

Statement by U.S. Representative Connie Morella  
Senate Commerce Committee Nominations Hearing

November 1, 2001

Introducing Dr. Arden Bement Jr.

Chairman Wyden, Senator Nelson, and members of the Committee, it is with great pleasure that I am here to introduce Dr. Arden Bement Jr., the designee for Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. As you may know, NIST is very near to my heart, and I would be pleased if its direction were left in Dr. Bement's capable hands.

An engineer by training, Dr. Bement has had a long and distinguished career in both science and public service, holding numerous positions in government, industry, and academia. Currently, he serves Purdue University as a chaired professor and Head of the School of Nuclear Engineering at that institution. In the past he has worked in the Department of Defense, sat on the National Science Board overseeing NSF, consulted for the DOE's national laboratories, and served on advisory committees to NASA. More to the point, he has been advising NIST in a variety of capacities continuously for the past 20 years. He currently chairs the Advisory Committee for the Advanced Technology Program at NIST and has been a vocal proponent for the continuation of this highly successful and important program.

Dr. Bement would be taking over at an auspicious time for NIST. The institute has recently celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but NIST is far from a stodgy, old laboratory. Its state-of-the-art facilities boast numerous advanced laboratories and its scientific discoveries have remained on the forefront. Two Nobel Prizes in Physics have been awarded to NIST scientists in the last five years. Modern, cutting edge laboratories have recently been commissioned and others are in mid-construction. It remains the premier institution for standards in this country and its work in this area is unparalleled.

Nevertheless, retaining the standards of excellence that have come to be associated with NIST will require strong, bold, effective leadership. I am confident Dr. Bement is just the man to provide it. His experience with government is extensive and he knows NIST inside and out. He has worked in both industry and academia, and understands their needs and the importance of collaborations and partnerships. He has been a leader encouraging the next generation of scientists and engineering, particularly among woman and other underrepresented groups. He has fresh ideas and a proven track record. I believe he is supremely qualified to lead the institute into its second century and position it to solve tomorrow's problems today. I hope you will confirm him quickly. Thank you.