

STATEMENT OF SHARON BLOCK  
NOMINEE FOR MEMBER, NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS  
OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2014

Thank you Chairman Harkin, Senator Alexander and members of the Committee. I am honored and humbled to appear before you again as a nominee to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board.

It has been a little bit more than a year since I last appeared before this Committee as a nominee for the Board. The Board, for the first time in a decade, is operating under regular order with five confirmed members and only one vacancy on the horizon. As a result, the Board has a chance to undergo an orderly transition from one Board to the next, without the uncertainty and disruption that comes with multiple Board member vacancies that in the recent past have extended for long periods of time and threatened the existence of a quorum. This allows the Board members and their staffs to concentrate on doing the public's work..

I have spent the largest part of my career as a career civil servant with the Board. I started my career in private practice representing management in employment cases at Steptoe & Johnson, but I came to the Board when my career was still in its formative stage. I had the privilege to serve Boards in both Democratic and Republican administrations.

My service as a career attorney culminated with my position on the staff of former Republican Chairman Bob Battista. When I served as senior counsel to Chairman Battista, I always appreciated the frank case discussions and respect he showed the dedicated career attorneys on his staff. As a former career attorney, I would never underestimate the value of the expertise of the Agency's exceptional career staff.

Since the last time I appeared before you, the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Noel Canning*. Although my expertise is in labor law--not constitutional law--as a lawyer I have an unwavering respect for our judicial process in resolving difficult legal issues, like those involved in that case. So I have a keen appreciation of the process that brought us to this point and the utmost gratitude for the opportunity to sit before you again today as a nominee.

I am also grateful to this Committee and the Senate for confirming a full Board. As someone who has spent the better part of my career at the Board, I can unreservedly say that it was a good day for the Board when Nancy Schiffer and Kent Hirozawa began the process that culminated in their confirmation with Chairman Pearce and Members Johnson and Miscamarra. I am especially grateful to Member Schiffer who came out of retirement to answer the call to public service and who has so ably led the staff that I had had the honor to work with. Anyone who cares about the Board and about the efficient functioning of government – on either the labor or management side of the Board’s cases – must agree that a fully confirmed, five-member Board is the ideal, as the statute prescribes.

If fortunate enough to be confirmed for a seat on the Board, I would bring with me passion for the kinds of cases that make up the heart of the Board’s docket -- the cases where the parties have no interest in making law or grabbing headlines. In such cases the Board, as a neutral adjudicator, brings resolution to parties who just want to have their voices heard and their views fairly considered. Throughout my different tenures at the Board, these are the cases that have dominated the Board’s docket and which I have found the most rewarding. The reality of my time on the Board, as with most Board members, is that the majority of cases that I participated in were unanimous decisions that applied long-standing precedent. They are the cases where we make a difference in people’s lives – by getting them their jobs back after they

have been unlawfully discharged or facilitating the bargaining process by allowing companies to move forward running their businesses when a genuine impasse in negotiations has been reached. I remain dedicated to moving these cases as fairly and efficiently as possible.

I would also bring with me lessons learned in this room during my tenure on the Committee's staff. When I was here last year, I shared the important lessons that I learned from participating in this Committee's work on the MINER Act. This Committee continues a strong tradition of working across party lines to pass significant bipartisan legislation. The Committee's great accomplishments are examples that I would carry with me to the Board of what good work for the American people can be achieved when we work amicably across the aisle.

In closing, I would like to thank Secretary Perez for having given me the opportunity over the past year to continue to serve the public in this Administration. He is a remarkable leader from whom I have learned so much. And, I would like to thank my family that is here with me for all their love and support during the ups and downs since they last sat in those seats. Since I was here last year, my children have graduated from high school. So my son, who started at Oberlin College just a few weeks ago, is not here today, but my daughter Charlotte, who will be starting at University of Chicago in a couple of weeks, is here, with my husband Kevin, my parents Lois and Joseph Block, my uncle Michael Fuchs, and my aunt Froma Sandler.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these opening remarks. I welcome your questions.