



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
Senator Mary L. Landrieu

Opening Statement for
Hearing entitled: “*Confirmation Hearing of Marie Johns for Deputy
Administrator of the Small Business Administration*”
May 19, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.
Room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building

(As prepared)

Good morning. I call to order today’s confirmation hearing on the nominations of Marie Annette Collins Johns to be Deputy Administrator for Small Business Administration. I welcome those in the audience, my colleagues and the nominee.

I understand that you have family and friends here today. I would like to welcome them as well. Please feel free to introduce them to us during your introduction.

I would also like to welcome Congressman Andre’ Carson from Indiana. Congressman Carson will be introducing our nominee to the Committee following opening statements.

Our Committee received a statement of support from Senator Paul Strauss, the shadow Senator for the District of Columbia, and I would ask that those remarks be entered into the record.

I have had the chance to meet with Ms. Johns and have been very impressed. I would like to take just a few minutes to speak briefly about her and the position she has been nominated for. I will then turn it over to the Ranking Member, Olympia Snowe from Maine, and then the nominee can make her opening statement.

The Deputy Administrator is a critical position at the SBA and we are very pleased that it will soon be filled. Typically the Deputy Administrator acts as a Chief Operating Officer of the Agency.

In my discussions with Ms. Johns it is clear that Administrator Mills wants to expand the role of Deputy Administrator. She envisions the Deputy Administrator as an extension of herself. The new Deputy Administrator will provide another set of hands to provide outreach to the nation’s small businesses.

It is clear from Mrs. Johns’ background that she has the leadership skills to be an invaluable asset to the SBA. She spent more than two decades in executive leadership at Verizon and its predecessor companies – retiring in 2004 as President of Verizon-Washington DC. For the past three years she

has served as a consultant to the Leader's Edge, an international leadership development, executive coaching and consulting firm. Ms. Johns has served as a board member on a number of non-profit organizations, including the Washington, DC Technology Council, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, Girl Scouts USA and many others.

With all of this experience, I know Ms. Johns will come to the SBA ready to hit the ground running, and I am looking forward to working with her.

With Ms. Johns' nomination process coming to a close, the SBA is one step closer to having an exceptional leadership team in place. With capable leaders like Mrs. Johns at the SBA, we are hopeful the agency will be empowered to play an important role in assisting small businesses as they continue to lead this country to an economic recovery.

Mrs. Johns, I look forward to hearing your opening statements and getting more details on how you would handle specific issues facing the SBA, which we will explore during the question period. We look forward to working with you and Administrator Mills as we continue our work to revitalize this Agency on behalf of the millions of small businesses across the country.

With that, I will now turn to my Ranking Member, Olympia Snowe, for her opening statement.