

Ranking Member Tim Scott (R-S.C.)
Opening Statement
Full Committee Hearing
April 18, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Today we are here in furtherance of the Senate's solemn and constitutional role to provide advice and consent on presidential nominees. Nominees are intended to advise the President and serve as his or her designee by leading their respective department, agency, or division. And as leaders of our country, the greatest nation on Earth, presidential nominees should inspire confidence and have a strong respect for the rule of law and support policies that promote the American Dream. As public servants, we must all strive to serve the American people to the best of our ability, and in doing so, we must promote a strong economy and policies that serve the interests of everyday Americans working to achieve their version of the American Dream. We do this by incentivizing growth and opportunity, not an administrative state full of regulatory burdens.

Unfortunately, this panel before us today falls short of those goals. Today we will hear from Dr. Jared Bernstein, to be the Chairman of the CEA, Dr. Ron Borzekowski, and Mr. Solomon Greene, as well as Mr. David Uejio. Sadly for our country, most of these men share a vision to remake our government into one that prioritizes handouts over hand-ups. They lack respect for our men and women in blue, and they have worked to promote an administrative agenda cloaked in secrecy and politics rather than working through a transparent notice-and-comment process. These views and ideas aren't held by the majority of the American people, and they should not be reflected in America's leaders and the regulatory responsibilities they undertake. Time for my opening remarks is limited. But given the large panel, I would like to take just a few minutes to run through some of my chief concerns with each of the nominees before us today.

First, President Biden has nominated Dr. Bernstein as the chair of the CEA. While Mr. Bernstein has made some positive comments about opportunity zones—and I will certainly look forward to having a conversation about that during the Q&A—however, the American people probably know Mr. Bernstein best as a man who told them time and time again that inflation was “transitory.” Who later had the audacity to say the American people just didn't understand the definition of transitory when inflation turned out not to be transitory. It is mind-boggling to me that inflation is at a 40-year

high and yet the person who advised the President that inflation would be transitory is the very same person the President has nominated to be the Chair of the CEA. It just doesn't make sense.

Among other things, Mr. Bernstein has advocated for universal government-guaranteed jobs, universal government-run health care, higher taxes including a carbon tax, and more reckless government spending, the [Green New] Deal, dropping our commitment to maintaining the dollar as a reserve currency, and remaking the Federal Reserve—an independent body—to focus not on the dual mandate, but more specifically, on unemployment by race. He is championing the cause of climate alarmists at the expense of working families, writing that the price of fossil fuels “should be higher” given the “increasing awareness of the urgency of climate change.” He even criticized the low gas prices during the previous administration, claiming that it should be higher “given its negative environmental effects.” Not only have Mr. Bernstein's economic policies and views proven to be inaccurate, some are simply counter to Americans’ best interest[s].

In addition to Mr. Bernstein, this committee must once again consider Mr. Greene and Mr. Uejio. Mr. Greene and Mr. Uejio were here last year, during the last Congress. Both failed to receive a confirmation vote, and I think is important for us to understand why. Mr. Greene has made numerous public statements disparaging the police and advocating for defunding the police. Because of his extreme anti-police statements two national police groups have publicly opposed Mr. Greene's nomination since he was first nominated in 2021. Worse yet, instead of taking responsibility for making such statements, he pointed fingers and apologized for our taking offense, attempting to deny his anti-police sentiment.

I'm a guy who spent a lot of time and many years working on police reform. And when you look at the comments, clearly, there's nothing hyperbolic about the position that I'm taking as it relates to the concept or the statement that Mr. Greene would really not be that dissuaded in finding ways to use the money for the police officers, particularly in some of the most devastated communities, for something else. I will recall that this is round two for Mr. Greene and I having a conversation about the importance of police in the poorest communities in the country, as neither one of us will be surprised that in August of [2021], we had the same conversation about

the importance of having law enforcement in their presence—increasing in some of the most devastated, crime-ridden areas of our country. Having grown up in a single-parent household and in poverty and being all too familiar with the negative impact that happens in so many of these [devastated] areas, I think some things are not political. Some things are just so personal that it is impossible to deny the actual impact of fewer officers, not more officers in some of the most challenging areas. And so, I take great offense on behalf of those who today suffer under the weight of crime that is burdening their communities. You think about here in the D.C. area where rape is over 100%, you think about New York City, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and so many other places around the country where the weight of crime is now locking grandparents in their houses from the time the sun goes down, until it comes up. And so, for me, this is such an important issue that having someone in the role over [at] the Housing and Urban Development [Department] in any way, shape, or form who doesn't seem to appreciate the importance of law enforcement's presence is just a challenge and makes it impossible for me to vote for someone like that.

Like Mr. Greene, Mr. Uejio's nomination also failed law last Congress. Despite protestations to the contrary, the record is clear. Mr. Uejio is unqualified to serve as an Assistant Secretary of the Department of HUD. More importantly, the reported actions of forcing out senior career civil servants so that Director Chopra at CFPB could fill those positions with handpicked loyalists, including Mr. Uejio himself, are troubling. We must all strive to lead by example, and I cannot justify confirming a nominee who may have unfairly secured his current role as a means of padding his resume for his pending, albeit languishing nomination.

And finally, Mr. Borzekowski has been nominated to serve as the Director of the Office of Financial Research at the Department of Treasury. He has a doctorate in economics and unquestionably is academically qualified. And though his record lacks really glaring concerns, I look forward to hearing more about your positions and learning more about you carrying out your responsibilities and duties in a fair, empirical, and apolitical fashion, if confirmed. After all, the Office of Financial Research should not be used to manipulate financial data, standards, and analysis to justify the progressive economic agenda of the Biden administration that seeks to unravel our free-market economy and damage the livelihood of everyday Americans. I look forward to hearing from each of you.