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CONTACT: [Katie Niederee](#), [Julia Lawless](#)

202-224-4515

Hatch Opening Statement at HHS Nominations Hearing

WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) delivered the following opening statement at a Finance Committee hearing considering the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) nominations of John Bartrum to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services and Lynn Johnson to be an Assistant Secretary for Family Support:

Today we will consider the nominations of John Bartrum and Lynn Johnson. I would like to extend a warm welcome to each of the nominees here today. Congratulations on your nominations and thank you for your willingness to serve in these important positions.

Mr. Bartrum, President Trump nominated you to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources at the Department of Health and Human Services. This is not the first time you have been called upon to serve your country. In fact, you have thirty years of military experience as both an active duty officer and as a reserve officer. We thank you for your service.

In addition to your substantial military career, you spent many years on Capitol Hill as a Senior Professional Staffer to the United States House Appropriations Committee. In that capacity, you played a key role in funding the Department of Health and Human Services as well as many other agencies under its purview. Your experience has given you important insights into the costs associated with the policies and programs carried out by the Department.

Prior to your career on Capitol Hill, you served as a part of the National Security Division of the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Office of the President. At OMB, you were responsible for the budget of the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs. It is obvious from your background that you have a good deal of experience crafting and implementing

federal budgets. I'm sure these experiences will serve you well in the position for which you have been nominated.

If confirmed, you will oversee HHS's budget and provide guidance to the Secretary on all aspects of financial management. As I'm sure you are well aware, Medicare and Medicaid are expanding too quickly. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, national spending on mandatory health programs is projected to grow at an average of 5.5 percent per year between 2017 and 2026 and will reach \$5.7 trillion by 2026.

This trajectory is unsustainable.

I have a long history of supporting entitlement reform and believe that we need to continue to find ways to curb excessive government spending while increasing access to high-quality, affordable care.

I don't think I need to say this, but I will anyway: We have our work cut out for us, Mr. Bartrum.

On the other hand, Mrs. Johnson, President Trump nominated you to be Assistant Secretary for Family Support at the Department of Health and Human Services. Currently, you serve as Executive Director of Jefferson County Human Services, where you oversee a number of workforce and social services programs, including TANF. Prior to your position with the Jefferson County of Human Services, you ran a consulting firm in Colorado that focused on mental health, high-risk youth, and child welfare among other things. I'm sure these experiences will serve you well in the position for which you have been nominated.

If confirmed, Mrs. Johnson, you will oversee a wide range of more than 60 programs with a budget of more than \$53 billion, making it the second largest agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. You will oversee major programs such as TANF, child welfare, child care, child support, and Head Start—partnering with states and communities to help families achieve prosperity and independence.

You will also be charged with implementing laws passed by Congress to aid children and families across the country. Last month, after years of hard work on both sides of the aisle,

Congress passed—and the President signed into law—the Family First Prevention Services Act. This law has the potential to improve the lives of tens of thousands of children and their families across this country. The opioid epidemic has hit families hard, and the number of children entering foster care due to parental substance abuse is continuing to climb. Fortunately this new law will help address the epidemic by providing more help to families to address substance abuse issues.

Mrs. Johnson, if confirmed, you will be charged with leading the agency in implementing this law, and I know members of this Committee are eager to work closely with you to make sure it is implemented quickly, and as intended, so that families will get the help they need.

I look forward to working with you both, and hope that we can get your nominations reported and confirmed in short order so that you can get to work. We have a great deal of work ahead of us on these issues. And I look forward to working with HHS as we work to achieve our shared goals.

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