

**STATEMENT OF HON. BLANCHE LINCOLN, A U.S. SENATOR
FROM ARKANSAS**

Senator LINCOLN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. But I would like to take just a personal moment here, to the Chairman and to the Ranking Member here. You two gentlemen have really been unbelievably kind to me as a new member of the U.S. Senate.

I reached out to both of you all on this committee on a couple of issues and you have both been wonderful for me and my staff to work with. Your staffs have been wonderful, and I would like to thank you all personally for that. It means an awful lot for those of us that are new members, when we do reach out, for you all to have such a warm response ready. So, I appreciate that.

A very special thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, to be before you today. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Senate Finance Committee and to introduce my friend Bill Halter to serve as Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

It is a fellow Arkansan who, as you will hear, has quite a distinguished academic and professional background. He is a 1983 graduate of Stanford University, where he was a Truman scholar. He graduated from Stanford with honors and distinction in economics and political science. In 1986, he graduated from the prestigious Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar.

Presently, Mr. Halter serves as a senior advisor in the director's office within the Office of Management and Budget. Since 1993, he has provided counsel to OMB on policy issues, including review and evaluation of the management practices and budgets of the Federal cabinet departments.

Mr. Halter has served as an economist for the Joint Economic Committee of Congress and as a Chief Economist for this very distinguished committee as well.

He is being nominated to a critical Federal agency at an historic time in our Nation's history. Strengthening and preserving our Nation's Social Security system is one of the greatest challenges facing Congress and the administration.

In listening to both of you gentlemen, looking for solutions that will bring results—this is a result-oriented committee—and I think you all will agree that the gentleman that is here today can definitely bring about results and will work hard toward solutions.

It is imperative that, in order to meet the many challenges facing our Nation, the Social Security Administration should be led by our best, brightest, and most qualified. We can be sure that Mr. Halter brings outstanding skills and expertise to the Social Security Administration.

I know that you will find, as I have, that Mr. Halter is a man full of the enthusiasm, dedication, and the knowledge to be able to look for those solutions and to find those results.

I know his father is here in the audience, and equally is as proud of Mr. Halter as I am. I am also proud to say that he is a contemporary of mine, which is important, I think, in all of the debates that we are having.

I hope that the Finance Committee will favorably report the nomination of Mr. Halter to the Senate floor, and I look forward to supporting Mr. Halter's nomination.

I want to, again, thank you gentlemen for all that you have done for me, and certainly for allowing me to be here today in support of a good friend of mine. Thank you.