

**Opening Statement**  
**Nomination Hearing for Lance Robertson**  
**Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee**  
**Chairman Lamar Alexander**  
**August 1, 2017**

Thank you Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray, and members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee for allowing me to appear before you today. I am honored to be here with my fellow nominees and am grateful for your consideration of my nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary on Aging and Administrator of the Administration for Community Living (ACL). I look forward to discussing how we can advance that organization's ongoing successful work in serving seniors and individuals living with a physical and/or intellectual and developmental disability. I appreciate the wisdom many of you and your staff members shared with me in advance of this hearing.

I would also like to thank so many family members, friends, and colleagues who have supported me through this nomination. I wish to especially thank my wife of 23 years, Lori, who joins me here today. I am grateful beyond words for her unwavering love and support and that of our daughters Brooke and Kaitlyn.

ACL's mission of maximizing "*the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers*" is critical. ACL currently serves more than 140 million Americans and this population continues to grow. Ensuring choice, independence, and meaningful community inclusion is the hallmark of ACL's work and my life's mission.

As Assistant Secretary, my vision would involve a four-pronged, overarching strategy that positively impacts all populations.

1. The first strategy is to improve access to information about long term services and supports that are available both with publicly-funded and private-sector resources. Many Americans are unsure where to turn when confronted with an illness, disability, service need, or when they stumble into the role of a caregiver.
2. The next strategy focuses on supporting caregivers. The informal caregiver and the service he or she provides is the epicenter of the long-term services and supports system. Our nation must recognize how critically important it is that we help the 44 million unpaid family caregivers whose work to the care system is estimated at 470 billion dollars a year. Under my leadership we will continue to bolster respite vouchers, promote evidence-based solutions, and build support systems that work. We will continue to seek ways to meet caregivers where they are and equip them with the tools needed to be successful in their roles.

3. The third strategy is dedicated to strengthening elder justice. Far too many older adults are exploited and abused, and we must continue to aggressively fight this growing epidemic. Strong momentum can be seen, however, through the work of the multi-agency Elder Justice Coordinating Committee, the recent release of innovation grants funded through ACL, and the new bipartisan Congressional caucus focused on this issue.
4. The final strategy is increasing our network's business acumen. Non-profit aging and disability community-based organizations work hard every day to feed, support, transport and assist individuals. These organizations are the backbone of our effort to promote independence, well-being and quality of life for older adults and people living with disabilities.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the great team at ACL. As a collective body, ACL boasts a cadre of intelligent, committed and impressive individuals.

As you fulfill your important role of confirming nominees, I am certain you look for individuals who not only have the requisite experience and skills but preferably convince you that their commitment is unmatched and possibly even galvanized by personal experience. I humbly submit to you that I meet such criteria with nearly a quarter century of public service experience, a graduate degree in public administration, holding national leadership roles, and comprehensive experience in directing aging and disability network programs. I am humbled and appreciative of the endorsements that I have received from organizations across the aging and disability networks. It is my hope that when you review the letters of support it will assure you of the abilities that I would bring to this position if I am confirmed. Having been partially raised by my grandparents, served as a caregiver, and having a niece living with significant disability affords me a personal view of ACL's important work.

Never does a day go by that I'm not impressed with the resiliency of those we serve. In most cases, particularly through programs offered by ACL, these individuals just need a little help – a meal, assistance with employment, transportation to the doctor, a referral to a community organization, a bit of respite, etc. We help by supporting the least expensive and preferred home and community-based care where it is desired. I believe whole-heartedly in our work to offer choices, empower people, and support families across the care spectrum. We help Americans live healthy, productive and independent lives in their community. Our work is vital.

I wish to thank President Trump for his nomination, support and confidence and I am excited to work under Secretary Price's leadership if confirmed. And, thanks to each of you for the outstanding leadership and passion you provide each day on behalf our great country. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your staff. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to be with you today.