that inflate costs for taxpayers. Will you commit to independent investigations of PBM practices, even if the findings conflict with the Administration's relationships with major drug manufacturers or PBMs?

**Response: I commit to investigating credible reports of misconduct by entities under the purview of the HHS OIG.**

13. In recent years, some so-called “fraud prevention” efforts in Medicare Advantage and Medicaid managed care have resulted in seniors and people with disabilities being wrongly denied medically necessary care. Will you commit to examining whether anti-fraud initiatives are improperly shifting costs or restricting access to care for eligible beneficiaries, rather than simply targeting provider billing?

**Response: I commit to investigating credible reports of misconduct by entities under the purview of the HHS OIG.**

14. Private insurers are increasingly using AI algorithms to deny Medicare Advantage and Medicaid claims, sometimes illegally or prematurely. Will you commit to evaluating whether algorithmic based denials cause improper benefit denials?

**Response: I commit to investigating credible reports of misconduct by entities under the purview of the HHS OIG.**

15. Inspectors General are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of federal reporting, even when data conflicts with the President’s political messaging. Can you commit that you will not suppress, alter, or delay audits or data releases related to Medicare or Medicaid because of concerns they could undermine Administration policy and/or messaging?

**Response: I will be as timely as possible about releasing information to the public, consistent with the law.**

16. You were listed as having been a “respondent” in an invitation-only “deliberately limited gathering” on “The Relationship of Jesus Christ to Civil Government.” The event was hosted by several organizations, including “the National Reform Association”<sup>1</sup>—a Christian nationalist group formed with the express purpose of “modifying...its Preamble and First Amendment, to recognize Jesus Christ as King and Supreme Governor of the United States.”<sup>2</sup> The gathering’s organizers stated that the event would feature lectures on theories on the “Biblical role of civil government,” including “Christian America,” “National Confession,” “Principled Pluralism,” and “Theonomy.” Following these lectures, you and the other respondents were expected to critique the positions presented in the lectures.

- a. Did you participate as a respondent in this event? If yes, please describe any civil government reforms you advocated for or against during this event. This question does not request that you describe any of your personal religious views, it only seeks clarity on reforms to civil government you may have advocated for or against at this event.

**Response: My views as they relate to religion’s rightful place in American society is not a relevant question for my nomination. Furthermore, Article VI, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution prohibits a religious test as a qualification for federal office.**

---

<sup>1</sup> *Presbyterian Journal*, December 3, 1986, p.4, <https://share.google/oKNc7QEhhHof82PEG>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nationalreformassociation.weebly.com/>

**Question for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Senator Cantwell.**

Question 1: Mr. Bell, we currently face a reeling health care system that will have to absorb a \$1 trillion cut and 15 million additional uninsured Americans, including 300,000 Washingtonians, thanks to the Republican budget reconciliation bill. Even now, just days before the start of ACA marketplace open enrollment on November 1st, my colleagues across the aisle are still refusing to extend the expiring Affordable Care Act Enhanced Premium Tax Credits. This will result in higher premiums for the 24 million ACA marketplace enrollees next year.

In my own state, insurers have been approved to increase premiums by an average of 21 percent – the largest increase since 2017 – and insurers have explicitly attributed this to the Trump Administration’s tariffs and the expiration of ACA tax credits. As we speak, Americans who purchase health coverage on the ACA marketplace will have to decide to either accept record-high premium price hikes or forgo coverage altogether.

My office released a case study report last week detailing the average premium hike for a married couple with annual income of \$120,000 per year in each county in Washington state. The report found that the average increase in premiums across all 39 counties in Washington is a whopping \$1,049 per month, or \$12,590 per year. This will not only increase the number of uninsured, but it will also increase uncompensated care costs at hospital emergency departments, further straining our health care system.

Questions for Mr. Bell:

1. The Affordable Care Act brought down the number of uninsured people to an all time low of 7% in 2023. This also decreased uncompensated care costs across the board and allowed people to access preventative screenings and critical treatments. Do you agree with the fact that a healthy and insured population leads to less strain on our health care system, which also lowers the financial strain on taxpayers and the government?

**Response: I believe rooting out waste, fraud and abuse in the health cares system lowers the financial strain on taxpayers and the government.**

2. Do you agree that we should extend the expiring enhanced premium tax credits to keep Americans insured and lower uncompensated care costs for the government and taxpayers?

**Response: I leave that decision up to Congress.**

3. As an inspector general, you would be responsible for seeking out waste. Do you believe that the budget reconciliation bill, which will increase uncompensated care costs and the federal deficit by \$3.4 trillion, is a good example of waste?

**Response: No.**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Senator Cortez Masto.**

Question 1: The Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control (HCFAC) Program combats fraud, waste, and abuse across federal health programs and is managed by the HHS Office of the Inspector General. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring the HCFAC Program gets the necessary support from your office to effectively keep pace with increasingly complex fraud schemes?

**Response: I look forward to reviewing the effectiveness of the HCFAC Program.**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Senator Warren.**

Question 1: If confirmed, how would you weigh requests for investigations, audits, and evaluations from Democratic and Republican lawmakers?

A. Do you commit to give these requests equal priority?

**Response: I commit to investigating credible reports of misconduct by entities under the purview of the HHS OIG.**

Question 2: If confirmed, will you commit not to intervene in or interfere with the findings, conclusions, or recommendations of career HHS OIG staff that conduct audits, evaluations, and investigations?

**Response: It is my job to manage all employees at HHS OIG and approve their work products. If the employees provide quality work products that follows the facts, I will approve those work products.**

Question 3: Do you think that it is appropriate for HHS employees to act on financial, personal, or political conflicts of interest?

**Response: HHS employees should follow the law.**

Question 4: What would you do if you were made aware of employee conflicts of interest at HHS?

**Response: I will investigate credible reports of wrongdoing as it relates to violations of conflict-of-interest laws.**

Question 5: You were forced to resign from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality following a legislative audit revealing you authorized nearly \$8,000 in payments and taxpayer funds to a former spokesperson with no documentation or justification.

A. Please provide an explanation for this incident.

B. How will you assure the public that you will adequately account for spending and take stewardship of public resources seriously if you are confirmed as HHS IG?

**Response: I did not resign for the reason you stated. The payment was approved by the Director of the Department and by career professionals within the agency and by the State**

**Director of Personnel management and the Attorney General. The media mischaracterized these events. I will continue to follow the law.**

Question 6: When you first joined HHS in 2017, due to your controversial actions on the Select Panel, “out of an abundance of caution, [you] recused [yourself] from all enforcement matters related to [your] work on the Select Panel’s investigation [into Planned Parenthood] to alleviate any optics concerns by members of the public or Congress.” Your decision to recuse yourself in 2017 from any matter relating to Planned Parenthood demonstrated that you correctly acknowledge that there are significant and legitimate concerns about an actual or apparent conflict of interest in such matters. If confirmed as HHS IG, do you commit to recuse yourself from any HHS OIG investigations, audits, and evaluations involving Planned Parenthood as you previously did?

**Response: The premise of the question is incorrect. I was cleared by the Ethics Office to work on any matters related to Planned Parenthood. I do not harbor animus against any individual within that organization. If confirmed, I will follow the law.**

Question 7: As chief of staff in the Office for Civil Rights at HHS during President Trump’s first term, you worked with Roger Severino—who wrote the Project 2025 chapter on HHS—to create the Division of Conscience and Religious Freedom that was intended to weaken reproductive health care access, particularly for abortion. If confirmed as HHS IG, would you commit to recuse yourself from any abortion-related matter.

**Response: No, the division was created to protect conscience and religious freedom rights.**

Question 8: According to members of the Select Panel, “you may have acted improperly during that investigation by secretly coordinating with outside groups,” raising concerns about your “conduct, judgment, and ability to meet professional standards of impartiality and fairness.”

- A. Do you currently maintain any connections to anti-abortion advocacy groups? If confirmed, what steps will you take to avoid the appearance that these relationships might improperly color your investigative decisions and policy recommendations on reproductive health matters?
  - a. If you are offered any information by a person or group affiliated with the organizations with which you inappropriately coordinated while serving on the select panel, do you commit to not accept or use such information in OIG investigations?
- B. Do you currently maintain connections to any political or advocacy organizations? If so, which ones? If confirmed, what steps will you take to avoid the appearance that these relationships might improperly color your investigative decisions and policy recommendations?

**Response: All actions taken by me and the staff of the Panel were carefully reviewed by the House General Counsel, Committee General Counsel, the House Parliamentarian, and by the General Counsel to the Speaker. The chairman of the Panel required strict adherence**

**to all House Rules. I maintain contact with a large and diverse number of individuals. If confirmed, I will follow the law.**

**Questions for the Record submitted to Thomas Bell from Senator Warnock.**

Question 1: A recent report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the state of Georgia spent \$54.2 million, over 87 percent with federal dollars, on a Section 1115 Medicaid waiver to demonstrate work reporting requirements in its Medicaid program. More than 2 years in, this same program has a [current enrollment of 9,885](#). As Inspector General, you would be responsible for oversight of potential wasteful spending by the Department of Health and Human Services.

- In your view, does the HHS Inspector General position have either the legal authority or the statutory responsibility to evaluate the success of Section 1115 Medicaid waivers to determine if taxpayer waste has occurred?
- In general, do you believe a program that spends tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to enroll only a few thousand individuals is wasteful of taxpayer resources?
- Please list metrics by which you would evaluate HHS programs for waste.

**Response: I commit to investigating credible reports of misconduct by entities under the purview of the HHS OIG. The OIG has several tools by which to measure waste and effectiveness. I look forward to learning more about the questions you raise and will be happy to discuss further.**

Question 2: The [person?] responsible for reviewing potential conflicts of interest at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was [reportedly eliminated](#) by the Administration on October 10.

- Do you believe preventing conflicts of interest contributes to ending waste, fraud, and abuse?
- Do you believe federal officials should be held to a standard to prevent conflicts of interest? If so, and if confirmed, will you commit to investigating the alleged elimination of this office?

**Response: I will investigate credible reports of wrongdoing as it relates to violations of conflict of interest laws.**

Question 3: Much of CDC's funding flows directly to state and local health departments. However, massive firings at CDC mean that dedicated, expert staff will no longer be there to give technical assistance and guidance to states and localities looking to respond to potential health threats. Additionally, I have heard from constituents that several multi-year contracts, some of which were nearly completed, were canceled by the Administration.

- Is it an efficient use of government funding to cancel active, multi-year contracts awarded by CDC, some of which were nearly completed?

- Do you believe there are circumstances where canceling active, multi-year contracts where work has been partially funded could constitute a waste of taxpayer dollars? If so, please explain.
- If confirmed, will you commit to investigating any potential waste of government resources in instances where research grants were halfway done but canceled?

Question 4: As Inspector General, you would be responsible for evaluating the efficiency of HHS. Do you believe it is efficient to fire thousands of CDC workers and then [call half back](#) the next day?

**Response 3-4: I have not been employed at HHS and lack context for these claims. If confirmed, I will look into these issues.**

Question 5: If confirmed, will you commit to immediately informing this Committee, both majority and minority, should President Trump take steps to fire you or demand your resignation?

**Response: I commit to being transparent with the Committee as required by law.**

Question 6: The Whistleblower Protection Act prohibits retaliation against federal employees who disclose evidence of wrongdoing. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that this law is available to federal employees at HHS, including employees at the CDC? If so, what plans do you have for ensuring HHS whistleblowers are protected?

**Response: I will encourage the CDC and HHS to abide by the Whistleblower Protection Act.**

Question 7: What would you do if you received an order from the President that you believed to be illegal? What would you do if you received an order from the President to ignore Congressional appropriations or a law passed by Congress?

**Response: I do not anticipate this will happen. President Trump believes in law and order.**