

Senator Larry Craig

Prepared Statement of Senator Larry Craig

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Burr, thank you for holding this hearing today. Unfortunately I will have to leave early today for a hearing with the Energy Committee. However, I wanted to make a few comments on the nominee pending before this Committee today.

I had the chance to meet with Michael Hager, and I was very impressed with his passion and excitement for taking on this position. This enthusiasm is reinforced by his very impressive resume, and I believe his extensive experience in human resource management will serve him and the Veterans' Affairs Department very well.

Michael spent 15 years with Banc One Corporation, during which the employee base grew from 7,000 to an astonishing 60,000. He is currently an Associate Deputy Administrator with the Small Business Administration and has proven himself a valuable member of that office. While Michael will have just over a year to serve in his capacity as Assistant Secretary, I believe that he has the skill set and the energy to serve the VA, and I trust that he will take full advantage of the short time allotted to him.

It is my hope that we can move forward swiftly with this nominee. It is imperative that we schedule a vote in the near future to allow Michael to get to work as soon as possible.