

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Sherrod Brown
Executive Session on
Brian Miller, nominee for Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery, and
Dana Wade, nominee for Federal Housing Administration Commissioner
May 12, 2020

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The Committee will vote in person on two nominees for positions that are integral to making sure our recovery efforts to restart the economy and protect families are working.

If confirmed as Special Inspector General, Mr. Miller will oversee the \$500 billion provided in the CARES Act, as well as trillions in additional lending by the Fed. The Act provides the Treasury Secretary with broad discretion over the lending programs, so it is critical that the Special IG can act independently from the Administration and hold bad actors accountable.

His current position in the White House Counsel's office connects him to the Administration that he is supposed to keep an eye on – in contrast to virtually every other IG nominee. Mr. Miller was evasive during his nomination hearing when asked about the matters he worked on in the White House, and he repeated those non-answers in response to the written questions for the record.

As an IG nominee with personal ties to the White House Counsel's office in an Administration outwardly hostile to anyone who tries to hold the President accountable, Mr. Miller failed in committee to explain, or in the letters afterward, how he will establish his independence from his current bosses. He was unwilling to condemn the President's impulsive firings of several inspectors general who challenged this Administration.

He expects this Committee to evaluate him based on his prior record as an IG, and I appreciate and respect the Chairman for bringing that

up. But this is an entirely different job. And there is so much more at stake.

Oversight will require thorough examination of the work of the Treasury Department and the Fed, as well as the banks. And Mr. Miller failed to explain how he will fulfill that role, and I am unable to support his nomination today.

I think that if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle - if this were reversed and it was President Obama who wanted somebody to oversee his work who is working in the White House Counsel's Office, I think every single one of you would vote no. I'm hopeful you would be able to stand back and look at it that way.

We will also consider the nomination of Mrs. Dana Wade to be FHA Commissioner and Assistant Secretary for Housing. That role will play a critical role in stabilizing our housing markets, maintaining equal access to affordable homeownership, and protecting the lowest-income renters, including seniors.

Based on her responses to my questions, I don't believe she is the right person for the job.

In response to my questions following the hearing, she clearly stated her support for this Administration's policies that undermine the Fair Housing Act, displace 55,000 children, undermine the religious freedom of vulnerable people seeking federally-funded shelter, raise the cost of homeownership, and raise rents on the lowest income renters.

She also praised the Administration's response to the natural disasters in 2017, including in Puerto Rico, which tells us quite a lot about her judgment. The President's response was a catastrophe. The Administration violated the law when it delayed the process of getting aid to Puerto Rico for months.

She did all this while refusing to answer any questions about her role in these policies, despite the fact she was the lead political official overseeing HUD's rules and funding at the OMB.

In this, she is like other nominees who have come before this Committee. She cites her experience at OMB to show she's qualified for the job, but when asked for any details about what she actually did there, she avoids discussing it due to executive branch confidentiality.

Just like Ms. Kraninger, you can't have it both ways. I assume that you can because you can jam this through because whatever the President wants from this Congress, from this very spineless Congress, the president gets from this Congress.

Now is not the time, Mr. Chairman to be weakening fair housing protections, displace families, or raise costs on homeowners and renters, but that's the exact policies she has supported. We can't trust her to make the necessary decisions on policies that will help those most in need right now, when her past efforts show the opposite.

That's why I will oppose her nomination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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