

United States Senate
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Testimony of Irving L. Dennis
Nominee for Chief Financial Officer
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Thank you, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Warren, and distinguished members of this Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

I am deeply honored to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as Chief Financial Officer of HUD and grateful for the confidence that both the President and Secretary Scott Turner have placed in me. Having previously served as HUD's Chief Financial Officer during the first Trump Administration, I am honored by the opportunity to return and continue serving the American people.

I would also like to thank my family for their unwavering support throughout this nomination process and throughout my career.

As a Certified Public Accountant, I have dedicated my professional life to financial stewardship, accountability, and protecting stakeholder dollars from fraud, waste, and abuse.

As someone who grew up with very humble beginnings in the small town of Belvidere, New Jersey, I do not take this opportunity for granted. My home town is a blue-collar farming community that instilled in me a strong work ethic, and an appreciation for public service.

My father emphasized the importance of hard work from an early age. At age twelve, my brother and I worked on a local produce farm, waking before sunrise to harvest crops. I also worked at a local Hot Dog Stand and local factory to pay for my college education. Those experiences taught me discipline, responsibility, and the value of earning and saving for the future.

I attended Montclair State University as a first-generation college graduate and earned a degree in accounting. I remained actively involved with the university through guest lectures and service on the advisory board of its business school.

Following graduation, I joined Ernst & Young, one the big four auditing firms, where I became a CPA and spent

nearly forty years building a career in public accounting. I ultimately retired as a Global Client Service Partner. During that time, I served as the coordinating audit partner for several Fortune 500 companies and advised boards of directors, audit committees, and senior executives on corporate governance, financial reporting, internal controls, business transformation initiatives, and mergers and acquisitions.

After retiring from EY, I sought an opportunity to apply my professional experience to public service. I was honored to be nominated and confirmed as HUD's Chief Financial Officer during the first Trump Administration under Secretary Ben Carson.

When I arrived at HUD in 2018, the Department faced significant financial management challenges. HUD's financial infrastructure included multiple material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, and adverse audit outcomes. Meaningful improvements were needed across governance, people, processes, internal controls, and information technology systems.

Working alongside Secretary Ben Carson and a dedicated team of public servants, we focused on

transforming HUD's financial management and technology operations. Through those efforts, HUD eliminated most of its material weaknesses, strengthened internal controls, and in 2020 achieved its first clean audit opinion in eight years.

Building upon that progress, HUD is continuing to modernize its financial operations. One of my key priorities include consolidating and modernizing the Department's financial and grants management systems, improving efficiency, enhancing customer service, and strengthening financial oversight and accountability. We refer to this initiative as HUD's Unified Grant System, or HUGS for short.

HUGS includes implementing stronger processes to improve transparency and accountability among grantees and subgrantees to track how taxpayer dollars are being spent at the subrecipient level. Also, we are working closely with HUD program offices to address longstanding improper payment challenges through comprehensive business process improvements.

If confirmed, I will work diligently to ensure that HUD remains a responsible steward of taxpayer resources and continues to strengthen its financial management

practices. I am committed to promoting transparency, accountability, operational excellence, and effective support of HUD's mission on behalf of the American people.

Thank you, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Warren, and the distinguished members of this Committee for your consideration of my nomination.