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**Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on Markup of Hargan, Malpass, and
McIntosh Nominations**
As Prepared for Delivery

Let me begin, Mr. Chairman, by saying how horrified I was to learn of the shooting in Alexandria this morning. I know I speak for everyone here when I say that Congressman Scalise, the aides and officers injured will be in our thoughts and prayers, and we are extraordinarily thankful for the Capitol police and first responders who were able to prevent this unspeakable act of violence from becoming far worse.

The Finance Committee today will vote on four nominations to important positions in the executive branch. One of our four votes will be on the nomination of Mr. Eric Hargan to fill the deputy secretary position at the Department of Health and Human Services. Given what the job entails, it's fair to call Mr. Hargan a health care nominee, and here's why that presents a big issue.

At this moment, the American public and most of the Congress -- except for a group of 13 male Republican Senators -- and not even they seem to know what's going on -- is being kept in the dark about what the Senate majority has in store for American health care.

What's worse is that my good friend, Chairman Hatch, the leader of the committee of jurisdiction for healthcare reform, is being cut out, our committee being completely disregarded, as this charade continues.

Under Chairman Baucus, with Ranking Member Grassley, the Senate Finance Committee held dozens of hearings, some started in the morning and went well into the night, on healthcare reform. But Leader McConnell has kept Finance members from even seeing the bill, much less doing their jobs as representatives of their state by actually legislating.

An American voter would expect, for example, that if provisions of this bill harmed people in Texas, that Senator Cornyn would work in committee to fix the legislation. The hundreds of thousands of seniors in who face losing their nursing home coverage in Pennsylvania under the Republican bill have every right to expect that Senator Toomey would look out for them and devise a bipartisan solution in committee that protects our most vulnerable citizens.

That is not to be. The Chairman has been bypassed. This is a political process on Trumpcare that makes the House look positively transparent.

The public has seen the House-passed version of Trumpcare, and that bill has gone over with the public about as well as prolonged root canal surgery. But now that the bill has come to the Senate, the Majority Leader has kept it hidden behind closed doors, and committed to rushing the bill to a partisan vote on the floor with no review, no hearings, and no accountability to the American people.

Democrats in the Senate have said to our colleagues over and over, drop the political rhetoric of “repeal, repeal, repeal,” stop the President from sabotaging the markets where millions of Americans get their insurance, and let us sit down and legislate together.

Let’s find ways to inject more competition into the insurance markets. Let’s bring down drug prices. Let’s update the Medicare guarantee to reflect the care seniors need today and in the future, particularly those with chronic conditions like cancer and diabetes. That’s where our focus ought to be on a bipartisan basis, and those are issues Chairman Hatch and members on both sides of this committee have shown great interest in tackling.

But instead, Republican are leading their members down a radically partisan path. The public can only guess at the details of what’s being drafted behind closed doors -- how many millions will lose insurance, how many hundreds of billions of dollars will be slashed from Medicaid, how much each special interest will get for their silence, how massive the tax breaks will be for the very wealthy.

It’s impossible for us to evaluate a nomination for the number two spot at HHS without viewing it through that lens. So I will be unable to support Mr. Hargan’s nomination today.

Next, Mr. Malpass, Mr. McIntosh and Mr. Maloney are all nominated to significant roles at the Treasury Department. It’s my judgement that Treasury’s number one focus in the months and years ahead ought to be finding fresh, bipartisan policies that give everybody in America a chance to get ahead.

That means rejecting partisan approaches like reconciliation, and it means reaching out to the opposite party in Congress instead of stonewalling them on oversight issues.

I want to thank Chairmen Hatch and Grassley for speaking out against the administration’s stated policy of ignoring inquiries from Democrats, which would set a dangerous and undemocratic precedent. During the hearing last week, each of the nominees we’re considering today committed to responding to questions from Senators of either party, so it’s my expectation that these nominees will follow through with that commitment if confirmed.

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