



# News Release

Economics and Statistics Administration

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Dr. Rebecca Blank Sworn In as Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Top Economic Advisor to Commerce Secretary

*Washington (June 9)* – Dr. Rebecca Blank was sworn in today as the new Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs. Dr. Blank will oversee two of the Nation’s preeminent statistical agencies: the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Affairs. She will also serve as the top economic advisor to Commerce Secretary Gary Locke.

“In Dr. Blank, we have the right person to handle a series of looming challenges,” Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said, “She will help the Census Bureau conduct an accurate and complete count in the 2010 Census, and I’m relying on her to provide sound economic data and analysis to guide the nation through the worst economic crisis in 60 years.”

The Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA) informs critical policymaking through comprehensive economic analysis, reports and forecasts. Moreover, ESA develops domestic and international economic policy.

“It is truly an honor to have been nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate to serve in this position,” Dr. Blank said. I look forward to working with Secretary Locke and with the top staff at Census and BEA. The immensely important Decennial Census is less than one year away. I am committed to ensuring the most complete count possible of everyone living in the United States. In addition, I will be focusing with Secretary Locke and the rest of the Administration on developing and implementing economic recovery initiatives. I pledge to work with Secretary Locke to leverage the resources and talent of the Commerce Department to help rebuild our economy: through innovation, job creation and equality of opportunity.”

Dr. Blank, a native of Missouri, is a summa cum laude graduate in economics from the University of Minnesota, and holds a Ph.D. in economics from MIT. She was dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan and co-director of the National Poverty Center. Dr. Blank served as a member of President Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers. She has also taught economics at Northwestern

University and Princeton and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a Lifetime Associate at the National Academies of Science.

The Robert S. Kerr Fellow at the Brookings Institution since 2008, Dr Blank's research has focused on the interactions between the macro-economy, government policy, and the behavior and well-being of American families. Her 1997 book, *It takes a Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty*, won the Richard A. Lester Prize for Outstanding Book in Labor Economics and Industrial Relations. Congressman John Dingell said in remarks submitted for her nomination, "Dr. Blank understands the lamentably conspicuous rise in economic inequality and the concurrent growth of social inequality that have plagued our nation of late." Dr. Blank addresses some of these issues in her most recent collaboration, *Insufficient Funds: Savings, Assets Credit, and Banking Among Low-Income Families*, (co-edited with Michael Barr, Russell Sage Press, 2009).

"I believe the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs to be one of the best agency jobs available," said Blank at her recent confirmation hearing.

She will oversee nearly 13,000 permanent employees in the combined bureaus, and will help direct the largest peace-time mobilization in history for the 2010 Census. Dr. Blank will lead a distinguished group of economists, statisticians, demographers and data gathers who share her enthusiasm for collecting and analyzing data. For more information about Dr. Blank see the ESA website: <http://www.esa.doc.gov>.

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