



## **Testimony of David Carey Woll, Jr.**

### **Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development**

#### **Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs**

**November 20, 2019**

Thank you, Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Brown, and distinguished members of this committee. I am deeply honored to be nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Community Planning and Development.

If I may, I would first like to introduce my family, who are the most important people in my life. I am happy to introduce my wife of 23 years, Phoebe Cabell Woll. I would also like to introduce my three children: my oldest son Tripp, who is a senior at Pennsylvania State University; Ted, who is a junior at the University of Wisconsin; and my youngest, Bryce, who is a sophomore in high school.

I would also like to introduce my dad, David Woll, who has been my mentor both as a father and as a lawyer. My dad and my mom, who I wish was still with us today, taught me the importance of faith, values and treating every person, regardless of their background or circumstances, with compassion, dignity and respect.

My brother Mike is also here with his wife, Anita Woll. I cannot thank them enough for their tremendous support. My sisters Eileen and Francie were unable to travel here today, but they too have always been very supportive of me and I am profoundly grateful for their love and encouragement.

My path to nomination and this confirmation hearing has been somewhat untraditional. After graduating from the University of Maryland and the University of Virginia School of Law, I spent most of my earlier career as an investigator and prosecutor working to protect victims of crime.

At the Securities and Exchange Commission, I was a senior counsel in the Enforcement Division, where one of my largest matters was a securities fraud case involving a securities boiler room that targeted unsophisticated and elderly investors.

At the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, I spent three years prosecuting domestic violence and sexual assault cases against people who victimized some of the most vulnerable people in the community, including children, indigent women who had been trafficked, and young people who were LGBTQ. I also served as a federal prosecutor in Brooklyn, where I prosecuted business and securities fraud cases in which the victims were financially devastated due to the greed of others who took advantage of them. This included prosecuting a \$100 million Ponzi scheme and a Hurricane Katrina fraud case.

Following Superstorm Sandy in the Fall of 2012, I had an opportunity to do something completely different, which was to work on disaster recovery for the State of New Jersey. That was an important moment in my career because it ended up being my first exposure to HUD and the dedicated career staff who work for its Office of Community Planning and Development. It struck me then, as it does now, that CPD genuinely cares about disaster victims, the unsheltered homeless and others in need, and works incredibly hard to help grantees navigate through very stressful and difficult circumstances. I feel particularly privileged to be considered to lead this incredibly talented team.

There is always, however, room for improvement, particularly when it comes to better serving the states and communities who are our grantees. With this in mind, I have several priorities if I am confirmed.

First, CPD needs to continue to strengthen its stewardship of the Disaster Recovery program by making sure we have the right number of people in the right places. To that end, we are in the process of doubling the size of the disaster recovery division, and out-stationing staff closer to our grantees. This will help us to deliver grant assistance in a more efficient manner and give us greater flexibility to respond to the unique needs of each state and grantee.

Second, CPD needs to work with other agencies, states, municipalities and the private sector to develop strategies to target unsheltered homelessness. This effort is similar to what we did when we targeted veterans' and family homelessness, which led to decreases in both numbers.

Third, our many field offices are on the front line and play a critical role in forging relationships with our grantees. We need to reshape our field operations in order to improve communications between headquarters and the field, and to give the field offices greater flexibility to react to the changing needs of our grantees.

Members of the Committee, I have always worked to help those who are vulnerable and most in need. If confirmed, I commit to you that I will continue to do so as the Assistant Secretary of CPD. Thank you.