

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

May 20, 2025

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Members of the Senate HELP Committee:

I am writing to express concern that the Senate HELP Committee may not be holding public hearings on many nominees for the agencies under its jurisdiction. On the Committee's website an executive session was noticed this week presumably for marking up seven nominees to important posts at the Departments of Labor and Education. There have been no hearings for these nominees.

Public hearings are an important part of the Senate's constitutional role in advising on and consenting to presidential nominations. Not only may Senators further inform their decisions via these hearings, but the public itself is given an opportunity to hear about the nominee's values, priorities, and qualifications. This transparency informs the public and allows the public to weigh in with their Senators about the nominations, whether to express support or concern. Not holding public hearings deprives working people of the full opportunity to make their views known to their government.

Working people care about what their government plans on doing with respect to job training, mine safety, disability rights, public education, and more. Workers care about who will be making decisions affecting their lives, what those officials intend to do, and how they will approach problems. Working people also want to see their elected representatives speak publicly to these nominees on their behalf, to lay out their constituents' concerns and priorities. Creating a public record with these nominees helps Congress fulfill its oversight obligations, providing some measure of accountability as the work of these executive branch leaders gets underway. Just as hardworking taxpayers have to undergo interviews to get a job, so should these nominees, and new hires always benefit from setting expectations.

Public hearings are more important today than ever before. Given the current Administration's approach to governing, busting norms and empowering unelected and unconfirmed people like Elon Musk to cancel programs and eliminate public services without an opportunity for public comment, public hearings on nominees can only help restore some modicum of trust. Without public hearings, citizens have every reason to be suspicious of these nominees' qualifications and intentions. Public hearings help every stakeholder in this process – the nominees who are asked to lead, the Administration appointing them, the Senate in its constitutional duties, and the American people, whose faith in their government is in short supply.

In sum, we urge you to hold public hearings on nominees. Transparency is critical and will pay off for everyone in the short and long terms. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs