

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Testimony of Deputy Secretary Nominee Sarah Bloom Raskin before the Senate Finance Committee

11/20/2013

As prepared for delivery

WASHINGTON - Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Hatch, and Distinguished Members of the Committee: It is a great privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

Let me begin by thanking Senator Paul Sarbanes, who has served as an exemplary role model throughout his lifetime of public service. Let me also thank your colleague and my Senator, Ben Cardin, for his kind words and the excellence of his leadership and passionate concern for the people of Maryland.

I also would like to thank all the members of my family, especially my husband, Jamie, and three children for their support, understanding, and good humor. I want to mention that my husband Jamie was with me at my confirmation hearing when I was nominated for the Federal Reserve Board three years ago even though he was going through radiation and chemotherapy at the time. Jamie is a law professor and a Senator--although not a real Senator as my daughter Tabitha said when she was a little girl--a State Senator, and I am delighted that he is by my side again on this day, robustly healthy and fit three years after his final treatment.

I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Lew for this opportunity. The trust they have placed in me is a humbling honor.

Finally, I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member Hatch, for the enormous courtesy you and the members of your staff have shown me throughout this process. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you as the Treasury Department continues the essential work of promoting economic growth and accelerating our recovery from the financial crisis of 2008.

It is a special thrill to be back in the Senate. Although I spent half of my career as a lawyer in the private sector, the other half has been devoted to public service, and for me this gratifying phase of my career began right here in this Chamber. As a former Counsel to the Senate Banking Committee under three different Chairmen, I cherish the time that I spent in this remarkable body where I learned that the character of our leaders and the purposes they bring to public life are far more important than their party labels. This is an institution with a great history and a great future, and all of America is deeply invested in its success.

I have worked extensively in the private sector. These roles in business not only gave me invaluable management experience, but they also taught me what those in the financial marketplace seek most from government: stability, predictability, fairness, a sense of proportion, attention to the unintended consequences of regulation, pragmatism, and bipartisan effort towards economic prosperity and public efficiency.

From 2007-2010, I had the honor of serving as the Commissioner of Financial Regulation for the State of Maryland. As Commissioner, I worked hard every day to provide stability to our financial sector and opportunity to our businesses and our people through the darkest days of the Great Recession. I mobilized a great deal of talent to address the devastating effects of spikes in home foreclosures and unemployment that shocked so many of our families and communities. And I took action to revise and replace ineffective and counterproductive state regulations in order to enhance economic progress, regulatory effectiveness, and access to affordable credit.

In 2010, I was nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate as a Governor of the Federal Reserve Board. In that capacity, I have worked with my colleagues on the Board and on the Federal Open Market Committee to maximize employment, maintain price stability, and restore the underlying strength and vibrancy of the American economy.

As the executive agency charged with promoting economic prosperity and financial stability, the Department of the Treasury has a sacred trust to advance the fortunes and livelihood of our people, our businesses, our communities, and our nation. The government does not create wealth and prosperity and innovation in our economy, but it does create the conditions in which our people and businesses can, and therefore its role is central and indispensable.

This is an exciting time to join the Treasury Department. With the need for immediate stabilization from the financial crisis behind us, Congress and the Administration can increasingly focus their attention on longer-term structural reforms that will improve conditions for sustainable and meaningful economic growth. From housing finance reform and implementing financial regulatory reform to tailored sanction design and implementation, new trade agreements and tax and entitlement reform, we have the chance to make important long-term and durable progress for the country. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely alongside members of this Committee to identify the best bipartisan policy options to achieve such progress.

I also look forward to helping Secretary Lew continue exemplary and efficient management of the Department and its component bureaus and offices. At different points over the last decade, I have dealt with the Treasury staff and have been greatly impressed by their skill and commitment. If I am so honored, I look forward to working every day to build effective policies for a sustained economic recovery and growth that reaches every corner of every state in our nation.

Let me say, finally, that I have learned plenty from intense study of econometric models and academic analyses in my time as a Federal Reserve Governor, but I have learned more than I ever imagined possible from the people I met when I made impromptu visits to job fairs and unemployment centers. Talking to people trying to avoid falling off the economic ledge reminds us of the urgent public purposes that must infuse our work here if we are to be authentically successful. I make it a continuing commitment to throw everything I have into seeking ways to broaden the opportunities for prosperity for all Americans.

Thank you for allowing me to testify here today and for receiving me in your offices. I would be happy to respond to any and all questions you may have throughout this process and indeed throughout my tenure at the Treasury Department if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed for this position.

###