

Keith Sonderling
Nominee for Deputy Secretary of Labor
Senate HELP Committee Testimony

Chairman Cassidy, Ranking Member Sanders, and Members of the Committee, it is an honor to once again appear before you, this time as President Trump's nominee to be the Deputy Secretary of Labor. I am deeply grateful to President Trump for the opportunity to continue to serve our nation.

In 2020, I had the honor of being unanimously approved by this Committee as President Trump's nominee for Commissioner on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. I was subsequently confirmed by a bi-partisan vote of the United States Senate. For the last eight years, I have worked directly with members of this Committee, on both sides of the aisle, on issues that impact hundreds of millions of American workers and employers.

Over the past few weeks, it has been a pleasure to meet with many of you again and learn more about your states' workforce challenges and opportunities. During our meetings, I promised that, if confirmed, I will continue my longstanding commitment to the members of this Committee in continuing to work together to shape the future of the American workforce through President Trump's America First agenda.

I want to take a brief moment to honor the people who have supported me throughout my life. My parents, who are here today, provided a firm foundation on which I am able to build a life of public service. My wife, Fara, my number one supporter, recognizes my deep commitment to serve our country and continues to encourage and support me. Our two boys, who are napping at home and unlike the rest of my family, not tuned into C-Span. Also, I want to thank all my current and former colleagues at DOL and the EEOC for the chance to work with such dedicated professionals and for your encouragement for my next opportunity to serve.

On a personal note, I think it is important to share what I consider to be a fundamental characteristic of who I am as an individual and as a member of society. I am the grandchild of Holocaust survivors. My interest in protecting all Americans' rights in the workplace is undoubtedly shaped by my grandparents, who, despite suffering unspeakable tragedies, were able to achieve the American Dream.

My grandmother, as a young teenager, was forcibly taken from her family by the Nazis. She survived a concentration camp only by fleeing into the woods during a death march. My grandfather escaped the horrors of the Warsaw Ghetto and then joined the Allied forces. My grandparents both lost innumerable family members during the war. Fortunately, my grandparents were able to immigrate to the United States. They were overwhelmed with gratitude at the prospect of living and working in what they considered "the land of golden opportunities."

Unfortunately, once settled in the United States, my grandparents encountered forms of religious discrimination more subtle than those they faced at the hands of the Nazis. Although more than willing to work, my grandparents lost employment opportunities based solely on their religious beliefs and life circumstances. It was only through their tenacity and relentless hard work that they

overcame the barriers put before them, ultimately paving the path for me to appear here, before you, today.

Yet, generations later, we are once again seeing a rise in religious discrimination. I am proud that President Trump issued executive orders tackling the generational resurgence of antisemitism and other forms of religious discrimination, including anti-Christian bias.

With this background, for the past eight years, both at the Department of Labor and the EEOC, my philosophy on the government's role in assisting workers and employers has been steadfast—that education and outreach to workers and employers go hand in hand with strong law enforcement. One that goes hand-and-hand with President Trump's vision of making the American Worker great again.

In President Trump's first term, the Wage and Hour Division, where I served, achieved back-to-back record-breaking enforcement recoveries for workers and more outreach than ever before, with fewer resources. My record of balancing law enforcement, providing compliance assistance, modernizing outdated regulations, and proactively addressing workplace issues demonstrates my shared belief that, under President Trump's leadership, we will be prepared for the opportunities and challenges facing the workforce over the next four years.

As President Trump said throughout his campaign and when he nominated Secretary Chavez-DeRemer and myself to lead the Department of Labor, we must put American Workers First and give everyone a fair shot at the American Dream.

The President's vision for his administration and the Department of Labor embodies my grandparents' and countless other Americans' legacy. If I have the privilege of being confirmed as Deputy Secretary of Labor, I look forward to continuing to make this a reality for all Americans.