

Testimony of Victoria Baecher Wassmer
Nominee for Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Budget Programs
U.S. Department of Transportation
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
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Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker and members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Transportation. If confirmed, I will work every day to support the work of our Department in ensuring that all Americans have access to safe and reliable transportation systems that everyone deserves.

I am joined today by my husband Franklin and my son Alexander. My son Christophe along with my parents and other family members are watching remotely. My family's steadfast support and commitment to community and public engagement grounds me every day in the work I do on behalf of the American people.

Commitment to public service is what propelled me to spend the majority of my 30-year professional career in public service, including twenty years in management and leadership positions within the federal government. Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to serve in the public and private sector concentrating on transportation programs. These experiences have helped me gain a solid understanding of the vital role transportation plays in supporting our economy, and in providing Americans with access to opportunities and services that enrich our lives.

Today, our transportation systems are more connected than ever and are critical for our nation's economic success and competitive positioning in a global economy. New technologies deliver efficiencies, conveniences, and new transportation options that done well will reduce the transportation sector's impact on the environment and ensure transportation safety. Let me note that transportation safety is a passion of mine, and it remains the highest priority at the Department. I look forward to working closely with the Secretary and the leadership team on new and innovative ways to make our current and future transportation systems more effective as well as safer for everyone.

I am also keenly aware of the important responsibilities public servants have in safeguarding federal resources. If confirmed as the Department's Chief Financial Officer, I will do my best to provide Secretary Buttigieg and our leadership team with the tools, talent and systems needed for wise resource stewardship. These include a top-notch financial management system that is transparent and accountable, in addition to a financial and budget management team of professionals that are second to none. In my previous roles, I have learned the importance of establishing strong systems of enterprise risk management and internal controls so that checks and balances are built into our programs and financial systems in order to manage risk, maximize effectiveness and provide transparency. Together, these tools are invaluable to wise management of the Department's resources — they help ensure an effective control environment so that reliable information is available to assist all levels of the Department in decision-making and project management.

Early on in my federal career, I learned firsthand the importance of how the federal budget can demonstrate the Department's strategic goals and direction. Indeed, done well, the priorities and choices made in a Department's federal budget align resources to deliver on strategic priorities. Likewise, a commitment to analyzing performance and program effectiveness and embedding a virtuous feedback loop to future budget decisions are critical for any high performing organization, especially public serving institutions, to deliver on their goals and objectives.

Through program evaluations and performance reviews, we can learn important lessons that confirm if our programs are operating as envisioned and to make adaptive changes if they are not. I believe by analyzing data and looking at spending trends, we gain valuable insights that can help guide us in future planning. In my view, financial stewardship responsibilities don't end when monies are spent.

I am committed to working collaboratively and accountably as a team and creating an environment that brings out the best in everyone as we work together to take the Department and our programs to new levels in the years to come.

Growing up, my parents instilled in me the belief that public service is a noble calling, and it is an honor to work in service of others. If confirmed, I will do my very best to serve the Department of Transportation with excellence and to safeguard its financial resources to the best of my ability.

Thank you, and I welcome any questions you may have.