

Prepared Statement of Keith A. Nelson

**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Administration,
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

**Hearing before the United States Senate Committee on Banking,
Housing and Urban Affairs**

United States Senate



September 15, 2005

Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Sarbanes, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of Administration for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. I am honored that President Bush has nominated me to serve in this position, and that this Committee is taking time to consider my nomination.

I also want to take a moment to introduce my wife, Julia Gomez Nelson, who is joining me today, as well as my mother, Pamela Hudson Nelson, who this morning is skipping part of her monthly meeting as Vice Chair of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. My in-laws, Guillermo and Olema Gomez, also traveled from Florida to be with us today.

Commitment to public service is a proud tradition in my family, and I have been honored to continue that tradition over the last three years at the U.S. Department of Labor. Since 2001, I have worked in management and administration at the Labor Department, most recently serving as Associate Deputy Secretary for Management. In this capacity, I have been involved in human resource matters, information technology, budget formulation, financial management, and general operations. One of our proudest accomplishments came recently, when the Office of Management and Budget recognized the Labor Department as the best-managed in the Executive Branch.

Among our most significant achievements was the collective bargaining agreement we reached earlier this year with Local 12 of the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents most of the Department's employees in the Washington, DC area. This agreement, the first since 1992, was the culmination of more than three years of mediation and negotiation.

The Department also successfully migrated its payroll system to the National Finance Center – part of a government-wide effort to shift certain services that are not mission specific to designated government service providers. This was a significant endeavor – one that required our office to coordinate the efforts of our Chief Financial Officer, the Human Resources staff, and regional employees in order to prepare the Department's 17,000 employees for a new payroll system.

In a more broad sense, my service at the Labor Department allowed me to gain a clear understanding of the urgency of succession planning in the federal government. And through the extensive briefings and interviews that have

characterized the confirmation process, I have come to appreciate how acute and serious this issue is for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In addition to succession planning, HUD has also performed an assessment revealing various “skill gaps” between current personnel and those required to execute the mission most effectively. If confirmed, I hope to have the opportunity to provide the Department with the training and recruitment necessary to bridge those gaps.

Through these and other areas of focus, I will keep lines of communication open with stakeholders to ensure that all interested parties receive a fair hearing.

In conclusion, I am committed to the responsibilities and challenges that come with this position. Under the leadership of Secretary Jackson, I am confident HUD will continue its progress to becoming a more efficient and effective operation in fulfilling its vital public mission.

I want to thank you again for scheduling this hearing during what I know is a very busy time for the Senate.