

**Opening Statement of Matthew S. Axelrod, Nominee, Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement,
Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce
Before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
October 7, 2021**

Chairman Brown, Ranking Member Toomey, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to be here today as President Biden's nominee to become the Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement at the Department of Commerce.

I want to thank President Biden and Secretary Raimondo for nominating me to this important enforcement and national security position at this critical time. I also want to thank my family, both those in the hearing room with me today – my wife, Jami, and daughter, Sophie, who is missing her high school American Government class but getting a firsthand look today – as well as those watching intently on their computer screens in Massachusetts and Florida – Sophie's older sister, Emily, my parents Carl and Andrea Axelrod, and my in-laws Jon and Margie Sussman. No one does these jobs alone. It is only through my family's collective love, support, and belief in the importance of government service that I am able to appear before you today as a presidential nominee.

In recent years, the export enforcement work of the Department of Commerce has become an increasingly pivotal component of our country's national security efforts. It is an essential function that helps ensure our adversaries don't have access to dual-use goods and technologies that they can put to malign purposes like terrorism, weapons-of-mass-destruction proliferation, and human rights abuses. If confirmed, I believe that my deep criminal and national security enforcement experience will allow me to effectively lead the dedicated agents and analysts of BIS in meeting this national security imperative.

As an Assistant United States Attorney in Miami, I was part of one of the nation's busiest U.S. Attorney's Offices. Given Miami's role in international commerce, both licit and illicit, our work often had international dimensions. My cases included ones against the two founders and highest-ranking members of the Cali Cartel and against a husband-and-wife team who were spying for the Cuban Intelligence Service. In all my cases as a prosecutor, both those with international angles and those that were purely domestic, I worked alongside federal law enforcement agents. I was – and remain – in awe of all they do to help keep the American people safe.

After six years in Miami, I became a career detailee to Department of Justice headquarters in Washington, D.C., where I worked as a Senior Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division and then as an Associate Deputy Attorney General, responsible for overseeing the criminal enforcement work of the Department. I also later served as the Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General, where I worked with the Department's senior leaders on the Department's most significant national security and criminal enforcement matters. During my time at Main Justice, I worked closely with the career prosecutors in the National Security Division, with federal law enforcement agencies, and with interagency partners to protect the country's national security. I am confident that the relationships I formed, and the knowledge I

gained about the importance of bringing a whole-of-government approach to combat national security threats, will serve me well if confirmed.

While I come from an enforcement background, that's not the entirety of my professional experience. I spent much of the past four years in an international law firm, where my work took me around the globe, from Europe to Asia to Africa. No matter where I was in the world, people wanted to hear about United States enforcement mechanisms; it was our enforcement regimes they wanted to make sure they did not run afoul of. That experience gave me an important perspective on how best to maximize the impact of our export enforcement work – we must impose significant penalties against those who break the law while at the same time incentivizing companies to play by the rules. That way, we not only punish export violators, but also deter those violations from occurring in the first place.

I mentioned that my daughter Sophie is missing her high school government class to be here today. Back when I was in high school, my classmates and I were consistently told that “from those to whom much has been given, much will be expected.” I am filled with gratitude beyond measure for what I've been given over the years – by my family, my friends, and my professional colleagues. I know that means that much will continue to be expected. If confirmed, it would be my great honor to work to fulfill those expectations as the Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement.

Thank you again for considering my nomination, and I look forward to your questions.