

**Opening Statement
of
Eugene Scalia
before the
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee**

September 19, 2019

Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee. It is an honor to be here, and to have been nominated to serve as Secretary of Labor. I'm deeply grateful to President Trump for this nomination, and for his trust and confidence.

Elaine, thank you for that introduction. Secretary Chao was an exceptional Labor Secretary. She established clear priorities and a smooth operating structure. Her management will be a model for me if I'm confirmed.

The Labor Department is a venerable agency with an important mission: Enforcing the worker protections enacted by Congress; offering programs that help prepare Americans for a lifetime of productive work, while also helping supply the skilled workforce needed by American businesses; and providing support to workers who've fallen on hard times, whether through loss of work, loss of retirement benefits, or work-related illness or injury.

This is work I valued when I served previously as Solicitor of Labor, the Department's third highest official. Then, as now, I was coming to the Department from the private sector where I advised and represented businesses regarding employment matters. But once at the Department I had new clients, new responsibilities, and a public trust. I am proud of the actions I took as Solicitor to further the Department's mission:

- That included helping to resolve a labor dispute at the West Coast Ports that threatened to cripple the nation's economy—my goal was to act with favor toward neither company nor union, but to help them end the dispute.

- I focused our enforcement efforts on low-wage and immigrant workers; encouraged increased use of a powerful mechanism for OSHA enforcement; and took an unprecedented legal action to protect a whistleblower at a garment factory.

I took these and other actions because I believed they were right, they furthered the Department's mission, and because I believe in law and order. But there was more: The most affecting part of the job for me was encountering individual workers in sometimes tragic circumstances, and recognizing the capacity we had to respond. The construction workers killed in trenching accidents. The twelve miners in Alabama who gave their lives trying to save a co-worker's. Migrant workers whose sacrifice for their families was preyed upon by others.

The Labor Department is a big agency, with many programs, components, and acronyms. But if confirmed, I will aim to remain mindful every day of the individual men and women—like these—to whom our efforts ultimately are targeted.

Back in the private sector, much of my work has been in the public eye. But there were important parts of my job that went largely unseen. That included helping clients address workplace misconduct, including harassment and retaliation. I have advised clients to fire, or take other serious action, against executives and other managers who in my judgment engaged in harassment or other misconduct. I have been direct and forceful in telling clients to take steps that, sometimes, they wished they did not have to.

Something that became important to me at my law firm was supporting lawyers trying to balance the demands of their jobs with their roles as parents. In recent years, many of the young lawyers I worked with were on a part-time work schedules so they could spend more time with their families. It was important to me to visibly support that. Shortly before the President announced he would nominate me, I organized a program for our summer interns to hear from women—and men—at the firm trying to strike that balance. I've had the good fortune to pursue a demanding career while enjoying a deeply rewarding family life. It became very important to me to support young men and women at our firm in doing the same.

I look forward to your questions this morning—to a dialogue that, if confirmed, I want to continue. I enjoy exchanging ideas with people who see things differently than I do. I'm betting I'll get some of that today. That's good—I learn from it. And it is partly through this dialogue with you that that I hope to justify the President's confidence, and to be the best possible Secretary of Labor.