

SCOTT BOYER QUEHL
OPENING STATEMENT TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Hutchison, distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored and humbled to come before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration of the United States Department of Commerce. I want to thank the Members of this Committee and their staff for our productive discussions on the Department's finances and operations in the weeks leading up to this hearing. We all share a commitment to a Department that is efficient and effective, as it promotes accelerated economic recovery and sustainable growth through trade promotion and commercial diplomacy, innovation and intellectual property, and the science and infrastructure that businesses will rely upon to develop a vibrant clean energy industry. If confirmed, I look forward to open communications with all of you as we work together to translate this commitment into results.

I also thank President Obama and Secretary Locke for the confidence they have shown in me by putting forward my nomination to serve our country at such a critical time. I am grateful for the support from Senator Kohl of Wisconsin. Monroe and Green Bay, Wisconsin provided loving communities for the families which raised me: the Quehls, the Sheltons, the Boyers, and the Bablers. It was the faculty of Monroe's public schools who made a student out of me, and the professors of Lawrence University who instilled a habit of mind for challenging assumptions and critical thinking.

I appreciate the statement of support from Senator Casey of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania has been the birthplace of my son; the place where I received my advanced education at the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government; and a place where, for a decade, my partners and I helped governments in 16 states pull themselves back from the brink of financial collapse, head off pending financial and operational problems before they resulted in crisis, or improve very good management practices into great ones. Finally, I thank two public servants who have been essential in my professional formation – who have shown me how a chief financial officer of vision, of energy, and of courage can extend beyond ledgers and budget object classes to make government better able to help people make the most of their own lives: CFO, then Mayor, of the District of Columbia Anthony Williams; and former Finance Director of Philadelphia, Controller of the United States, and present Senior Advisor to the President, Vice President, and OMB Director, G. Edward DeSeve.

I would like to introduce my wife, Valerie Gregory Piper, and son, Mark Gregory Babler Quehl. Valerie, Executive Director for the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence, devotes herself to the expansion of publicly-assisted housing in New Orleans and serves as advisor to the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Chicago Housing Authority. Mark, the center of Valerie and my collective heart, attends the first grade at St. Peter's School in Philadelphia, and helps us operate our farm in Delaware County, New York. Also here today are my mother, Janeen Joy Babler – an artist recognized by the Governor of Wisconsin for her contributions to the design of the state's quarter – and my step-father and great friend, David Alvin Babler.

My job, if confirmed, will be to carry out such responsibilities as the following:

- Ensuring the Department's mission, goals, and budgets are connected to measurable results that matter
- Ensuring the Department makes best use of its human capital, providing the management and tools to improve productivity and results
- Procuring goods and services cost-effectively and fairly – particularly large, mission-critical capital assets whose success or failure have material bearing on programmatic success and Department budget stability
- Managing risk prudently
- Facilitating an integrated Department which applies taxpayer resources to achieve the policy results intended while respecting appropriately distinct goals, even cultures, of bureaus and programs.
- Building upon the Department's well-deserved reputation for clean audit opinions, internal controls, and faithful financial reporting
- Effectively planning, budgeting, and managing the Department's 860 facilities and other assets, and secure them from those who would do our country harm
- Investing – soundly and effectively – the resources entrusted to the Department for implementation of the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

I know the positive impact well-executed government administration in such areas can have, through my experiences as a Peace Corps Volunteer, at the World Bank, with the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, with the Office of Federal Financial Management of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and while helping governments throughout the country meet their challenges.

If confirmed, I will work in a spirit of partnership and client service that has been articulated by Secretary Gary Locke with the Department's policy, program, and operations leadership, seeking counsel and implementation support from the Department's strong corps of career service employees. I will view the Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office as sources of expertise to be consulted frequently. If confirmed, I will draw from, and contribute to, the formulation of best practices through the Federal CFO Council and other inter-agency councils, and through working closely with the Office of Management and Budget. And I will seek open dialogue with this Committee and other Members of Congress. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your consideration of my nomination and for the opportunity to address any questions that you and your colleagues might have.