

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT M. COUCH**

Nominee to serve as General Counsel  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Hearing before the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban  
Development

United States Senate



MAY 10, 2007

Chairman Dodd, Ranking Member Shelby, and distinguished members of the Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. And thank you to all of the staff who met with me over the last month. Those meetings have helped me gain important insights into the position for which I have been nominated.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to President Bush and Secretary Jackson for their confidence in asking me to not only be part of the Administration, but to have the confidence in me to serve as both the President of Ginnie Mae and as HUD's Acting General Counsel. I am certainly honored to be nominated to serve as the General Counsel of HUD.

If my appearance seems like *déjà vu* to some of you, it was a little more than a year ago that I came before this very Committee as the nominee to serve as President of Ginnie Mae. I appreciate the confidence you put in me then, and I can assure you that, over the last year, Ginnie Mae has continued to fulfill its mission of expanding access to affordable housing in America by linking the global capital markets to the nation's housing markets. I am grateful for the trust the United States Senate placed in me when I was confirmed last year. Since then, I have been extremely impressed with the professional staff of Ginnie Mae and I strongly believe the organization will continue to be successful and effective in meeting its goals.

Today, I come before you as the nominee for the position of General Counsel of HUD. Just this past weekend, I was in Lexington, Virginia celebrating my 25<sup>th</sup> law school reunion at Washington and Lee University. Since I graduated, I have been grateful for the opportunities I have had both as a lawyer and as a banker, and I believe my previous occupations have provided me with the skills necessary to serve as HUD's chief legal officer. In addition, I have served as the Acting General Counsel for approximately 6 months now, and I have become very familiar with the operations of the agency and the Office of General Counsel.

The Office of General Counsel is a legal organization of approximately 400 attorneys with offices spread throughout the nation. I have already visited several of our regional offices and have gotten to know many of the very talented and dedicated attorneys in the field and at Headquarters here in Washington, D.C. Let me just say that I have been extremely impressed.

If confirmed, I am committed to working with our clients within the agency to provide the best legal counsel possible to further HUD's mission: to increase homeownership, support community development, and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination.

I would also like to thank my wife, Anne, who is here today and my family for the love and support they have given me, especially during the move from Birmingham to Washington. This has been a challenging, exciting, and rewarding time for me and for them as well.

Mr. Chairman, I am very appreciative of the trust that the President and Secretary Jackson have placed in me by nominating me for the post of General Counsel. And I am also grateful for the Banking Committee's consideration today.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.