

**NOMINATION OF RUSSELL T. VOUGHT,
OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY DIREC-
TOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGE-
MENT AND BUDGET**

**HEARING & EXECUTIVE
BUSINESS MEETING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

**June 7, 2017—HEARING ON THE NOMINATION OF RUSSELL T.
VOUGHT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE
OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET**

**June 14, 2017—EXECUTIVE BUSINESS MEETING TO CONSIDER THE
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**NOMINATION OF RUSSELL T. VOUGHT,
OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR
OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND
BUDGET**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2017

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:31 p.m., in room SD-608, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Michael B. Enzi, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Enzi, Grassley, Gardner, Kennedy, Sanders, Stabenow, Merkley, Kaine, Van Hollen, and Harris.

Staff present: Matthew Giroux, Republican deputy staff director; and Warren Gunnels, minority staff director.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL B. ENZI

Chairman ENZI. Good afternoon. I will call this hearing to order.

We are here today to consider the nomination of Mr. Russell T. Vought, of Virginia, to be the next Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). I am going to try to keep my opening remarks brief.

President Trump nominated Mr. Vought for this position just last month. I think all members on the committee can agree that we would like to see a confirmed OMB Deputy Director in place as soon as possible. I was delighted to see that the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee convened this morning to hold their own confirmation hearing with Mr. Vought.

Now that all of us have had the opportunity to review the President's budget and were able to hear from Director Mulvaney, we can see why there is a real need to ensure all the leadership positions at OMB are filled.

Recall that the President's budget is just one step in the process of putting America on a better and more sustainable path. This Herculean effort will take Congress, the administration, and, most importantly, the American people all working together if we are going to confront our fiscal challenges.

America faces today a nearly \$20 trillion debt, unchecked and unfunded mandatory spending, and large regulatory burdens on businesses and individuals. I am pleased that the President has nominated an experienced hand.

As I mentioned just recently, we had the privilege of hearing from Director Mulvaney speak about the President's budget. I am

certain that Director Mulvaney is looking forward to having Russell T. Vought by his side as OMB now transitions to work on implementing the policy proposals contained in the President's budget.

Indeed, producing a budget is just one of the important roles OMB serves. For example, OMB works to manage governmentwide functions, such as agency rulemaking, contracting, grants management, financial management, information technology, program assessment, personnel policy, and property management, just to name a few. Having a Deputy Director in place at OMB will ensure that the administration and the Federal Government is serving the American people to its utmost capability.

Today I look forward to hearing from Mr. Vought on why he is the best qualified person for this position. Particularly, I am eager to know how his past positions of working in public policy will translate now to enacting real reforms. I am pleased to announce that we had a very productive meeting before this hearing weeks ago, and it is encouraging that we can continue that conversation today. As with then-nominee Mulvaney, I will be interested in learning Mr. Vought's views on the role played by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OIRA, and vetting agency regulations. This is a particular interest because our committee has been exploring the concept of a regulatory budget as one way to quantify the burdens Federal regulations have on the American economy.

Another important area of the committee's work is reforming the broken budget process. Unfortunately, we have seen years when budgets were not even passed, and if they were, prescribed levels of funding were not enforced. I am confident that the administration wants to do better, and I am eager to hear how Mr. Vought plans to assist in that process.

Senator Sanders.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BERNARD SANDERS

Senator SANDERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Vought, thanks for being with us.

As I understand it, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vought has been at the OMB as part of the so-called beachhead team since the beginning of the Trump administration. Mr. Vought has told us in writing that he has "largely been responsible for advising Director Mulvaney on the composition of the fiscal year 2018 budget proposal and preparing decisions for him to make."

Now, I have to say that, in my view, the budget that Mr. Vought helped write is perhaps the most destructive and cruel budget ever presented by a President in the history of our country. This is a budget that would cause devastating economic pain to tens of millions of Americans. It would make it harder for children to get a decent education, make it harder for our working families to get the health care they desperately need, make it harder to protect our environment, and make it harder for senior citizens to live out their retirement years in dignity.

The Trump budget that Mr. Vought helped write cuts nutrition assistance for low-income pregnant women and their babies by 15

percent, literally taking food out of the mouths of some of the most vulnerable people in this country.

The Trump budget would eliminate the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, something very important to my State because we have weather that occasionally gets 10, 20 below zero. We have a lot of lower-income seniors and others who cannot afford to keep their homes warm in the wintertime.

The Trump budget would cut affordable housing to some 250,000 families at a time when millions of working people are spending 40, 50, or 60 percent of their limited incomes trying to put a roof over their heads.

The Trump budget that Mr. Vought apparently helped to write would slash Head Start by almost \$1 billion, throwing nearly 90,000 low-income children off of the high-quality early childhood education they desperately need.

Now, here is the point about this budget, which really is the main thing. It is not just that there are massive cuts to health care, to education, to nutrition, to environmental protection, to affordable housing—about \$2.5 trillion in cuts over a 10-year period. But what was very interesting about this budget, at the same time they make massive cuts to the programs that working families desperately need, they also managed to put in there some \$3 trillion in tax breaks for the top 1 percent.

So Mr. Vought and Mr. Mulvaney and Mr. Trump apparently think it makes a lot of sense to go after the needs of working families, the elderly, the children, the sick and the poor—the most vulnerable people in this country—and then at the same time say to billionaire families that they are going to get massive tax breaks.

Now, as all of you know, when Donald Trump campaigned for President, he told the American people that he would be a different type of Republican. Well, not the case. Tax breaks for the rich and cuts in programs for working people are the same old Republican ideology that we have heard from for years.

Further, Mr. Chairman, what President Trump is also doing in a way that is unprecedented in modern American history is trying to divide this country up. It is one thing for us to disagree on issues. But what serious Presidents do, what serious leaders of democracies do, is to try to bring people together. Maybe the color of your skin is a little bit different than mine. Maybe your religion is different than mine. Maybe you came from a different country than I did. But what leadership in a democratic society is about is bringing people together. And yet we have a President who is trying to divide us up based on the Nation that we came from, based on our religion, based on many other factors.

Which brings us to Mr. Vought, the nominee of today. On January 17, 2016, Mr. Vought wrote an opinion piece for a publication called *The Resurgent* in which he said, and I quote: “Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned.”

When Mr. Vought was asked in writing if he considered this statement to be Islamophobic, hateful, and offensive, he responded, and I quote—this is Mr. Vought: “No. I respect the right of every individual to express their religious beliefs. This statement, which

is taken out of context, was made in a post designed to defend Wheaton College, my alma mater, for its decision to insist that one of its professors maintain its statement of faith. I specifically wrote it with the intention of conveying my viewpoint in a respectful manner that avoided inflammatory rhetoric.” End of quote from Mr. Vought.

The professor who Mr. Vought is referring to is Larycia Elaine Hawkins, who became the first female African American tenured professor at Wheaton College in 2013, serving as an associate professor of political science. Apparently, the crime that Mr. Vought found so objectionable was a 2015 Facebook post that Ms. Hawkins wrote, stating, and I quote—this is from Ms. Hawkins, the professor of political science: “I stand in religious solidarity with Muslims because they, like me, a Christian, are people of the Book. And as Pope Francis stated, we worship the same God.”

Mr. Chairman, in my view, the statement made by Mr. Vought is indefensible, it is hateful, it is Islamophobic, and it is an insult to over a billion Muslims throughout the world.

This country since its inception has struggled, sometimes with great pain, to overcome discrimination of all forms, whether it is racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and Islamophobia. Over the years we have made progress in becoming a less discriminatory and more tolerant society, and we must not go backward.

The nomination by President Trump of an individual who has expressed such strong Islamophobic language is simply unacceptable. In a democratic society, we can all disagree over issues, but racism and bigotry cannot be part of any public policy. In my view, the nomination of Mr. Vought must be rescinded.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ENZI. Thank you, Senator Sanders.

Before I begin, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from Congressman Hensarling introducing Mr. Vought. Without objection, so ordered.

[The referenced information follows:]

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June 7, 2017

Testimony of U.S. Representative Jeb Hensarling (TX-05)
 On the Nomination of Russell T. Vought to be the
 Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget

I want to thank Chairman Enzi, Ranking Member Sanders, and the Members of the Senate Budget Committee for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of Russell Vought.

Our nation faces a fiscal crisis as we are drowning in a sea of debt. This \$20 trillion price tag will smother future generations with its weight and magnitude – dooming them to a standard of living that is less than the one enjoyed by their parents.

President Trump has outlined a bold, forward-looking agenda to tackle the very serious problems that hardworking Americans and their families face – stagnant paychecks, shrinking savings and a skyrocketing debt burden racked up by their federal government.

I believe President Trump showed his strong commitment to addressing this dire debt situation when he nominated my former colleague, Mick Mulvaney, to be our nation's OMB Director. The President has further demonstrated leadership on our spending driven debt crisis by nominating Russ Vought as the Deputy Director of that office.

I personally know of Russ' commitment to our nation and the cause of liberty because I had the distinct honor of working with him.

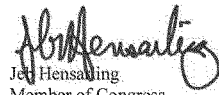
Russ began his service to the American people and Congress immediately following his graduation from Wheaton College in 1998. After a brief stint with then-retiring Senator Dan Coats, Russ joined the staff of my political mentor, Texas Senator Phil Gramm. During those four years with Senator Gramm, Russ became a keen student of legislative procedure and a master of federal budget policy.

After I had the good fortune of being elected by the people of the 5th District of Texas, Russ joined my staff as Policy Director – where he served as my top adviser on budget issues and worked for several years providing invaluable counsel to me on tax, entitlement and spending policy. When I became Chairman of the Republican Study Committee in the 110th Congress, Russ served me and the 100-plus members of the committee as Executive Director with integrity and an unwavering devotion to the conservative cause we shared.

At the conclusion of my chairmanship, Russ went on to serve then-Conference Chairman Mike Pence as Policy Director at the House Republican Conference, where he served as principle adviser on budget, appropriations, Social Security, legislative procedure and entitlements.

Throughout his career, Russ' devotion to constitutional, limited government principles has always been second to none. I once said that I could take heart knowing that Russ' service to the cause of liberty would continue in whichever path he chooses for his life. As the Senate fulfills its constitutional duty of advice and consent, I ask that you truly recognize the impressive qualifications Russ Vought brings to this position and that you confirm him without delay.

Yours Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Hensarling", written over a printed name and title.

Joe Hensarling
Member of Congress

Chairman ENZI. Our witness this afternoon is Mr. Russell T. Vought, the President's nominee for Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Mr. Vought has been serving at OMB since January in a senior advisory role. Prior to his time at OMB, Mr. Vought had an extensive and impressive career on Capitol Hill. Starting his time on the Hill as an intern, Mr. Vought worked his way up the ranks to become the Policy Director of the House Republican Conference. Along the way, Mr. Vought also completed his law degree from George Washington University. After leaving Capitol Hill, Mr. Vought served as vice president for grassroots outreach and policy initiatives at the Heritage Action for America.

We look forward to receiving your testimony, Mr. Vought, but first, under the rules of the committee, nominees are required to testify under oath, so, Mr. Vought, would you please rise with me so I can administer the oath? Do you swear that the testimony you will give to the Senate Budget Committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Mr. VOUGHT. I do.

Chairman ENZI. If asked to do so and if given reasonable notice, will you agree to appear before this committee in the future and answer any questions that members of the committee might have?

Mr. VOUGHT. I will.

Chairman ENZI. Please be seated. We will now have a chance to hear from you.

**STATEMENT OF RUSSELL T. VOUGHT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET**

Mr. VOUGHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, the ranking member, and the members of this committee for the honor of appearing before this committee.

I also want to thank and introduce my family who has endured this process with me and the long hours that come with serving one's country in a public role. My wife, Mary, is here, and my daughters Ella and Porter. And I am also thrilled that my sisters and many friends could be here in support.

It is a joy to "come home" to the U.S. Senate. I worked the first 4 years of my career in this distinguished body, mostly for Senator Phil Gramm. I spent hours on the Senate floor, in committee, and at my desk, learning how the Senate works its will with great deliberation; how an institution protects the rights of a minority to be heard, and how Statesmen ought to debate their colleagues to move votes and shape public opinion. And it was here that I developed a love for public policy, seeing how it could be used to help the people of this country live freer and better lives.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve as the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget. It is a job that comes with great responsibility, and I am humbled that President Trump and Director Mulvaney have asked me to serve. I know the quality of the men and women who have served previously in this particular role, and I want to contribute to that long line of distinguished public service.

My career has readied me for this moment. I spent over 12 years working in the House and Senate, with a specific emphasis in budget policy. I was the Republican Study Committee's Budget Di-

rector, writing its budget resolution and advising on budget policy. I went on to serve as the RSC's Executive Director and then the Policy Director of the Republican Conference under then-Chairman Mike Pence. All of these roles afforded me an opportunity to handle a wide range of policy issues and manage policy development processes that ensured a wide variety of viewpoints would be heard. That is very much the job of the Deputy Director of OMB: to build and further a policy process that ensures that the President and his advisors receive the best analysis possible so that everyone is heard and the best decision is made.

I also have experience managing a large organization. I spent the last 7 years managing many aspects of Heritage Action for America, including staff and 17,000 volunteers across the country. Volunteers are in fact volunteers. They have their own viewpoints and ideas, and you do not get very far working with them if you do not treat them as leaders in their own right. That experience has prepared me well for managing the men and women of OMB, who are career experts in their fields and have years of institutional knowledge for this administration to draw upon.

As for the job to be done, it is immense. Our country faces a \$20 trillion national debt. It will eventually wreck our country if not addressed. That burden will fall on my children and grandchildren if the current trajectory of spending is not dealt with. It will mean a lower standard of living for them and less time for the truly important things in life as more and more of their salary is consumed by Government. Their families and communities will be weaker, and they may be the first generation that gets a worse deal than their parents. That is not the American way.

I have spent my entire career caring about taxpayers and their families. I have fought to save them money and ensure that their tax dollars were spent well. I come from a blue-collar family. I am the son of an electrician and a public school teacher. I know what they went through to balance their budget. My parents worked really long hours to put me through school. But they also worked long hours to pay for the Government in their lives, and I have often wondered what they would have been free to build and give without such a high burden. My old boss called them the "wagon pullers in our country." Others have referred to them as this country's "forgotten men and women." They have always been my test for Federal spending. Did a particular program or spending increase help the nameless wagon pullers across our country, working hard at their job, trying to provide for their family and future, without the luxury of watching C-SPAN at that very moment to know whether we were increasing their burden? How would they vote? Yea or nay? I believe that as a country we have too often failed that simple test, and it is the reason that we face a \$20 trillion national debt. If the Senate confirms me, I am ready to take up that work again.

Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vought follows:]

Testimony of Russell T. Vought
To Be Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget
June 7, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, the Ranking Member, and the Members of this Committee for the honor of appearing before this committee.

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I have spent my entire career caring about taxpayers and their families. I have fought to save them money and ensure that their tax dollars were spent well. I come from a blue-collar family. I'm the son of an electrician and a school teacher. I know what they went through to balance their budget and save for the future. My parents worked really long hours to put me through school. But they also worked long hours to pay for the government in their lives, and I often have wondered what they would have been free to build and give without such a high burden. My old boss called them the wagon-pullers in our country. Others have referred to them as the country's forgotten men and women. They have always been my test for federal spending. Did a particular program or spending increase help the nameless wagon pullers across our country, working hard at their job, trying to provide for their family and future, without the luxury of watching CSPAN to know that we might be increasing their burden at that very moment? How would they vote? Yay or nay? I believe that as a country we have too often failed that simple test, and it is the reason that we face a \$20 trillion debt that needs to be dealt with. If the Senate confirms me, I am ready to take up that work again.

Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman ENZI. Thank you for your testimony.

Does anybody have any questions about the order we will go in? I will ask questions first, and then you will get to ask questions, and then we will go back and forth, if anybody else shows up over here, we will go in order of appearance at the sound of the gavel.

Thank you for your testimony, and particularly thank you for bringing your family. That is who we do these things for, family. I have some grandkids and I do not want to be embarrassed by questions they might have later of things that I might not have gotten done.

Of course, an important part of the committee's work is budget process reform. There are a lot of good ideas out there on how to reform this process, and one in particular is implementing a biennial budget. I am proud to say that my home State of Wyoming budgets biennially. Most States do. We do not seem to be able to get through the process, so maybe if we did it once every 2 years or divided it into two separate categories of six budgets and six budgets, we might be able to get the job done.

So what are your thoughts on biennial budgeting for the Federal Government? What other budget reforms might you suggest?

Mr. VOUGHT. Thank you, Senator. We very much need to fix our budget process, and it is something I have long been interested in, working on budget process reforms as a congressional staffer.

Biennial budgeting is definitely an idea that is worthy of consideration. I would be very interested in the types of reforms that would ensure that our appropriations process is on a 2-year cycle.

I am worried about not having budgets every year because I would not want to lose the ability to have reform and oversight in those off years. But I think there are ways around that, and to use the second year in a 2-year cycle to do a lot of that oversight. But it is definitely an idea that is worthy of consideration, and if confirmed, I would look forward to working with you on that.

Chairman ENZI. Thank you.

Of course, another important area of the committee's work is trying to grasp the cost of Federal regulations. Private sector studies have estimated this cost could be close to \$2 trillion annually in gross domestic product (GDP). At OMB, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OIRA, is positioned to play an important role in reining in the burdens created by regulations. I posed a similar question to Director Mulvaney at his confirmation, but how do you see OIRA accomplishing the task of reducing the cost of Federal regulations?

Mr. VOUGHT. If confirmed, I would love to work on this issue. It is an enormous priority of this President to reduce the cost of regulation. You see it in some of his initial Executive orders which begin to ask agencies to live under incremental cost growth with regard to new regulations and to begin to reduce the burden of regulatory—reduce the burden of regulations as they are moving forward with new ones. So that is certainly something that I would look forward to, if confirmed, working on with this committee.

Chairman ENZI. One of the things I am particularly concerned about is how many regulations are passed and it is estimated that they have about a \$100 million impact on small business. I will be watching that.

There are many times as Deputy Director when you may disagree with the President. For example, President Trump has called for increasing infrastructure funding, and in the past you have stated that you would be against infrastructure increases. Obviously, nobody agrees 100 percent of the time. How would you approach situations when the administration proposes one policy and you may feel a different policy is preferable? How did you handle this when you worked in the legislative branch?

Mr. VOUGHT. Sure. This President wants people in the room who disagree with him and provide their viewpoints, and so I would continue to do that, and I have done that. I think that as it pertains to the President's budget, it is his budget, and I would go forward and I would be, as I am, supportive of his policies and his agenda.

Chairman ENZI. Thank you.

Now, our current fiscal crisis is caused in large part by mandatory spending. Seventy percent of all the fiscal decisions are made before we get to make any others. This spending is not subject to annual appropriations, and instead the money flows out of the Treasury on autopilot. Mandatory spending continues to consume a larger and larger portion of the money that Treasury collects. In fact, by 2027, mandatory spending will account for 77 percent of all dollars collected by the U.S. Government.

Now that preparation for the President's 2019 budget has already begun, what approach would you suggest for entitlement reform?

Mr. VOUGHT. Well, Senator, it is a very important issue. It is one that this President's budget took very seriously. There is more nominal entitlement reductions than any other President's budget in history. There is more reductions in entitlement spending as a percentage of the base than any President's budget since President Reagan. And so this President's budget takes it seriously, and in 2019, fiscal year 2019, if the Senate confirms me, I would be arguing to continue that trajectory of trying to deal with one of the biggest drivers of our Federal spending problem and our debt in this country.

We have begun the process of balancing our budget. It takes us 10 years to do it, but I think when you start to balance budgets and you start to ensure that there is some parameter for which decisionmaking should exist in, it is a very healthy budget process to regain the concept of balance, and it is something that we are very proud of with regard to this budget that we are able to achieve balance in the last year.

Chairman ENZI. Thank you. My time has expired.

Senator Sanders.

Senator SANDERS. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate making as part of the record a letter from three organizations written together: the Arab American Institute, Bend the Arc Jewish Action, and Muslim Advocates. And I will just read the first—

Chairman ENZI. Without objection.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you.

[The letter follows:]



**BEND THE ARC
jewish action**



June 7, 2017

Dear Senator:

We write to express our deep concerns about the nomination of Russell Vought to the position of Deputy Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Mr. Vought has denigrated American Muslims and the Muslim faith. His writings demonstrate a clear hostility to religious pluralism and freedom that disqualify him for any appointment, including that of deputy director of the OMB.

Earlier this year, Mr. Vought supported the termination of Dr. Larycia Hawkins from Wheaton College because she said that Muslims worship the same God as Christians (a view supported by many religious scholars and leaders of both faiths, including the Pope).

In his argument supporting this termination, Mr. Vought called Islam a “deficient ideology” and claimed that, “Muslims...do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ his Son, and they stand condemned.” This logic also extends to all people who do not concur with Mr. Vought’s personal religious views.

Naming any individual who has seriously denigrated and shown bigotry toward a community, like Mr. Vought has, erodes the nation’s core trust in our institutions and in that appointee’s ability to serve the interests of *all* Americans. For that reason, Mr. Vought has no business in any federal appointment.

The Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget oversees a detailed management agenda integrating the administration’s goals throughout the entire government, from housing finance to the collection of demographic data, including the decennial census. It is improper for the Trump Administration to appoint a person who expresses such views to a position that is so consequential to these communities.

For these reasons, we urge that the nomination of Mr. Vought be rejected.

For questions or concerns you may contact Ryan Suto at AAI (rsuto@aaiusa.org), Arielle Gingold at Bend the Arc (agingold@bendthearc.us), and Naheed Qureshi at Muslim Advocates (naheed@muslimadvocates.org)

Respectfully,

Arab American Institute
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Muslim Advocates

Senator SANDERS. Their letter states, and I quote: "We write to express our deep concerns about the nomination of Russell Vought to the position of Deputy Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget. Mr. Vought has denigrated American Muslims and the Muslim faith. His writings demonstrate a clear hostility to religious pluralism and freedom that disqualify him for any appointment, including that of Deputy Director of the OMB." So for the record.

Let me start off, Mr. Vought, on budget matters. You in your remarks expressed the concern about the national debt, its impact on what you call "wagon pullers," middle-income, working-class people, and that when you make decisions working on budgets, you always try to think of how it will impact those people, how they feel. Will they vote yes or nay? Just kind of paraphrasing what you said.

Do you think that wagon pullers, that middle-class family, that working-class family who today is probably working longer hours for low wages, thinks it is a great idea to give up to a \$52 billion tax break to the Walton family, the wealthiest family in this country, at the same time as your budget makes massive cuts that will impact that very wagon-puller family in terms of Head Start, in terms of Medicaid, in terms of after-school programs for his or her kids? When you wrote that budget, did you have in mind that middle-class person? Do you really think that they think it is a great idea to give up to a \$52 billion tax break to the wealthiest family in this country, a family worth something like \$130 billion?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I think it is an important concept that most American families deal with on a week-to-month basis, which is how do we balance our family budgets. And when they think about what they can spend, I am pretty confident, because I have lived in one, that they think through what they have to spend before they think through what they have—

Senator SANDERS. I understand that. I understand that. I came from a family that maybe had less money than your family. But I am not sure that your family or my family or that average middle-class family thinks it is a great idea to cut nutrition programs or food stamps or Medicaid. Please answer the question. Tell me why you think it is a great idea to give up to a \$52 billion tax break—\$52 billion—to the wealthiest family in America now worth \$130 billion. Tell me that. Why do you think it is a good idea?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I assume you are referring to the repeal of the estate tax.

Senator SANDERS. That is exactly what I am referring to.

Mr. VOUGHT. This administration—and I fully support it—does not think that death should be a taxable event as it pertains to ranches and small businesses and things that a—

Senator SANDERS. All right. Just for the record, I knew that that would be your answer, and it is the answer given over the years. Will you deny that 99.8 percent of the American people will not get a nickel of benefit? That is what all of the studies show. It is for the top two-tenths of 1 percent.

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I do not think that the American people view America that way. I think they view America as a land of opportunity, and that they want to be able to work hard and provide

a future for their children and grandchildren so that someday they may have to—be able to—

Senator SANDERS. OK, thank you. Mr. Vought, I do not mean to be rude. I just have some other questions that I would like to ask you. The bottom line is the administration has nothing to say about the absurdity of providing unbelievable tax breaks to people who do not need it while making major cuts for working families.

Let me get to this issue that has bothered me and bothered many other people, and that is in the piece that I referred to that you wrote for a publication called Resurgent. You wrote: “Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned.”

Do you believe that that statement is Islamophobic?

Mr. VOUGHT. Absolutely not, Senator. I am a Christian, and I believe in a Christian set of principles based on my faith. That post, as I stated in the questionnaire to this committee, was to defend my alma mater, Wheaton College, a Christian school that has a statement of faith that includes the centrality of Jesus Christ for salvation, and—

Senator SANDERS. Again, I apologize. Forgive me. We just do not have a lot of time. Do you believe that people in the Muslim religion stand condemned? Is that your view?

Mr. VOUGHT. Again, Senator, I am a Christian, and I wrote that piece—

Senator SANDERS. Well, what does that say—

Mr. VOUGHT [continuing]. In accordance with the statement of faith of Wheaton College.

Senator SANDERS. I understand that. I do not know how many Muslims there are in America. I really do not know, probably a couple million. Are you suggesting that all of those people stand condemned? What about Jews? Do they stand condemned, too?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I am a Christian. I—

Senator SANDERS. I understand you are a Christian, but this country is made up of people who are not just—I understand that Christianity is the majority religion, but there are other people of different religions in this country and around the world. In your judgment, do you think that people who are not Christians are going to be condemned?

Mr. VOUGHT. Thank you for probing on that question. As a Christian, I believe that all individuals are made in the image of God and are worthy of dignity and respect regardless of their religious beliefs. I believe that as a Christian that is how I should treat all individuals—

Senator SANDERS. And do you think your statement that you put into that publication, “They do not know God because they rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned,” do you think that is respectful of other religions?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I wrote a post based on being a Christian and attending a Christian school that has a statement of faith that speaks clearly with regard to the centrality of Jesus Christ in salvation.

Senator SANDERS. I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, that this nominee is really not someone who is what this country is supposed to be about. I will vote no.

Chairman ENZI. Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To my colleagues on the Senate committee, I hope that we are not questioning the faith of others and how they interpret their faith to themselves.

Thank you for your willingness to serve our country. Mr. Vought, as I travel the State of Colorado, I hear a lot of small business owners who are struggling with Government regulations, Federal regulations, and perhaps a Congress that would like to tell people how to think and what to do. So I guess I would just like to hear from you perhaps ways that we can reduce regulatory burdens and how we can move forward with letting people live the lives the way they hope to live their lives, to run their businesses the way they hope to, without a Government deciding they can do it better for themselves.

Mr. VOUGHT. Thank you, Senator, Gardner. There are a lot of initiatives that this administration has begun to reduce the burden of regulation in this country. There has been a number of Executive orders regarding ensuring that there are two regulations removed for every new one. There is a lot of emphasis being done right now to make sure that the retrospective reviews that have been going on since the Carter administration are taken seriously and used as part of that process.

There is a series of Executive orders that are designed to ask various agencies to go back and take a separate look at a number of the regulations from prior administrations that increased the costs on society.

And then I think there is some statutory proposals that are worth considering. The REINS Act is one. I know Congress is working on a number of these kinds of regulatory proposals to improve the process, and it is something, if confirmed, I would love to continue working on.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Vought. One of the proposals that I have been working on with Senator Lee is legislation that would try to reduce the number of excessive regulations. It talks about if you are going to increase the national debt limit, which this country must address its debt crisis, it would require Congress to enact legislation to reduce Federal regulatory costs by at least 15 percent of the amount of the debt limit increase. Maybe that is the right number, maybe that is the wrong number, but at least it gets this country focused on the fact that if you are going to increase the debt burden on the next generation of this country, then you have to do something to spur economic activity to get more generation of revenue to the Federal Government. And one of the ways we know we can do that is through debt regulation—excuse me, debt reduction, debt—excuse me, regulatory elimination and eliminations of unnecessary regulations.

Just talking a little bit about energy savings performance contracts. We have had some pretty great successes at the Office of Management and Budget with energy savings performance contracts over the past several years, bipartisan successes, both Re-

publicans and Democrats who have pursued performance contracting tools that save taxpayer dollars by leveraging private sector know-how, resources to make energy upgrades to Federal buildings and thereby lowering energy costs. Performance contracts have delivered around \$12 billion of privately financed improvements in Federal Government buildings over the last 20 years, and that is without incurring any up-front capital costs or any special appropriation by Congress. And so bipartisan support in the House and Senate exists for the Federal Government to do more in this area.

Do you agree that we should expand programs that leverage private dollars like this to deliver taxpayer energy savings to the Federal Government?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I really enjoyed when you and I discussed this issue in your office and the potential that it has to save taxpayers money, and if confirmed, I would like to look into it a little bit more and see the ways that it is being done well and ways that we can improve them and to get back to you with how we could go forward.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, and thank you to your family as well for your willingness to serve this country.

Mr. VOUGHT. Thank you.

Chairman ENZI. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the witness and your family for being here.

I do have to say, Senator Gardner, I do not think anybody was questioning anybody's faith here. I think the issue that Senator Sanders was raising was whether the nominee was questioning the faith of others, and he quoted the nominee saying, and I am quoting again: "Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, and they stand condemned."

So nobody is questioning your faith. The issue is you are now moving from a position where you were a staff member in the Republican Study Committee to somebody who is supposed to uphold the public trust for the whole country. And I think it is irrefutable that these kind of comments suggest to a whole lot of Americans that, No. 1, their religious philosophy is deficient, and in condemning them because they have rejected Jesus Christ, His Son, you are condemning people of all faiths other than Christians.

I am a Christian, but part of being a Christian, in my view, is recognizing that there are lots of ways that people can pursue their God. So no one is questioning your faith, Mr. Chairman. It is your comments that suggest a violation of the public trust in what will be a very important position.

Let me just read another statement that you made with respect to infrastructure, kind of sort of a garden variety expenditure here: "All of us want better roads and bridges, but conservatives have long championed devolving the highway program to the States to collect and spend gas tax revenues as they see fit." That is fine.

Then you go on to talk about some of the Federal highway programs, and you state, "It is great that Republicans are proposing to consolidate programs, but rationalizing transportation policy while growing Government at an unaffordable pace harms the

country. In short, it may be the difference between Chinese communism and Soviet communism, but it is still communism.” Something you said to *Red State* in January 2012.

My question is pretty simple: We are a democracy. This Congress, Republicans and Democrats, have passed legislation for Federal highway projects and other transportation projects. Just explain to me how that is communism.

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, do you have that post that I could actually read right now?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I would be happy to provide it to you, and apparently you responded to it in the course of responding to some of the committee comments, I believe. In fact, I see someone nodding yes. But I would be happy to provide it to you.

Mr. VOUGHT. Happy to take a look at that. With regard to infrastructure spending—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, my question is really simple. How is it—

Mr. VOUGHT. I would like—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, unfortunately, I do not get to expand my time. My question is really simple. How is it in a democratically elected institution where we decided to invest Federal taxpayer dollars in infrastructure projects, just tell me how that is communism.

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, with regard to infrastructure spending, I have always been someone who supports roads and bridges that work for the American people.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. That is not my question. My question is much more simple. We can have a difference of views about whether the Federal Government spends taxpayer dollars for infrastructure or whether we should send all that money to the States for that decision. We can disagree on that. My question is: How is that communism?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I would like to see the post that you are referring to.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I would be happy to provide it to you, and then I would like an answer in writing, because there is a history here of not just disagreement. We have big disagreements in this Congress. But it is making comments like that and the comment you made with respect to people of the Muslim faith or other faiths that lead people to question whether you can fairly sort of execute the public trust.

[The referenced information was not provided at press time.]

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Let me ask you about the deficit and debt, and I am not going to go into detail. We had this conversation with Director Mulvaney. But anybody who claims that this budget that was proposed actually balances on any kind of credible assumptions is smoking something. I mean, it is pure—it is pure Enron accounting to pretend that this budget balances at 10 years given all the things you have put in there and your growth assumptions, which have been refuted by everybody. We would all like to see that kind of growth. But nobody has put forward, unless you know the Trump administration has put forward, a credible set of policies showing how we are going to get there.

Here is my question: I agree with you that we have large deficits and debt. You mentioned the bill that will be passed to your children. You are also aware, I am assuming because you have done budgets a long time, that the largest category of spending, according to the Congressional Budget Office, is what they call tax expenditures. Is that right?

Mr. VOUGHT. It is a large portion of the Federal Government, correct.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So it is actually larger on an annual basis than what we spend on Social Security. Tax expenditures are larger on an annual basis than what we spend on Medicare. And a lot of them are there because some powerful special interest group got to Congress and got themselves a break that was not enjoyed by ordinary Americans.

So my question to you is: If you believe so strongly that we should be reducing the deficit and the debt, which we should, are you willing to eliminate any of those tax breaks for the purpose of reducing the deficit and debt?

Mr. VOUGHT. Well, thank you, Senator. One of the ways that we have been—this administration has been criticized for this budget is the notion that we are double counting when we are not. The tax bill itself is meant to be deficit neutral.

Now, the policy development process is in an early stage, and we cannot be specific about how the guidelines that Secretary Mnuchin and Director Cohen put forward—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I am sorry. I think you misunderstood my question. I am not asking whether your tax bill is deficit neutral. I am asking whether you would support closing a single tax break for the purpose of reducing the national deficit and debt.

Mr. VOUGHT. I would for the purpose of cutting taxes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. You would be in favor of cutting taxes for—oh, for eliminating loopholes to create—to cut taxes for others, but not to reduce the deficit or debt, which, as you pointed out, is a big issue. That is not part—

Mr. VOUGHT. A deficit-neutral tax bill—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. That is not what I am asking.

Mr. VOUGHT [continuing]. Economic growth—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Would you be prepared to reduce the deficit and debt by cutting a single tax break? And, you know, Mr. Mulvaney answered no.

Mr. VOUGHT. No.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Clearly, your answer is no, too.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENZI. Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to the committee. Franklin Roosevelt said that the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, but whether we do enough for those who have little. And, certainly, the effort has been made to build a ladder of opportunity so families can go up that ladder and thrive.

Do you agree with Franklin Roosevelt's analysis, his test of our progress?

Mr. VOUGHT. The test being that a notion of progress in this country is the ladder of opportunity provided to all Americans? Yes, that is——

Senator MERKLEY. As opposed to giving more to those who have the most.

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I think that America stands for the principle of allowing all people, those at all scales of income, to be able to pursue their happiness. And I would not phrase the American dream in categories of rich versus poor. I would frame it in the category of a broad ladder that allows rules of the game that allow all Americans to move up that ladder with hard work and a good idea.

Senator MERKLEY. So the budget that has been proposed eliminates 4,000 housing vouchers for low-income American families. We are actually in a state of emergency in affordable housing in Portland and some of the other parts of the State. Does that meet the test of strengthening the ladder of opportunity? Just yes or no.

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, with regard to affordable housing, this budget was very careful to ensure that no one currently receiving——

Senator MERKLEY. I am asking a specific question. You can address some other group on your desire, but I am asking if eliminating these housing vouchers for Oregon and similar quantities around the country strengthens or weakens opportunity for struggling families.

Mr. VOUGHT. One of the ways that this budget was put together, Senator, was to ensure that——

Senator MERKLEY. I am not interested in the way it was put together. I am asking whether this program being eliminated strengthens or weakens opportunity for struggling families.

Mr. VOUGHT. I appreciate it, Senator. I am just trying to answer your question.

Senator MERKLEY. You are not answering it.

Mr. VOUGHT. In terms of decreasing dependency on Federal programs such as this, this budget takes steps to ensure that the housing programs that we have really do meet the needs of those who need them, but as it pertains to ensuring that families that can pay a little bit more and get themselves off of affordable housing——

Senator MERKLEY. OK. Can you give me the short version to my final—to my other questions, because you have taken 2½ minutes not to answer my first one. Do you believe that eliminating heating assistance in the LIHEAP program strengthens opportunity for struggling families?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I think it is important not to waste taxpayer dollars——

Senator MERKLEY. OK, just—so you are saying yes, you think it strengthens, right? Because that is—you are just doing a long way of getting to yes, you support eliminating this program as something positive for struggling families.

Mr. VOUGHT. Well, it is a nuanced answer because the program does not work well and has a high rate of——

Senator MERKLEY. OK. Let us continue. Does eliminating nutrition assistance for 13,400 pregnant women, new moms, babies, and

toddlers in Oregon by cutting the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program and doing similar across the country strengthen or weaken opportunity for struggling families?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I do not think that is a fair characterization of the budget. There is no intent to cut WIC spending in this budget. In terms of timing when we set the budget, it was—we had not had a—

Senator MERKLEY. But it does lower—it does lower it.

Mr. VOUGHT. We had not finalized—

Senator MERKLEY. Do you intend to modify it then if you are using the excuse of time? Do you plan to change it?

Mr. VOUGHT. The omnibus bill had not passed.

Senator MERKLEY. Do you support changing the budget to accommodate the fact that you did not take that into account?

Mr. VOUGHT. We support working with Congress to ensure that there is no WIC cutting, WIC funding loss.

Senator MERKLEY. So you do intend to change the budget?

Mr. VOUGHT. We look forward—

Senator MERKLEY. Can you give us a—

Mr. VOUGHT [continuing]. To working with Congress to ensure that WIC has all of the necessary spending that it needs.

Senator MERKLEY. Does giving away, in the general outlines of the President's tax proposal, about \$6 trillion mostly to the richest Americans strengthen opportunity for struggling families?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I think the tax bill will lead to economic growth that will get people working again, and we have about 6 million people in this country that had previously been working and, unfortunately, cannot find jobs. And we want to change that.

Senator MERKLEY. Does eliminating health care immediately for 14 million individuals and an estimated 23 million families strengthen opportunity for working families?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, we do not think that is a fair characterization of the American Health Care Act (AHCA).

Senator MERKLEY. OK. What is your estimate of the number that will be eliminated?

Mr. VOUGHT. We have not provided an estimate yet.

Senator MERKLEY. So why do you support it if you do not have an estimate?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, because we think that it goes to the heart of the problems with Obamacare as we know it right now, which is doubling the premiums across the country. Counties—I am sure you have many in your own state that do not have the ability to have options for health insurance plans. These are all things that need immediate answers to, and we are going to have to continue to studying the best analysis we can going forward.

Senator MERKLEY. You are aware that the actions of the administration are undermining the success of the exchanges, both by eliminating reinsurance, which prevents companies from entering new markets, and that by withholding cost-sharing payments or the certainty of cost sharing, companies are choosing to leave the market, and that was the issue cited by Anthem today, and that by failing to spend the money for advertising in the last period for sign-ups, the administration undercut the successful, if you will, final sign-up period, that these actions are deliberately designed to

destroy the exchanges, which was a plan that came from conservative think tanks? Are you aware of all that?

Mr. VOUGHT. I do not think that is a fair characterization——

Senator MERKLEY. Oh, I think it is——

Mr. VOUGHT [continuing]. Of the administration's actions.

Senator MERKLEY [continuing]. Extremely fair, and my time is up. Thank you.

Chairman ENZI. Senator Harris.

Senator HARRIS. Thank you.

Last week, the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) released an opinion that executive branch agencies have no legal obligation to respond to congressional requests for information from individual members, including Ranking and minority lawmakers. Are you familiar with that?

Mr. VOUGHT. I am familiar with it. I have not read it, though.

Senator HARRIS. Have you in any way been asked or directed by the White House or any agency official to limit your responses in any way to requests from Democratic lawmakers?

Mr. VOUGHT. The administration has taken the view based on OLC's opinion that, with regard to certain types of oversight requests, they should go through the committee chairmen, and with regard to Director Mulvaney, we are taking that position as well. But it is something I look forward to talking with him about, if confirmed.

Senator HARRIS. Are you aware of any chairmen of any committees that have directed that you not respond to the requests from Democratic lawmakers?

Mr. VOUGHT. From committee chairmen? No, I am not aware of that.

Senator HARRIS. Are you aware of any direction from anyone that you not respond or that agencies do not respond to requests from Democratic lawmakers?

Mr. VOUGHT. Again, other than what I have said in terms of trying to make sure that we abide by the memorandum of OLC to have certain types of formal oversight requests go through the committee chairmen, no, I am not aware of that.

Senator HARRIS. And if you were to become aware of it, what do you believe your responsibility would be?

Mr. VOUGHT. Well, like I said previously to the committee this morning was that I intend to work in an open and transparent way with all Members of Congress and to look for ways that we can oversee the Federal Government to find ways to do things better, and when I do that, I will be looking to advice from our legal team. But I want to be as transparent and open in working with this committee as possible.

Senator HARRIS. Do you believe you have a legal obligation to respond to Members of the U.S. Congress when they ask about the work you do in your official capacity, if confirmed?

Mr. VOUGHT. I have already said to this committee that I would come and testify for any reason with regard to the decisions that are made publicly at OMB. In terms of——

Senator HARRIS. But if questions have been submitted to you, questions for the record?

Mr. VOUGHT. I think that the OLC memo—and I have not read it—pertains to whether the administration is obligated or not. That does not get to the discretion that is involved with responding to oversight requests and trying to work with Congress in an open and transparent process.

Senator HARRIS. So my question is: Do you believe you have a legal obligation to respond? Is your answer yes?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I would have to go and understand further the OLC opinion to know what obligations I would be subject to. That said, there is a reason why I am consulting the legal team so that I can make sure that I comply with all obligations under the law and this committee.

Senator HARRIS. Do you believe you have an ethical and professional responsibility to respond?

Mr. VOUGHT. Again, I want to work on an open and transparent way with this committee, and I think it is vital for the effective working of this—of oversight in the Congress.

Senator HARRIS. I understand that you were involved in the production of the President's skinny budget. Is that correct?

Mr. VOUGHT. One of my jobs as a member of the beachhead team was help compile options for the President and the Director to decide upon, yes.

Senator HARRIS. So the budget you helped draft cuts the Department of Labor by \$2.5 billion and the workforce training budget by \$1.3 billion at a time when there has been a number of major disruptions in our labor force. We have had that discussion in this committee. And so my question to you is that the budget that you have helped draft includes a 21 percent cut to the Department of Labor with a 40 percent cut to workforce training. How do you propose that the American worker receive the type of assistance she and he need to be able to transition into the economy of the 21st century when you have drastically cut the budget that was intended to help them make that transition so they can take on the jobs that need to be performed?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, one of the assumptions in this budget is that the best way to get people working is to get the economy growing, and that the best job training program is a job in the private sector. And so one of the things that this budget is trying to do is to say we need to get the country growing again at 3 percent and to bring 6 million people back into the labor force with the jobs.

Senator HARRIS. Yes, but would you agree that—that is fine to say that we want to create jobs, but if the workforce does not have the skills to perform those jobs, then those jobs will be left empty and Americans will be left jobless. Do you understand the analysis there?

Mr. VOUGHT. I do, and the second part of my comments that I was trying to get to was that, to the extent that we think that there are job training programs that work well, this administration wants to fund them. So, for instance, we increase spending on apprenticeships because we had evidence that that particular program worked well. We have less evidence as it pertains to many of the other kind of core job training programs and their effectiveness. Oftentimes people do not actually improve their employment prospects after going through those job training programs, and we

find that problematic. And in an era of scarce resources and deficits, we can no longer spend money on programs that do not work.

Senator HARRIS. My time has expired. Thank you.

Chairman ENZI. Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Vought.

When the House and the Senate reached a budget deal at the end of April, the President tweeted out a couple of days later some dissatisfaction with it and said it may be time for a “good shutdown in September.” That is the quote, “good shutdown.”

Do you believe a shutdown of the United States is or can be good—of the Government of the United States is or can be good under any circumstances?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I think it is important that we get out of the business of Government shutdowns, that we consider budget process reforms that put us on a situation where we have automatic continuing resolutions. Senator Portman has proposed legislation along these lines—I am not sure if you have taken a look at them—to be able to move the brinkmanship from the end-of-the-year appropriations process. The budget process is broken.

Senator Kaine. So you will agree with me that there is no such thing as a good shutdown of the Government of the United States?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I want to be very clear in terms of the appropriations process is broken right now, and to the—

Senator Kaine. I am asking you a very simple question. You are up for a position in the Office of Management and Budget of the Government of the United States, and I want to know your opinion as to whether there could ever be a good shutdown of the Government of the United States, in your opinion.

Mr. VOUGHT. My opinion tracks with the Director’s opinion that a Government shutdown that came from an ability to get out of the level of brinkmanship that we currently find ourselves in in the appropriations process would not necessarily be a bad one. That said, Government shutdowns are—

Senator Kaine. So you could foresee some circumstances where you think a Government shutdown would be good or would not necessarily be bad?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, right now you have an appropriations process in which—

Senator Kaine. I am just—I am real simple. I know the process, do not have to explain it to me.

Mr. VOUGHT. No, I understand that. I am not—

Senator Kaine. President Lincoln, the founder of your party, said he wanted to know whether Government by, of, and for the people shall continue to exist on the Earth. That was what his Gettysburg Address said. I do not think the Government should be shut down, of this Nation, for a week, for a month, for a year, for an hour, for a second. And I want to know whether you see any circumstance under which a Government shutdown would be good, as President Trump called for.

Mr. VOUGHT. I am not—

Senator Kaine. Because I will tell you, if you leave the door open that a shutdown would be good, I am voting against you. I am going to vote against anybody for a budget and management posi-

tion who cannot repudiate the notion that shutting the Government down is a very, very bad thing. If you think it could be a good thing, that is your opinion. You are not going to get my vote.

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, the appropriations process is broke, and we have a House and a Senate——

Senator KAINE. Let me ask it this way: I think any shutdown of the Government of the United States is a horrible thing. Do you agree with me?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, it depends on the level of——

Senator KAINE. All right. You do not agree with me.

Mr. VOUGHT [continuing]. And who shuts the Government down. It is not the President of the United States.

Senator KAINE. But it depends. So shutting the Government of the greatest Nation on Earth down could be OK. It could be fine.

Mr. VOUGHT. If Congress does not continue to send bills that meet the President's expectations for what he would sign and——

Senator KAINE. It is better for the Government of the United States to be shut down.

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, the appropriations process——

Senator KAINE. I mean, that is the implication.

Mr. VOUGHT [continuing]. Is broken.

Senator KAINE. It may be broken, but you should shut the Government of this country down—we are in year 230 of the Constitution written by Madison and others in Philadelphia in September of 1787. You want to be at the Office of Management and Budget, but you will not tell me that shutdown is a bad thing. That is an extremely telling admission. That is an extremely telling admission.

The last thing I am going to ask you is this: Your testimony talks about your parents. I think this is interesting, your written testimony: “I often have wondered what they would have been free to build and give without such a high burden.” The previous sentence is: “My parents worked really long hours to put me through school. But they also worked long hours to pay for the Government in their lives, and I often have wondered what they would have been free to build and give without such a high burden.” Is that how you see the Government of the United States?

Mr. VOUGHT. I do see the Government of the United States as a good thing that protects our rights as citizens to life——

Senator KAINE. I do not see that in your testimony.

Mr. VOUGHT [continuing]. And the pursuit of happiness. That said, we have an excessively large Federal Government. Right now, we spend \$4.6 trillion——

Senator KAINE. I mean, the thing that is interesting is I do not see anything in here about the Government that is good. Wasn't your mom a school teacher?

Mr. VOUGHT. She was, Senator.

Senator KAINE. And was she a public school teacher?

Mr. VOUGHT. For a portion of her time, yes.

Senator KAINE. So that was government, right? Some local government. Some people, including people who did not kids, were paying taxes to hire your mom to teach kids, and you went through the public schools, right?

Mr. VOUGHT. I did not.

Senator KAINE. So at no point along the way were you a public school student?

Mr. VOUGHT. I was not, Senator.

Senator KAINE. But your mom was being paid. So when you talk about the high burden that your parents experienced to pay taxes, some of those taxes that were being paid were to pay your mom to do a very honorable job, teaching kids in public schools.

Mr. VOUGHT. It was certainly honorable and it is not—

Senator KAINE. I give credit to her and all teachers.

Mr. VOUGHT. I am not here to say that there is not a role for Government. Please do not misread what I said in my testimony. I am saying that to the extent that our Government is excessively large and we spend \$4.6 trillion at the Federal, State, and local level that happens to track with the amount that Americans pay for food, clothing, and shelter, I think that is imbalanced.

Senator KAINE. It is a matter of emphasis, and I would agree there are problems, too. We might have the opportunity to work on some of them. But when the lead argument about your folks is worrying about the high burden that they had to pay because of the Government of this country and your mom was a public school teacher and you could not find anything else good to say about Government in here, I think that is very telling.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman ENZI. Senator Stabenow.

Senator STABENOW. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome. You are here at a very, very difficult time, as you know, a lot of very serious things in front of us, and let me first say that also in your testimony you talk on a number of occasions about the current national debt, \$20 trillion national debt. The President has proposed a tax cut geared to the wealthiest Americans, sort of hoping it will trickle down to everybody else. But that is at least \$5.5 trillion in costs not paid for, so I assume that it would add at least \$5.5 trillion to the national debt. Do you think that is a good idea?

Mr. VOUGHT. Senator, I do not think that is a fair characterization of what the President has put forward in his guidelines for tax reform. Some of those numbers that you mentioned are various outside groups that have scored various aspects of the proposal that is still in the policy development process.

Senator STABENOW. Well, how much do you think adding to the debt is a good idea? I mean, \$3 trillion, \$4 trillion? Five? I am not sure what his—

Mr. VOUGHT. The President's budget assumes a deficit-neutral tax reform bill, that any reductions in revenues from rate cuts or repealing the estate tax would come from broadening the base, eliminating special interest tax provisions, and getting rid of those types of provisions in the code.

Senator STABENOW. We have not seen this happen before in our history, these kinds of proposals. But let me move on.

Let me talk about another part of the benefit of being an American and driving on the roads, water systems, infrastructure, and the American Society of Civil Engineers has given America's infrastructure a D-plus rating. And so when we look at the President's budget, I have a lot of concerns. I guess I would start by asking

if you value and if the administration values rural communities and the infrastructure in rural communities.

Mr. VOUGHT. The administration certainly values rural communities.

Senator STABENOW. Well, let me ask why, then, the entire Rural Development Water and Sewer Program is eliminated in the President's budget, the support for small airports is eliminated, so all the small towns in northern Michigan that get two flights a day, you know, in and out of the major cities that allow people to be able to travel and do business and be involved in visiting our beautiful rural Michigan is eliminated. I mean, that is infrastructure. And we also have a situation where what is being proposed for the way to fund infrastructure, as I understand it, in the President's infrastructure proposal is basically to turn most of the funding for that over to Wall Street investors or maybe a foreign country wants to buy a road, maybe Saudi Arabia wants to buy a road. You know, the President talks about buy America, hire America. How about owning America?

But all of this adds up to a situation where the little town where I grew up in northern Michigan is going to lose if we are eliminating water and sewer, if we are eliminating support for small airports. I do not see any major Wall Street investors being willing to invest in the water and sewer system in Clare, where I grew up, or the roads going up to the Upper Peninsula. So what do you tell people in rural Michigan about this budget and what it says about support for the quality of life in their communities?

Mr. VOUGHT. Thank you, Senator. A couple things.

First, it stands for the proposition that the best thing that can happen for people in rural America is having an economy that is growing again. But let me get to the specifics that you brought up.

With regard to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Infrastructure Program, that is a program that predates the State revolving funds at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). And even though EPA saw serious reductions in this budget, one of the things that we protected was the State revolving funds because we think those are so crucial for the very types of water and sewage infrastructure that you are talking about.

With regard to essential air service, that is a program that consistently gets on every Government Accountability Office (GAO) report about programs that do not work, that have high subsidy costs per flight, flights are empty because no one is on them to fill them. So we eliminate the discretionary portion of that program, but we retain a portion for mandatory for rural areas, specifically to address communities like your own.

Senator STABENOW. Well, let me say, first of all, I would love to have you take a flight with me when I am flying up to Marquette or Alpena or Traverse City on full flights, and it is very important. And when you are flying all the way up to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, those flights are absolutely critical to connect businesses, hospitals, educators, citizens to the lower part of our State as well as across the country.

But let me just stress one more time: What you are doing at EPA is not going to take the place of the Rural Development Water and Sewer Program which serves about 20 million people in our coun-

try. I can take you to every part of Michigan, and you will see efforts that have gone on that have created quality of life, clean water, roads, small businesses as a result of programs that are being eliminated in this budget.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENZI. Thank you.

Senator Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Vought, how are you?

Mr. VOUGHT. Good, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. How big is the national debt?

Mr. VOUGHT. \$20 trillion.

Senator KENNEDY. So that would be \$2,000 billion. Is that right? How long would it take me to count to a billion, do you think?

Mr. VOUGHT. Quite some time.

Senator KENNEDY. I did the math before I came. If I counted to a billion one numeral a second, it would take me until 2047. Doesn't that just take your breath away?

Mr. VOUGHT. It does, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. Now, how did we run up \$20 trillion worth of debt?

Mr. VOUGHT. Well, Senator, I think we got to that place by no longer considering about the constraints or what we have to spend when we had the same conversation about what we need to spend on, when we lost the connection between the two, like every other family in this country, which is they say we are going to figure out what we are going to spend and it is going to be based on what we have to take in, what our salaries are, what other income resources we have, I think that is when we went off the rails from a fiscal standpoint.

Senator KENNEDY. I think we got—and I agree with your analysis. I think of it in terms that are a bit simpler. Every year we have been spending more than we take in, and we borrow money to fill the hole. Right?

Mr. VOUGHT. Correct.

Senator KENNEDY. And those deficits, those annual deficits, accumulate and we end up with \$20 trillion worth of national debt that my son and my grandson, if I have one, and his children are going to have to pay off.

How would it work in your family if you just took your credit card and every month you and your better half just charged whatever you wanted to and never worried about paying it back? How long could you survive?

Mr. VOUGHT. Not very long.

Senator KENNEDY. Have you ever seen a nation spend itself into prosperity?

Mr. VOUGHT. No, sir. And, in fact, I think the historical record is that nations that spend themselves into debt situations go by the wayside.

Senator KENNEDY. I have not been here very long, but it seems to me there are sort of two groupings of people around Congress.

There is one group that believes that Government can spend your money better than you can and Government knows better than you do, and if you just give enough of your money to Govern-

ment and listen to them, do what they say, they know what is best for you and your family.

And there is another group that believes that people can spend their money better than the Federal Government can.

Which group do you belong in?

Mr. VOUGHT. I believe families and local communities can spend their money far better than politicians can in DC.

Senator KENNEDY. Because that is what I see developing in Washington, and it is not a Republican versus Democrat thing. I think there are some Republicans that may disagree with what I say, and there are some Democrats, my friends on the other side, that may agree. But there are basically two groups of people now. There are people who believe in more freedom and more free stuff, and we cannot afford all the free stuff we have. And it upsets me when people say, well, the American people, they just do not want to help folks who are not as well off as they are when we are spending \$1 trillion a year in state and local social programs.

In this country, if you are hungry, we feed you. If you are homeless, we house you. If you are too poor to be sick, we will pay for your doctor. But we have to be mindful of the budget. And I want you to take a message back to the Director for me.

First, I want to congratulate you on your service in Government. You have an extraordinary resume. And I want you to take a message back to the Director after you are confirmed. I want you to tell him—thank him. Thank him for trying to get the spending under control. Thank him for admitting what is obvious to any reasonable American, and that is that there are billions of dollars worth of waste in this budget, and help him get rid of it.

Mr. VOUGHT. Thank you for that, for your kind words, and I will certainly put that message back to the Director.

Senator KENNEDY. And I am going to get gaveled, but be aware, there are some people around here that are just going to hate you because you were nominated by a President they do not like or because you are standing in their way to spend every single dime that the taxpayer has and then they want to go hunting for more. So do not expect to be popular. But I know you know that.

Mr. VOUGHT. I look forward to treating all people with dignity and respect, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. I know you will. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ENZI. Thank you. I want to thank Mr. Vought for appearing before the committee today. Your full statement will be included in the record.

I also want to thank you for bringing your family and want to congratulate them on their extreme patience. I know this is the second hearing today, not the first, and afternoons sometimes get a little long. But I wish we had this kind of entertainment at all of our hearings.

[Laughter.]

Chairman ENZI. I look forward to watching as they grow up.

As information to all Senators, questions for the record are due by 12 p.m. tomorrow, with signed hard copies to be delivered to the committee clerk in Dirksen 624. That is in response to some who

think that they might like to have additional questions or have more specificity.

Under the rules, Mr. Vought, you will have 7 days from receipt of our questions to respond with the answers, which fits with the oath that you took at the beginning, and I think you actually answered some of the questions that you got.

So with no further business, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:43 p.m., the committee was adjourned. Additional materials submitted for the record follow.]

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
ROOM SD-624
(202) 224-0642

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510-6250

**STATEMENT OF BIOGRAPHICAL AND
FINANCIAL INFORMATION REQUESTED OF
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES**

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. **Name:**
Russell Thurlow Vought
2. **Position to which nominated:**
Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget
3. **Date of nomination:**
April 7, 2017 (intent to nominate)
4. **Address:** (List current place of residence and office addresses, information will not be made available for public inspection.)
(REDACTED)
5. **Date and place of birth:**
3/26/76 (Mount Vernon, NY)
6. **Marital status:** (Include name of spouse.)
(REDACTED)
7. **Names and ages of children:** (information will not be made available for public inspection)
(REDACTED)
8. **Education:** List secondary and higher education institutions, dates attended, degree received and date degree granted.
The George Washington University Law School, September 2000-May 2004, JD, 5/23/04
Wheaton College, September 1994-May 1998, BA, 8/31/98

9. **Employment record:** List all jobs held since college, including the title or description of job, name of employer, location of work, and dates of employment. (Please use separate attachment, if necessary.)
- Office of Management and Budget (Jan 2017-present)
 Team Member/ Senior Advisor
 Washington, DC
- Heritage Action for America (Aug. 2010-Jan. 2017)
 Vice President, Grassroots Outreach & Policy Initiatives
 Washington, DC
- House Republican Conference (Jan. 2009-Jul. 2010)
 Policy Director
 Washington, DC
- Republican Study Committee (May 2004-Dec. 2008)
 Executive Director (most recent)
 Washington, DC
- Rep. Jeb Hensarling (Feb. 2003-Dec. 2006)
 Policy Director
 Washington, DC
- Senator Chuck Hagel (Sep. 2002-Jan. 2003)
 Legislative Assistant
 Washington, DC
- Senator Phil Gramm (Jan. 1999-Aug. 2002)
 Legislative Assistant (most recent)
 Washington, DC
- B. Dalton Bookseller (Sep. 1998-Dec. 1998)
 Book Seller
 Washington, DC
- Senator Dan Coats (Jul. 1998 Est-Dec. 1998)
 Staff Assistant (most recent)
 Washington, DC
- Rep. Chris Shays (May 1998-Jul. 1998)
 Intern
 Washington, DC
10. **Government experience:** List any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions with federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above.
- None
11. **Business relationships:** List all positions currently or formerly held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise, educational or other institution.
- None
12. **Memberships:** List all memberships and offices currently or formerly held in professional, business, fraternal, scholarly, civic, public, charitable and other organizations.

Cherrydale Baptist Church, Member, Elder, and Deacon (2011-Present)
 Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Member (2002-2011)

13. **Political affiliations and activities:**

- (a) List all offices with a political party which you have held or any public office for which you have been a candidate.

None

- (b) List all memberships and offices held in and services rendered to all political parties or election committees during the last 10 years.

None

- (c) Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$50 or more for the past 5 years.

Cordasco for Delegate, \$300 (2016)
 Cordasco for James City Supervisor, \$200 (2015)
 Scalley for Delegate, \$200 (2014)
 Mike Lee (via Senate Conservative Fund), \$100 (2015)

14. **Honors and awards:** List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals and any other special recognitions for outstanding service or achievements.

The Heritage Foundation Leadership Development Program, 2016
 Lincoln Fellowship, The Claremont Institute, 2011
 Kingsmen Alumni Award, Christian Heritage School, 2007

15. **Published writings:** List the titles, publishers, and dates of books, articles, reports, or other published materials which you have written.

- RedState: House Republicans Need A Bold Spending Proposal
 August 2, 2010
- RedState: Time To Go After Democrats On Repeal Of Obamacare
 August 3, 2010
- RedState: "Historic" And "Bipartisan" Normally Means It's Bad
 August 9, 2010
- RedState: Walt Minnick Is Not Willing To Repeal Obamacare
 August 9, 2010
- RedState: Senate Republicans Getting Played On The Russian-Friendly Strategic Arms Treaty
 August 16, 2010
- RedState: Congress Needs Reforms, But Committees Don't Need More Power
 September 6, 2010
- RedState: Only 31 House Democrats Willing To Offer Soft Support For Small Businesses
 September 16, 2010

- [RedState: Who Dares To Be The Next Democrat Defection On Obamacare Repeal?](#)
September 16, 2010
- [RedState: Senator Bob Corker. Unacceptable.](#)
September 17, 2010
- [RedState: Idaho Congressman Misleads Constituents On Repeal...Again](#)
September 29, 2010
- [RedState: It's Time To Make GOP Leadership Less Powerful](#)
October 26, 2010
- [RedState: Mike Pence Is Ready For The Next Fight](#)
November 3, 2010
- [RedState: Senate Republicans Must Not Use National Security As A Bargaining Chit](#)
December 1, 2010
- [RedState: Bowles-Simpson Is A Massive Tax Hike](#)
December 2, 2010
- [RedState: Stop START: Whip List](#)
December 3, 2010
- [RedState: Senate Republicans And The Lost Art Of Negotiation](#)
December 6, 2010
- [RedState: House Rules Package Is A Nice First Step To Control Spending](#)
December 30, 2010
- [RedState: The Return Of The Lunch Bunch](#)
January 19, 2011
- [RedState: YouCut Can't Cut A \\$100 Billion?](#)
January 31, 2011
- [RedState: House Republicans Attempt To Extend "Stimulus" Trade Benefits](#)
February 7, 2011
- [RedState: How House Leadership Can Fix Their Mess](#)
February 9, 2011
- [RedState: Movement Towards \\$100 Billion, But Not There Yet](#)
February 10, 2011
- [RedState: Parsing The Pledge, House Leadership Still Not Compliant](#)
February 10, 2011
- [RedState: Speaker Boehner Throws Down The Gauntlet](#)
February 18, 2011
- [RedState: House Leadership Let Obamacare Expansion Pass](#)
March 9, 2011
- [RedState: Rep. Tim Huelskamp Stands Tall In Budget Showdown](#)

March 12, 2011

- [RedState: The Problem With One Last Vote For A Flawed Strategy](#)
March 14, 2011
- [RedState: This Is What Leadership Looks Like](#)
March 15, 2011
- [RedState: The Strategy Of Short-Term CR Opponents: A Response To Keith Hennessey](#)
March 16, 2011
- [RedState: Stop The Natural Gas Streaker!](#)
May 11, 2011
- [RedState: Corporate Welfare Gets New Life In The House](#)
July 5, 2011
- [RedState: Message to RSC Members: Get In Or Get Out](#)
July 27, 2011
- [RedState: House Republicans Ram Highway Bill Through Without a Roll Call Vote](#)
September 13, 2011
- [RedState: Darrell Issa And The Ongoing Fight Against Postal Bailouts](#)
September 14, 2011
- [RedState: The Crusade To Cave](#)
September 15, 2011
- [RedState: Reid Goes Nuclear To Block The President's Stimulus Plan](#)
October 6, 2011
- [RedState: House Republicans Set To Again Violate Their Pledge To America](#)
November 15, 2011
- [RedState: Debunking The Election Myths of the Republican Establishment](#)
December 6, 2011
- [RedState: Ramesh Ponnuru Moves The Goal Posts](#)
December 7, 2011
- [RedState: House Conservatives Need To Block The Coming Highway Bailout](#)
January 30, 2012
- [RedState: Why Every House Conservative Should Oppose The Highway Bill](#)
February 14, 2012
- [RedState: Incrementalism Doesn't Work for The Right, Look At The Food Stamp Bill](#)
July 12, 2012
- [Heritage Action: Defunding Obamacare: Questions & Answers, Excuses & Responses](#)
July 12, 2013
- [Daily Signal: Our Daughter Was Born With Cystic Fibrosis. We Can't Imagine Life Without Her.](#)
July 30, 2014

- Resurgent: Wheaton College and the Preservation of Theological Clarity
January 17, 2016

16. **Speeches:** Provide the Committee with four copies of any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 5 years which you have copies of and are on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated.

17. **Selection:**

- (a) What do you believe in your background or employment experience affirmatively qualifies you for this particular appointment?

I have nearly twenty years of public policy experience with a specific emphasis in budgetary policy. I was the Budget Director for the Republican Study Committee, before going on to be its Executive Director and the Republican Conference's Policy Director, handling a similarly broad portfolio to that of OMB's jurisdiction. And I have over seven years of experience of building and managing a large, national organization to prepare me for overseeing OMB as an institution.

- (b) Were any conditions, expressed or implied, attached to your nomination? If so, please explain.

No

- (c) Have you made any commitments with respect to the policies and principles you will attempt to implement in the position for which you have been nominated? If so, please identify such commitment(s) and all persons to whom such commitment(s) have been made.

No

B. FUTURE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

1. Will you sever all connections with your present employers, business firms, business associations or business organizations if you are confirmed by the Senate?

Yes

2. Do you have any plans, commitments or agreements to pursue outside employment, with or without compensation, during your service with the government? If so, please explain.

No

3. Do you have any plans, commitments or agreements after completing government service to resume employment, affiliation or practice with your previous employer, business firm, association or organization? If so, please explain.

No

4. Has anybody made a commitment to employ your services in any capacity after you leave government service? If so, please identify such person(s) and commitment(s) and explain.

No

5. If confirmed, do you expect to serve out your full term or until the next Presidential election, whichever is applicable? If not, please explain.

Yes

C. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. If confirmed, are there any issues from which you may have to recuse or disqualify yourself because of a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest? If so, please explain.

No

2. Identify and describe all investments, obligations, liabilities, business relationships, dealings, financial transactions, and other financial relationships which you currently have or have had during the last 10 years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated.

None

3. Describe any activity during the past 10 years in which you have engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy other than while in a federal government capacity.

Although I was not a registered federal lobbyist, I spent seven years engaged in grassroots lobbying at Heritage Action for America for the purpose of directly influencing the passage, defeat, and modification of a wide array of legislation based on the research of The Heritage Foundation.

4. Do you agree to have written opinions provided to the Committee the ethics officer of the Office of Management and Budget and by the Office of Government Ethics concerning potential conflicts of interest or any legal impediments to your serving in this position?

Yes

5. Explain how you will resolve potential conflicts of interest, including any disclosed by your responses to the above questions.

I will work closely with the appropriate ethics officials and will follow their legal advice.

D. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics for unprofessional conduct by, or been the subject of a complaint to any court, administrative agency, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If so, provide details.

No

2. To your knowledge, have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged or convicted (including pleas of guilty or nolo contendere) by any federal, State, or other law enforcement authority for violation of any federal, State, county or municipal law, regulation, or ordinance, other than a minor traffic offense? If so, provide details.

No

3. Have you or any business of which you are or were an officer, director or owner ever been involved as a party in interest in any administrative agency proceeding or civil litigation? If so, provide details.

Yes. I was sued in September, 1999, after a motor vehicle accident. It was settled in February, 2000. The litigation took place in the Circuit Court of the 18th Judicial Circuit, Dupage County, IL.

4. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be considered in connection with your nomination.

None

E. TESTIFYING BEFORE CONGRESS

1. If confirmed, are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so?

Yes

2. If confirmed, are you willing to provide such information as may be requested by any committee of the Congress?

Yes

F. FINANCIAL DATA

All information requested under this heading must be provided for yourself, your spouse, and your dependents. (This information will not be published in the record of the hearing on your nomination, but it will be retained in the Committee's files and will be available for public inspection, with the exception of income tax returns.)

1. Please provide personal financial information not already listed on the SF 278 Financial Disclosure form that identifies and states the value of all:
 - (a) assets of \$10,000 or more held directly or indirectly, including but not limited to bank accounts, securities, commodities futures, real estate, trusts (including the terms of any beneficial or blind trust of which you, your spouse, or any of your dependents may be a beneficiary), investments, and other personal property held in a trade or business or for investment other than household furnishings, personal effects, clothing, and automobiles; and
 - (b) liabilities of \$10,000 or more including but not limited to debts, mortgages, loans, and other financial obligations for which you, your spouse, or your dependents have a direct or indirect liability or which may be guaranteed by you, your spouse, or dependents; and for each such liability indicate the nature of the liability, the amount, the name of the creditor, the terms of the payment, the security or collateral, and the current status of the debt payment. If the aggregate of your consumer debts exceeds \$10,000, please include the total as a liability. Please include additional information, as necessary, to assist the Committee in determining your financial solvency. The Committee reserves the right to request additional information if a solvency determination cannot be made definitively from the information provided.

N/A
2. List sources, amounts and dates of all anticipated receipts from deferred income arrangements, stock options, executory contracts and other future benefits which you expect to derive from current or previous business relationships, professional services and firm memberships, employers, clients and customers. If dates or amounts are estimated, please so state. Please only include those items not listed on the SF 278 Financial Disclosure form.

N/A

3. Provide the identity of and a description of the nature of any interest in an option, registered copyright, or patent held during the past 12 months and indicate which, if any, from which you have divested and the date of divestment unless already indicated on the personal financial statement.

N/A

4. Provide a description of any power of attorney which you hold for or on behalf of any other person.

None

5. List sources and amounts of all gifts exceeding \$500 in value received by you, your spouse, and your dependents during each of the last three years. Gifts received from members of your immediate family need not be listed.

None

6. Have you filed a Federal income tax return for each of the past 10 years? If not, please explain.

Yes

7. Have your taxes always been paid on time including taxes paid on behalf of any employees? If not, please explain.

Yes

8. Were all your taxes, federal, State, and local, current (filed and paid) as of the date of your nomination? If not, please explain.

Yes

9. Has the Internal Revenue Service or any other state or local tax authority ever audited your Federal, state, local, or other tax return? If so, what resulted from the audit?

No

10. Have any tax liens, either federal, State, or local, been filed against you or against any real property or personal property which you own either individually, jointly, or in partnership? If so, please give the particulars, including the date(s) and the nature and amount of the lien. State the resolution of the matter. (REDACTED)

11. Provide for the Committee copies of your Federal income tax returns for the past 3 years. These documents will be made available only to Senators and staff persons designated by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member. They will not be available for public inspection.

12. Have you ever been late in paying court-ordered child support? If so, provide details.

No

13. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy or been a party to any bankruptcy proceeding? If so, provide details.

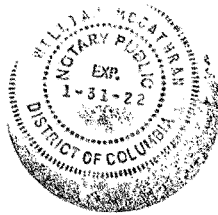
No

AFFIDAVIT

Russell Vought being duly sworn, hereby states that he/she has read and signed the foregoing Statement on Biographical and Financial Information and that the information provided therein is, to the best of his/her knowledge, current, accurate, and complete.

Subscribed and sworn before me this 21st day of April, 2017

William McCarthorne
Notary Public



Pre-Hearing Questions
from Senator Bernard Sanders
for Russell Vought
Nomination of the Russell Vought, of Virginia,
to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget
Senate Budget Committee

Question #1

In remarks to a radio host in March, OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said that he is trying to convince President Trump to back cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, in spite of repeated promises during the presidential campaign that President Trump would not cut these essential programs.

If confirmed, will you also advocate to the President that Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid be cut, in opposition to his repeated campaign pledges?

If confirmed, my job would be to provide analyses that helps the President and the Director make responsible budget decisions, including decisions about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. My belief continues to be that reforms can be made to save these important programs, which many Americans rely on, within the parameters of the President's campaign promises.

Question #2

On May 7, 2017, OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said this on CBS's "Face the Nation":

I think the president is frustrated that the process in Washington is broken. The appropriations, the spending process, Congress using the power of the purse has been broken here in Washington for more than 10 years. And I think a good shutdown would be one that could help fix that.

Similarly, in your March 16, 2011 RedState column, you wrote that in order to maximize "leverage" in policy fights, "you simply must be prepared to shut the government down."

Do you still have the same view of shutting down the government, that it is worthwhile in order to achieve policy concessions? Do you agree with Director Mulvaney's premise that a government shutdown would be "good"?

Nobody wants a government shutdown, but the budget process is clearly broken, and the nation is \$20 trillion in debt. I believe that it is impossible to cut spending or achieve other policy objectives if Congress is not willing to exercise its Constitutional power of the purse.

Question #3

On March 27, 2017, the Washington Post reported:

The Trump budget proposal released last week bears a striking resemblance to the Heritage Foundation's "Blueprint for Balance: A Federal Budget for 2017," complete with a list of deep spending cuts designed to scale back the size and scope of the federal government.

The Trump administration's budget document and the Heritage blueprint single out very similar lists of dozens of programs for elimination, including those on international climate, legal aid for the poor, energy research, aid to Appalachia, and insurance for U.S. exporters. And they cite the same reasons, noting for example that rural air service subsidies were meant to be temporary 40 years ago and now keep largely empty planes in the air.

a) As Vice President of Heritage Action, how involved were you in formulating the Heritage Foundation's various budget blueprint documents?

I had no involvement.

b) As a member of the "beachhead" team at OMB, how involved were you personally in formulating the Trump "skinny budget" for FY18?

I advised the Director on the composition of the skinny budget and helped prepare decisions for him to make.

c) To what extent were you personally involved in formulating OMB's requested \$18 billion in non-defense discretionary cuts for FY17?

I advised the Director on the composition of the President's FY17 request and helped prepare decisions for him to make.

d) To what extent were Heritage budget blueprints used as the basis for the formulation of the FY18 "skinny budget" or the requested FY17 spending cuts?

The basis for the formulation of the skinny budget and the FY17 spending request was the analyses and expertise of the OMB staff. I read the Heritage blueprints for awareness, as I did with proposals from other sources, but they were not a basis for either budget request.

Question #4

You worked as an aide to Sen. Phil Gramm between 1999 and 2002. To what extent were you involved in drafting or advocating for the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act?

I had no involvement.

Question #5

In an interview with CBNC published on April 12, 2017, OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said the following:

Bad spending to me in terms of its economic benefit would be wealth transfer payments. It's a misallocation of resources. Infrastructure is sort of that good spending in the middle, where even if you do misallocate resources a little bit, you still have something to show for it. It's tangible, it may help economic growth and so forth.

At the other end of the spectrum, at the very other end, is letting people keep more of their money which, while it can contribute to the deficit in a large fashion, is the most efficient way to actually allocate resources. It's a little less important to me if infrastructure adds to the deficit. And I'm really not interested in how tax reform handles the deficit.

a) Do you agree with Director Mulvaney that “wealth transfer payments” – like the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, and other programs that low-income people and working families rely on – are a “misallocation of resources”?

I believe there is a place for a social safety net, but we owe it to both welfare recipients and taxpayers to reform our nation’s welfare system to promote self-sufficiency and prevent any misuse of hard-earned tax dollars.

b) Do you agree with Director Mulvaney that “letting people keep more of their money” – otherwise known as tax cuts for wealthy individuals and large corporations – is “the most efficient way to allocate resources”?

Yes, I agree that letting people keep more of their own money is the most efficient way to allocate resources.

c) Do you agree with Director Mulvaney that it is OK to increase the deficit by cutting taxes?

Yes. I would prefer not to increase the deficit (and pay for tax cuts with spending cuts), but if necessary to allow people to keep more of their own money, I support it.

Question #6

In your February 14, 2012 RedState column, you argue that federal infrastructure spending does not create jobs or grow the economy. This runs counter to campaign promises made by President Trump, that he would push for additional spending on infrastructure.

If confirmed, will you advocate that the federal government not increase spending on physical infrastructure?

I do not support additional spending on infrastructure, but my job, if confirmed, would be to advance the President's agenda and not my own.

Question #7

Though there have been no details, experts have estimated that President Trump's tax plan will increase deficits by up to \$7 trillion over 10 years. When asked whether they believed the resulting economic growth could make up for this lost revenue, 37 out of 37 economists agreed that it could not.

Do you agree with each and every economist surveyed that the Trump tax cut plan cannot "pay for itself"?

I believe that sound tax policy leads to economic growth and increased taxable income, and therefore increased revenues to the government.

Question #8

On January 17, 2016, you wrote a post for The Resurgent, a conservative news website run by Erick Erickson. In the post, you wrote, "Muslims do not simply have a deficient theology. They do not know God because they have rejected Jesus Christ his Son, and they stand condemned."

Do you acknowledge that this statement is Islamophobic, hateful, and offensive?

No. I respect the right of every individual to express their religious beliefs. This statement, which is taken out of context, was made in a post designed to defend Wheaton College, my alma mater, for its decision to insist that one of its professors maintain its Statement of Faith. I specifically wrote it with the intention of conveying my viewpoint in a respectful manner that avoided inflammatory rhetoric.

POST-HEARING QUESTIONS FROM RANKING MEMBER BERNARD
SANDERS WITH ANSWERS BY RUSSELL T. VOUGHT

Sen. Sanders

Question #1

During yesterday's Budget Committee hearing, you confirmed that you are opposed to increasing federal spending on infrastructure. In January 2012, you wrote the following in a blog post for RedState, which Sen. Van Hollen referenced during the hearing: "All of us want better roads and bridges, but conservatives have long championed devolving the highway program to the states to collect and spend gas tax revenues as they see fit without heavy federal micromanaging. Both regularizing the recent taxpayer bailouts and relying on offsets elsewhere in the federal government will ensure that conservatives will never be able to devolve these programs and that the federal government will never get out of the federal highway business. It is great that Republicans are proposing to consolidate programs, but rationalizing transportation policy while growing government at an unaffordable pace harms the country. In short, it may be the difference between Chinese communism and Soviet communism, but it's still communism." According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, we need to invest \$2 trillion above current levels just to get our infrastructure back to a state of good repair. Do you believe that federal funding to improve our highways and bridges and federal regulations requiring seat belts and car seats that have saved countless lives is tantamount to communism?

No, I would not have written that today. It was not an accurate or helpful analogy.

Sen. Sanders**Question #2**

Mr. Vought, in your answers to my written questions before this hearing, you wrote that you would support increasing the deficit in order to cut taxes. You reaffirmed this position at yesterday's hearing. However, in your answers to my written questions, you also wrote, "I believe that sound tax policy leads to economic growth and increased taxable income, and therefore increased revenues to the government." Mr. Vought, these answers seem contradictory. Should tax cuts be allowed to increase the deficit, or do you believe they pay for themselves, despite all historic evidence to the contrary?

Sound tax policy can lead to economic growth, increased taxable income, and increased revenues to the government. Even if proposed tax cuts did not fully pay for themselves, through either economic growth or the elimination of tax loopholes, I would still support cutting taxes to allow Americans to keep more of what they earn.

Sen. Sanders**Question #3**

During the campaign, candidate Trump promised not to cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. But now that he is president, Donald Trump has proposed a budget and health care bill that would slash Medicaid by more than \$1 trillion, raid the Medicare fund by more than \$100 billion, and make massive cuts to Social Security for people who have severe disabilities, children who have lost their parents, and the poor. In your answers to my written questions in advance of this hearing, you made it clear that you would advocate to "reform" - i.e. cut -Medicare and Social Security, but that changes would be "within the parameters of the President's campaign promises." Mr. Vought, if you are confirmed, will you advocate that the President break his promises not to cut Medicare and Social Security?

No. I will continue to point out that Medicare and Social Security are going bankrupt without reform and can be saved within the parameters of the President's campaign promises.

Sen. Sanders**Question #4**

Mr. Vought, last week, your boss, Mr. Mulvaney gave an interview to the Washington Examiner. During this interview, Mr. Mulvaney said that he "wouldn't take what's in the budget as indicative of what our proposals are." Mr. Vought, you worked long and hard to produce this budget document. Do you agree with Mr. Mulvaney's statement that the President's Budget does not reflect the administration's policy? What I'm really asking is this: Should we bother taking the President's Budget seriously, seeing as its primary author says it's not "indicative" of the administration's proposals?

The President's Budget reflects the Administration's policies on any matter contained within.

Sen. Sanders

Question #5

Mr. Vought, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Trump-Ryan health care bill would throw 23 million Americans off of their health insurance. Study after study has shown that a lack of health insurance leads to a higher death rate. On January 23rd, Doctors David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler wrote a piece in the Washington Post with the headline: "Repealing the Affordable Care Act will kill more than 43,000 people annually." Here is what they wrote: "The biggest and most definitive study of what happens to death rates when Medicaid coverage is expanded, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, found that for every 455 people who gained coverage across several states, one life was saved per year. Applying that figure to even a conservative estimate of 20 million losing coverage in the event of an ACA repeal yields an estimate of 43,956 deaths annually." Has the Administration estimated how many Americans would die if 23 million Americans lose their health insurance?

The Administration is committed to a responsible repeal and replace of the Affordable Care Act. Americans will have the freedom to make the decisions that are right for them and their families. We are getting rid of Obamacare's burdensome mandate that Americans buy government-controlled health insurance that they can't afford and don't need. Americans will have more choices and access to the health care they want and deserve.

Sen. Sanders**Question #6**

The U.S. has one of the highest infant mortality rates of any major country on earth. Dr. Paul Jarris, the chief medical officer for the March of Dimes recently said: "In terms of preterm birth and infant mortality, the United States has the highest rates of any of the developed nations. Our rates are more similar to that of developing nations." The Trump budget would cut the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program by more than \$1 billion below OMB's own baseline in 2022 alone, potentially denying over 1 million pregnant woman and babies the nutrition they need to stay healthy. Has the Administration done an analysis of how much the infant mortality rate will go up if these cuts go into effect?

The Administration supports fully funding WIC, and we look forward to working with Congress to address any issues introduced by the final 2017 omnibus.

POST-HEARING QUESTIONS FROM BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS
WITH ANSWERS BY RUSSELL T. VOUGHT

Sen. Corker

Question #1: The President's 2018 budget was critical of the effectiveness of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) rule because lawmakers often include language exempting the budgetary effects of legislation from the PAYGO scorecards. From page 109 of the 2018 budget volume Analytical Perspectives: There are limitations to Statutory PAYGO 's usefulness as a budget enforcement tool. Although the scorecard consistently shows net savings from legislation subject to the PAYGO rules, a number of laws that significantly increased deficits were enacted with provisions directing that these deficit effects be ignored for PAYGO purposes. Would the Administration support proposals in the 2018 congressional budget resolution that end or limit the ability of lawmakers to exempt the cost of legislation from the PAYGO scorecards?

If confirmed, I would be very interested in discussing proposals along those lines.

Sen. Corker

Question #2: The President's budget also was critical of cost analyses that fail to incorporate the interest costs of legislation that would increase the deficit. From page 109 of the 2018 budget volume Analytical Perspectives: New legislation that affects direct spending and revenue will also indirectly affect interest payments on the national debt. These effects on interest payments can cause a significant budgetary impact; however, they are not captured in cost estimates that are required under the Statutory PAYGO Act of 2010, nor are they typically included in estimates of new legislation that are produced by the Congressional Budget Office. The Administration believes that cost estimates of new legislation could be improved by incorporating information on the effects of interest payments and looks forward to working with the Congress in making reforms in this area Would the Administration support proposals in the 2018 congressional budget resolution that would direct the federal scorekeeping agencies to incorporate in their cost analyses the interest costs of legislation that would increase the deficit?

If confirmed, I would be very interested in discussing proposals along those lines.

Sen. Stabenow**Question # 1:**

The President's USDA budget proposal cuts the Farm Bill by \$232 billion. This flies in the face of over 500 groups who oppose cuts to the Farm Bill and is clearly out of touch with the current state of the farm economy, with farm prices 56 percent lower than they were just four years ago. USDA indicated that it was not the author of many of the proposed cuts. Can you explain why the White House targeted crop insurance for cuts when this program is universally cited as the foundation of the farm safety net?

The Administration believes that there are opportunities for crop insurance reform that will provide savings to the taxpayers while still maintaining a robust safety net for farmers. The 2018 budget proposals focused on reducing subsidies for high-end coverage and coverage that potentially distorts the market by introducing means-testing factors and eliminating price hedging insurance.

Is this budget proposal President Trump's official position on priorities for the upcoming 2018 farm Bill?

The Administration's budget proposal targets Federal support to farmers that need it most and reduces the cost to the Federal taxpayer. The Administration is in the early stages of developing a comprehensive Farm Bill proposal. As with our budget proposals, we will expect the agricultural assistance provided by the Farm Bill to be targeted and programs to be streamlined in a way that result in budgetary savings.

If confirmed, will you commit to working with the Senate Committee on Agriculture prior to proposing future cuts to the farm safety net?

Yes.

Sen. Stabenow**Question #2:**

The President's budget targets SNAP for massive cuts even though CBO projections show that SNAP spending and participation continue to decline and the percentage of Americans participating is already on track to return to pre-recession levels in coming years. I am particularly concerned about the 25% cost shift to states and ability to change benefit levels. Most states face balanced budget requirements so this shift means states would have to raise taxes or cut other programs to fund SNAP.

What happens if a state can't meet the match requirement?

How much could states cut benefits for poor children or seniors?

Could a state eliminate benefits all together for some families?

While States may ultimately need additional flexibilities to manage their costs under this proposal, I think it's reasonable to consider parameters around how much States can alter the basic benefit level.

Sen. Stabenow**Question #3:**

Congress passed Buy American laws to ensure that federal agencies and localities use federal dollars on American-made goods and products. Unfortunately, loopholes and waivers to these laws have allowed billions in taxpayer dollars to be sent to foreign-firms that don't make products here. That is why I introduced the Make It In America Act, to bring accountability to federal agencies and to ensure that federal dollars are spent on American-made products. In April, the President signed an executive order that calls for OMB to be part of a government-wide review of Buy American implementation. Do you believe that a review of Buy American laws will significantly change agency practice when it comes to the issuance of waivers?

Do you believe that congressional action will be needed to close Buy American loopholes that send billions in taxpayer dollars abroad?

If confirmed, will you and Director Mulvaney work with me on legislation that will strongly enforce Buy American laws?

Part 1: Requiring agencies to review their existing policies, practices, and experiences with Buy American Laws, including the use of waivers, should help us to better identify weaknesses and steps that need to be taken to strengthen domestic sourcing.

Part 2: The analyses performed pursuant to the executive order should help to inform the extent to which administrative actions can be taken and where legislation may be helpful to close loopholes and increase domestic sourcing.

Part 3: Yes, I will work with you and Director Mulvaney to enact the President's agenda.

Sen. Warner

Question #1

The DATA Act - a bill I drafted and which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support - is a tool for helping us to better understand how government spends on programs, which should help agencies manage their finances and operations better. The first reporting deadline for the DATA Act's implementation was May 9th, however the broader work of implementing this law is ongoing.

A. Can you commit to working with me and my staff on DATA Act implementation?

OMB supports and continues to work to fully implement the DATA Act. If confirmed, I will commit to working with the committee on DATA Act implementation.

Sen. Warner**Question #2:**

OMB has a pivotal role, working with the Treasury Department, on implementation of this law, including leading governance efforts. While OMB and Treasury have made progress in developing high-level data governance concepts and objectives, much work remains to be done to formulate policy and procedures for developing new data standards and adjudicating conflicts between data standards.

A. Can you commit that OMB will work to formalize these additional procedures and policies within the governance structure, such as in ways recommended by the Government Accountability Office?

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the implementation of GAO's recommendation to enhance DATA Act governance. When the DATA Act data standards were first implemented in 2015, a robust public process was utilized to solicit feedback from internal and public stakeholders. OMB has committed to GAO that as changes are made to the DATA Act data standards, those changes will include a similar public process.

Sen. Warner

Question #3:

Secretary Mnuchin has said that the U.S. government should "absolutely" not have the ability to prioritize our payments and that there should "be no uncertainty that we are paying the bills."

However, Director Mulvaney has expressed support for prioritization.

A. Do you believe that the U.S. government should be able to prioritize the payment of bond holders, and ignore our other financial commitments such as payments to states and the salaries of federal workers?

I believe the federal government can and should prevent default. I do not believe the federal government can ignore its financial commitments.

Sen. Warner

Question #4 :

In a hearing before the House Budget Committee on May 24, 2017, Director Mulvaney seemed to suggest that we may be approaching the debt ceiling more quickly than originally expected. He said that "receipts are coming in a little bit slower than expected" and that we "may soon hear from Mr. Mnuchin regarding a change in the date."

A. How would you characterize revenues for March and April? Were they higher or lower than expected?

B. Do you have a new estimate of when we will be hitting the debt ceiling?

C. *If not*, when can we expect an updated date?

The Treasury Department is responsible for monitoring incoming revenues to the federal government and projecting the amount of room under the debt limit. I have no additional information.

Sen. Warner

Question #5:

Your budget proposes \$200 billion in new federal infrastructure over the next ten years, through some sort of mix of tax credits, loans, incentives to leverage private sector dollars. At the same time, your budget proposes numerous cuts to other infrastructure spending totaling more than \$200 billion, including cutting Highway Trust Fund outlays by \$95 billion over 10 years.

A. Can you confirm that President Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure plan, taken on balance, does not include an increase in federal infrastructure spending?

The President's Budget includes \$200 billion in Federal investment to leverage at least \$1 trillion in total infrastructure spending.

Sen. Warner**Question #6:**

OMB budget documents propose cutting Highway Trust Fund outlays to what gas tax receipts bring in. And that the federal government should push "more States and localities to finance their own transportation needs, as they are best equipped to know the right level and mix of infrastructure investments" [page 107 of OMB's Budget Process document]. At the same time, President Trump said earlier this month that he'd be open to considering a gas tax increase.

A. What is the position of this Administration? Do you support a theory of devolution, turning this responsibility back to the states? Or does the Administration believe there is a federal role in transportation investment, one that should be paid for through some sort of revenue increase as Trump has suggested?

Devolution of Federal highway and transit programs is not proposed in the 2018 Budget. However, the Administration is working with all stakeholders in developing its infrastructure proposal, including state and local officials, and is open to the best ideas for improving and maintaining our Nation's infrastructure.

Sen. Warner**Question #7**

The President has repeatedly emphasized the importance of investments in our nation's infrastructure. The Port of Virginia is a gateway for international commerce and is one of the thirteen US strategic ports that support the mobilization and readiness of our national defense. More than 14,000 businesses from all contiguous 48 states move cargo through Virginia, with 53% of all cargo moved through The Port of Virginia being American exports. The Port of Virginia is investing \$739 million to modernize its facilities and increase capacity to keep up with increased demand and new shipping standards as American businesses seek to export their products to global markets. The port is also working with the US Army Corps to deepen and widen its shipping channels to ensure safe access by the ships carrying cargo for American companies. The Craney Island Eastward Expansion (CIEE) is a Congressionally-authorized Civil Works project which extends the life of the existing Craney Island Dredge Disposal Management Area and creates the foundation for a future marine terminal to continue to serve the US economy. Investment in CIEE leverages future federal and non-federal investments in channel deepening and widening projects as well as \$1.5 billion in non-federal investment to construct the marine terminal. Its 4.2 benefit-cost ratio (at a 7% discount rate) recognizes these benefits. However, the President's FY18 budget includes no funding for CIEE. Federal investment into CIEE has lagged behind the non-federal investment at the Congressionally-authorized 50/50 cost share, and it has not reached the 14% budget policy. This delay hurts the investment the federal government has already made and prolongs the time of the completion of this nationally significant project.

A. Can you commit to me that the Trump Administration will support providing additional federal funding to complete the Craney Island Eastward Expansion project, thereby making possible an additional \$ 1.5billion in non-federal investment? If you cannot, can you please elaborate on the Administration's position on completion of this project?

The FY 2018 Budget demonstrated the President's steadfast commitment to addressing the challenges we face as a Nation without adding to the deficit. This required tough choices across the Federal government, including within the Army Corps of Engineers Budget.

With respect to the Craney Island Eastward Expansion project, I appreciate the importance of the Port of Virginia to the Commonwealth of Virginia. However, I am not familiar with this specific project. If confirmed as Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, I look forward to learning more about it.

Sen. Warner

Question #8

Many transparency advocates have been disappointed to see the new Administration get off to a slow start.

A. As Deputy OMB Director, will you work to ensure that executive actions are made public in the manner of the previous Administration?

B. What changes do you anticipate making that would increase government transparency and accountability, for instance by making OMB and OIRA more transparent?

C. What changes, if any, are you contemplating for OIRA and the rulemaking process?

A) While I am not familiar with all of the particular ways in which the previous Administration disclosed actions such as executive orders, I support working to ensure that there is prompt timely disclosure of such executive actions and believe the current Administration has followed this practice.

B) Transparency is an important value of OMB. Among other things, transparency allows for the participation of relevant stakeholders. For example, OIRA discloses on its website all of its meetings with individuals and groups who wish to discuss rules under review. OIRA also makes available any changes made to draft rules as a result of the interagency review process OIRA implements. I support maintaining these important transparency measures, and if confirmed I would be more than happy to work with the committee on additional specific suggestions to increase transparency.

C) While I have no specific recommendations at this time, if confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with the OIRA Administrator and others to help ensure robust execution of this Administration's important regulatory reform commitments and initiatives.

Sen. Warner

Question #9:

Currently, over 75% of the \$88 billion federal IT budget is spent on operations and maintenance, while less than a quarter is spent on development, modernization, and enhancement. While the President's Budget proposed a modest increase in overall IT spending, it fell short of the substantial, long-term modernization effort the federal government needs.

A. If confirmed, how would you ensure that federal agencies are employing the best and most-up-to-date IT?

B. What is your view on the state of federal information technology infrastructure, and do you support providing incentives for agencies to invest in the modernization of legacy IT by leveraging cloud and other innovative technologies?

C. Would you consider including modernizing legacy federal IT as part of the Administration's potential infrastructure investment plans?

D. While government has made significant progress in recent years to "digitize" citizen's interactions with government, there is still a long way to go. What are your thoughts on what OMB can do from a policy perspective to continue to improve services provided to citizens through the use of technology?

E. What measures will you promote to encourage agencies to use savings from data center consolidation for high-priority IT projects and IT modernization efforts?

F. Under your tenure, what steps will the Office of Management and Budget take to implement the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA)?

G. What focus will the Office of Management and Budget place on improving communication between the 24 CFO Act agencies and the Government Accountability Office when reporting data related to compliance with FITARA?

A. If confirmed, I will devote significant attention to migrating these outdated systems to more efficient, secure, and scalable technologies. I will explore ideas on how to best direct agencies to identify and prioritize their highest-risk systems, and will also examine innovative approaches to solving this problem.

B. I look forward, if confirmed, to learning more about the state of federal information technology infrastructure, and will work with agencies to examine innovative approaches to modernizing outdated IT. The Administration has made it a priority to modernize and improve government operations and service delivery by building modern citizen-facing digital services, buying more like a business, improving cybersecurity, investing in improved data analytics, and generating greater cost efficiencies.

C. If confirmed, I look forward to overseeing the implementation of the Technology Modernization Fund proposed in the 2018 President's Budget. The Technology Modernization Fund will be dedicated to transitioning Federal agencies from IT infrastructure, systems, and services that are not cost-effective or secure to more efficient and secure technologies.

D. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to improve services provided to the public through innovative use of technology. The 2018 President's Budget provides funding for Federal civilian agencies to spend on IT focused primarily on providing services to the American public, including systems that will ensure veterans can easily access the benefits and services they have earned, students can receive financial aid, and small business owners can access affordable financing to start or expand their businesses. OMB will seek to leverage the country's best private sector ideas, services, and vendors to deliver these projects efficiently and effectively.

E. If confirmed, I look forward to working with agencies to implement cost-saving and modernization efforts, including the DCOI.

F. If confirmed, I will ensure FITARA goals are a top priority of OMB IT modernization and reform efforts. OMB will continue to review its current library of IT policies and assess whether new or updated policies are appropriate to help agencies with FITARA implementation.

G. If confirmed, I look forward to finding new ways to improve communication across the Federal Government. OMB will continue to play a key role in FITARA implementation and will coordinate communication between Federal agencies and the GAO.

**EXECUTIVE BUSINESS MEETING TO CON-
SIDER THE NOMINATION OF RUSSELL T.
VOUGHT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY
DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGE-
MENT AND BUDGET**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2017

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 4:49 p.m., in room S-211, The Capitol, Hon. Michael B. Enzi, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Enzi, Grassley, Crapo, Graham, Toomey, Johnson, Corker, Perdue, Gardner, Kennedy, Boozman, Strange, Sanders, Merkley, and Harris.

Staff present: Eric Ueland, Republican staff director; and Warren Gunnels, minority staff director.

Chairman ENZI. I will call this committee meeting to order.

We will vote on the nomination of Russell Vought to be the next Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget. We will withhold statements at this time.

I do intend to support the nomination and I hope you will, as well.

Unless Senator Sanders has something to add, we will move directly to vote on the nomination.

The clerk will call the roll.

The CLERK. Mr. Grassley.

Senator GRASSLEY. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Crapo.

Senator CRAPO. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Toomey.

Senator TOOMEY. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Corker.

Senator CORKER. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Boozman.
 Senator BOOZMAN. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Strange.
 Senator STRANGE. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Chairman.
 Chairman ENZI. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Sanders.
 Senator SANDERS. No.
 The CLERK. Mrs. Murray.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Mr. Wyden.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Ms. Stabenow.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Mr. Whitehouse.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Mr. Warner.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Mr. Merkley.
 Senator MERKLEY. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Kaine.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Mr. King.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Mr. Van Hollen.
 Senator SANDERS. No by proxy.
 The CLERK. Ms. Harris.
 Senator HARRIS. No.
 Chairman ENZI. The clerk will report the vote.
 The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, there are 12 yeas and 11 nays.
 Chairman ENZI. How many of the nays are proxies?
 The CLERK. Eight proxies.
 Chairman ENZI. Thank you.

Statements for the record must be submitted by 12 o'clock p.m. tomorrow with a signed hard copy delivered to the committee clerk at Dirksen 624.

Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:55 p.m., the committee was adjourned. The following prepared statement by Senator Charles E. Grassley was submitted for the record subsequent to the executive business meeting.]



Statement for the Record

Charles E. Grassley

On the Nomination of Russell Vought

for the position of Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget

Executive Business Meeting

Senate Budget Committee

June 15, 2017

On May 1, 2017, the Office of Legal Counsel issued an opinion entitled “Authority of Individual Members of Congress to Conduct Oversight of the Executive Branch,” which asserted—erroneously—that individual Members of Congress are not Constitutionally authorized to seek information from the Executive Branch. The opinion also noted a policy of the Executive Branch to respond to requests for information from individual Members as it would respond to a request from a private citizen under the Freedom of Information Act. As such, the opinion failed to recognize the need of individual Members for Executive Branch information in order to perform their numerous Constitutional responsibilities as elected representatives. The opinion did not prohibit Executive Branch agencies from responding to individual Member requests. On June 7, 2017, I sent a letter to the President requesting that the OLC opinion be rescinded.

Under questioning at a hearing of the Senate Committee of Homeland Security and Government Affairs, Mr. Vought stated that in responding to requests for information from individual Members of Congress who are not Chairmen of Committees, he would have to consider the OLC opinion which he understood indicated that responses to oversight requests should flow through Chairmen. Concerned that this view of the OLC opinion would discourage the recognition of individual Members’ Constitutional role in oversight, my staff sought a private meeting with Mr. Vought to clarify his testimony and his views of the OLC opinion. After the meeting, I sought Mr. Vought’s written response to the following question:

If confirmed, will you commit to reviewing the OLC opinion “Authority of Individual Members of Congress to Conduct Oversight of the Executive Branch” and, if it is not rescinded or modified, recommend that OMB issue guidance to agencies that promotes voluntary accommodation of Congressional requests rather than relegating them to the bare minimum legally required disclosure obligations of Freedom of Information Act Requests? If not, why not?

Today, I received this written response:

I have read the OLC opinion ‘Authority of Individual Members of Congress to Conduct Oversight of the Executive Branch.’ If confirmed, I will recommend that OMB strive to voluntarily respond to all Congressional requests, exercising its discretion under the OLC opinion and regardless of whether any compulsory process has been triggered.

OMB issues guidance on matters that deal with budget policy or management of the federal government that relate to our statutory offices, such as the Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), or the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), etc. I am not aware of OMB ever issuing guidance on an OLC opinion, especially without a tie to its statutory responsibilities. My understanding is that, historically, guidance of this type has come from the Department of Justice or the White House Counsel’s Office.

While this response clearly does not resolve the ultimate problem, which is that OLC should rescind this opinion, Mr. Vought’s response in recognizing the Constitutional role for individual Members to conduct oversight is sufficient to support his confirmation.

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