

Opening Statement of  
Nominee for Member of the Council of Economic Advisers

**Katharine Gail Abraham**

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

March 8, 2011

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shelby, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am pleased and honored to appear before you today as a nominee to be a Member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers.

Before I begin, I would like to introduce several people who are with me here today. First is Graham Horkley, my wonderful husband of more than twenty-five years. Second is my mother Roberta Abraham, who throughout my life has been a source of encouragement and support. I am also very pleased to introduce my brother, David Abraham, his wife, Carol Popolow Abraham, my nephew and niece, William and Allison Abraham, and my sister, Sarah Abraham. My college-age sons, Ian and Ben Horkley, my father, William Abraham, my brother, Jon Abraham, and my sister, Molly Abraham, would very much have liked to be here today, but unfortunately were not able to attend.

I have been Professor of Survey Methodology and Faculty Associate of the Maryland Population Research Center at the University of Maryland since 2002. From 1993 to 2001, I served as Commissioner of Labor Statistics in the Department of Labor, where I was responsible for many of the key economic indicators produced by the Federal government. Prior to that, I held faculty positions in the Department of Economics, University of Maryland, and the Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

I first became enamored of economics as an undergraduate student. What drew me to economics is the power that economic analysis has to inform the policy process and contribute to better outcomes for our society. Economic analysis can be only as good as the data on which it rests. This is something that I came particularly to appreciate during my eight years as Commissioner of Labor Statistics and I have maintained a continuing interest in the quality of economic statistics and the ways in which they might be improved.

My research and writing have examined a variety of labor market policy issues and relevant economic data on unemployment, employment, inflation, wages and national output. It is my hope that, if confirmed, my expertise can be useful for interpreting the new data about our economy that will become available over the coming months and years and for assessing their implications for important policy decisions.

These continue to be extraordinary times for our economy. Following the worst macroeconomic shock experienced in a generation, the economy is beginning to recover, but for too many Americans things are still far from being back to normal. Looking to the future, we know that investments in physical, human and knowledge capital will be essential to ensuring our nation's long term prosperity. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with the other members of the Administration and with this Committee to provide economic insights and analysis that will help with the formulation of policies conducive to broadly shared growth.

Thank you. I will be happy to answer any questions you or other Members of the Committee may have.