

Opening Statements of  
Nominee for member of the Council of Economic Advisers  
**Cecilia Elena Rouse**  
Before the  
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs  
Of the  
United States Senate

January 15, 2009

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: 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'd like to introduce my family who is here today in force. First is my husband and partner in life, Ford Morrison, along with our two girls Nidal (who is 7) and Safa (who is 5). There is also our contingent from the great state of New Jersey, my parents, Carl and Lorraine Rouse, and my sister and niece, Carolyn Rouse and Skylar Schiltz-Rouse. Next to them are my cousin, Terrie Rouse who is also the CEO for Visitor Services for the Capitol Visitor Center, and my Aunts and Uncles Doris and George Haley, and Phyllis and Bill Taylor. And while she really wanted to be here, my mother-in-law, Toni Morrison, is unable to attend.

I am currently a Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University where I have been on the faculty for the past 16 years. As a labor economist I am most committed to understanding the problems, choices, and tradeoffs that individuals face, particularly those that concern the labor market. I am particularly interested in understanding ways to increase worker productivity, primarily through the acquisition of valuable skills or human capital. As such, I have devoted much of my research to the economics of education at all levels.

As a faculty member of a public policy school, I have always been deeply committed to studying real-world problems with real-world implications, rather than abstract theory. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to apply my skills to actual policy-making once before in 1998 when I spent a year at the National Economic Council and I would be most honored to have the opportunity to do so again should I be confirmed as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Indeed, these are extraordinary times. As Professor Romer has already described, the macroeconomic shock is the worst that it has been in a generation and by all expectations the unprecedented job loss will continue in the short term. Importantly, we are seeing that some sectors are suffering more than others forcing many unemployed workers to search for jobs that require a different set of skills than those they currently possess. As such, I believe that investments in education and training are critical to any strategy to help jumpstart our economy and should I be confirmed I look forward to working with the other members of the Administration and this committee to provide the economic insights and analysis you need to craft wise and effective policy.

As a concluding note, I would like to add that for the past several years I have taught one of the main introductory micro-economics courses to first-year students in the Woodrow Wilson School's master's program. (This year's class was particularly inquisitive and challenging!) I emphasize to the students the power of economics – both theoretical and applied -- in guiding analysis of policy issues. Should I be confirmed, I would bring this dedication and enthusiasm to the President's Council of Economic Advisers.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other Members of the committee might have.