

Opening Statement of Paul J. Ray
Nomination Hearing – December 4, 2019

Thank you very much, Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Peters, and Members of the Committee. It is a great honor to appear before you today.

I would like to thank the Members of this Committee and their staff for taking the time to meet with me. I would like to thank Chairman Johnson, whose leadership on regulatory reform has inspired many. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Members of the Committee on regulatory and information policy.

I would especially like to thank my family. My mother, DeLora Ray, has always been a model of sacrifice. Her determination and grit in raising three children, including a decade as a single mother, continue to amaze me. I am grateful for the companionship of my sister and brother, Hilary and David, throughout life's joys and sorrows.

Often, and especially today, I remember my father, Dr. Joe Ray. Born nearly blind and growing up amid great difficulties, his career as a teacher proved to many that hard work can overcome any adversity. Nearly two decades after his untimely death, his legacy as a loving father and husband, and as a faithful friend and mentor, continues to teach me what it means to live a good life.

Lastly, I would like to thank President Trump for his trust and confidence.

I am greatly honored to be considered for the position of Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. OIRA is an American success story. It is a story of commitment to good government, rationality, accountability, and the rule of law.

My appreciation for OIRA's vital mission is enhanced by having served at the office's helm as Acting Administrator. During this time, I sought to promote cost-benefit analysis and the other analytic tools OIRA uses to ensure that regulations rationally and transparently pursue the good of the American people. Those are the values that underlie the President's new Executive Order on transparent guidance, which OMB recently issued a memorandum to implement.

The President's recent Executive Order creates a level playing field for individuals and small businesses and gives them the tools they need to hold their government accountable for its policies. The Order is an instance of the Administration's commitment to making the regulatory process more democratic and accessible, a commitment I sought to advance in my time at OIRA.

I also worked to make the office an effective coordinator of the Executive regulatory process. OIRA's facilitation of the interagency review of regulations ensures that the federal government speaks with one voice and pursues the President's priorities. This unity of action is a prerequisite for rational regulation.

During my tenure I supported important initiatives with respect to federal statistical and information policy. For instance, in April, the Office of Management and Budget issued a memorandum directing agencies to update their Information Quality Guidelines, to bring greater openness and accuracy to data while rigorously protecting privacy and confidentiality.

I also sought to advance Congress's ability to monitor how agencies implement statutes through regulations. To that end, OMB issued a memorandum laying out a process for agencies to receive major determinations from OIRA under the Congressional Review Act. This policy will give Congress the tools it needs to hold agencies accountable.

I must mention something I observed during my time at OIRA: the outstanding quality of the men and women with whom I had the privilege of working. It is difficult to imagine a more dedicated and knowledgeable group of public servants. During my tenure, I tried to make OIRA a welcoming place where talented individuals dedicated to serving the United States would thrive.

Promoting cost-benefit analysis; making the regulatory process more democratic; facilitating interagency review; responsibly updating federal statistical and information policy; vindicating Congress's right to review regulations; and leaving OIRA an even better place to work than I found it: these are the objectives I pursued while Acting Administrator, and they are the goals I would bring with me to the position should the Senate choose to confirm me.

There is another, prime objective I would pursue, one that undergirds all the others I have mentioned, and that is promoting the rule of law. OIRA has a vital role in coordinating a process that results in regulations that comply with the law. Every federal official swears to bear true faith to the Constitution, and thus to the laws enacted pursuant to it; that oath has always been the touchstone of my public service. That, too, will continue if I am confirmed.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to answering your questions.