

Testimony of Ann Calvaresi Barr
Nominee for Inspector General
U.S. Agency for International Development
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
August 4, 2015

Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and Members of the Committee:

It is a great honor to sit before you today as the President's nominee for Inspector General of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I very much appreciate your consideration of my nomination, and if confirmed by the full Senate, I look forward to working with you on important oversight and accountability matters related to U.S. foreign assistance.

I would first like to recognize my family, who are always there for me: my husband, David, who is currently in Iraq on a State Department detail; and my daughter, Julianna, who completed her second year in International Studies at Dickinson College and is beginning a year of study in Italy. I would also like to recognize my mother, Julia, and late father, Anthony; and my siblings, Kathleen, Dominic, and Anthony. Also with me, in person or in spirit, are my mother-in-law, Aldonna; nieces, nephews, and other members of my sizeable Italian family. Together, they have instilled in me strong ethical and moral values and taught me that hard work, dedication, and humility are the foundation to building resilient relationships and mutual respect. I would also like to recognize my mentors, colleagues, and friends for their inspiration, encouragement, and support—some of whom are also here today. As you can see, I am surrounded by much love and personally blessed as a result.

It has been a privilege to serve in the Government accountability community for more than 3 decades. My civil service career—which began in local government in my hometown of Reading, Pennsylvania—includes 25 years at the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and 6 years at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of Inspector General (OIG). As the premier Government agency that wrote the standards for auditing and accounting, GAO served as a critical training ground for me from the time I started as a graduate co-op to my entry into the Senior Executive Service. During my tenure, I had the privilege to work with three outstanding Comptrollers General, as well as many other leaders who served as role models to me.

While at GAO, I led a number of complex and high-profile audits in multiple offices—including 5 years in GAO's former European Office in Frankfurt, Germany. These audits included assessments of large-scale, cross-cutting programs, and resulted in improved operations and significant cost savings across Government. Many of these audits focused on acquisition and procurement practices, financial and grant management, and export controls. I also worked closely with the Comptroller General to identify and develop key national indicators used by state, local, and foreign governments for gauging economic, social, cultural, and environmental health. This effort resulted in the development of a comprehensive system for assessing and improving the United States' position in the world in these areas.

Particularly gratifying and fulfilling was work I performed while stationed overseas, where I took part in improving and overseeing plans for implementing programs that provide aid. This work concerned international development efforts and the state of human rights conditions in Somalia, Turkey, Israel, and the former Yugoslavia and Zaire. I also worked on audits related to national security concerns, such as the drawdown of forces from Europe, the evacuation of noncombatants, and the deployment of female forces to the Persian Gulf.

My GAO experience prepared me well for the next chapter of my Federal career—working alongside DOT’s Inspector General, Calvin Scovel III, whose vision and exceptional leadership I learned from and are highly regarded throughout the OIG community. Within my first weeks as Principal Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation, I led the development of a comprehensive strategy for identifying and mitigating risks in DOT’s oversight of \$48 billion in transportation projects funded under the new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Our risk mitigation strategy enabled us to quickly identify and inform the Department of vulnerabilities that required immediate action or a sustained focus before funds were further obligated or expended. We subsequently adopted this approach for our surface transportation reauthorization and Hurricane Sandy relief audits.

During this time, I developed a vision for the Office of Audits and, in collaboration with senior managers, devised a strategic plan for the office with achievable goals, objectives, and performance measures. Ultimately, our aim was to enhance product quality and stress accountability for issuing timely and relevant reports. To get there, I worked with senior managers to streamline processes and institute new programs, policies, tools, and procedures.

After my first year at DOT, the Inspector General selected me as his Deputy, expanding the scope of my responsibilities to include providing leadership and direction for OIG’s investigation and operational support activities. From this position, I was able to fully appreciate each office’s distinct focus and outlook, as well as the need for greater synergies to fully develop and leverage our resources. Continual dedication to developing and motivating staff was critical to achieving these goals. I personally sponsored Communities of Practice, a forum where staff share knowledge to broaden perspectives and encourage greater coordination and partnering. I also established and participate in an OIG-wide mentoring program, monthly leadership brown bags for managers and line staff, an Adjunct Faculty Training Program, a Job Shadow Program, and an external Speakers Series.

Our returns on investment and positive employee survey scores demonstrate the success we have had in cultivating a skilled workforce and high-performing teams, building coalitions, branding the organization, and in achieving results. Over the past 5 years, our return on investment has averaged \$26 for every dollar spent on our office, with a high in fiscal year 2013 of \$41 for every appropriated dollar. During this time, we made over \$8.5 billion in financial recommendations through our audits, and realized more than \$1.8 billion in fines, restitutions, and recoveries from our investigations. We have also seen remarkable improvements in our Employee Viewpoint

Survey scores. I am proud to report that last year, DOT's OIG ranked in the top 15 percent among the Government's 314 subcomponents. Among the Department's subcomponents and across the OIG community, we ranked first in effective leadership, support for diversity, and innovation. Moreover, we ranked in the top 10 among all 314 subcomponents in those three categories as well as work-life balance.

If confirmed as USAID's Inspector General, I would approach this new responsibility with a clear understanding that foreign assistance is an integral part of U.S. engagement with an increasingly interdependent world, and that the success of USAID's mission depends in large part on effective partnerships and coordination with the State Department, Department of Defense, and other Federal entities, as well as with industry, foreign governments, other international donors, and the academic and scientific communities. The independent work of USAID OIG is critical to ensuring transparency, integrity, and accountability at USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, U.S. African Development Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, and Overseas Private Investment Corporation. It is equally important that OIG systems and processes thoroughly reflect oversight community standards and best practices.

If I have the honor and privilege of serving as USAID's next Inspector General, I would continue to model the highest standards of leadership and integrity. My experience has taught me that the most effective leaders, past and present, share at least one common trait—they marshal rather than direct. I welcome the opportunity to marshal the workforce of committed professionals at USAID OIG. With shared vision, clear expectations, strategic planning, and stewardship of resources, I would work to ensure they have the tools needed to fully engage in identifying and responding to major management challenges and to combat program fraud, waste, and abuse. Despite the many challenges these professionals face, they remain resolved to carry out their important mission—that is, to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in foreign assistance programs and operations around the world. Nothing short of a highly motivating, positive, trusting, and productive work environment is acceptable to support their dedication.

Aid reflects the goodwill of the American people, and during my time working throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, I saw first-hand how effectively implemented foreign assistance programs can help transform lives and unlock human potential. I remain passionate about the cause and, to that end, to helping ensure that every dollar spent furthers foreign assistance goals.

If confirmed as Inspector General, I look forward to continuing my Government service at USAID and to working with Congress to address your concerns; ensure transparency; and provide complete, timely, and accurate information on the progress of key foreign assistance priorities.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.