

The Committee meets today to consider the nominations of:

Alan Estevez to be Under Secretary for Industry and Secretary at the Department of Commerce;

Thea Kendler to be Assistant Secretary for Export Control at the Department of Commerce;

Alexia Latortue to be Assistant Secretary for International Markets at the Department of Treasury; and

Graham Steele to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions at the Department of Treasury.

We welcome the nominees and their families. We thank you for your willingness to serve during this critical time in our nation's history.

To the nominees, during your opening statement, please feel free to introduce your families and those who have accompanied you here today to show support.

The nominees before us today have the experience and preparation they need to take on these unique, important roles.

If confirmed, each nominee would play a significant role in protecting U.S. interests at home and abroad.

Mr. Estevez would lead the Bureau of Industry and Security at the Commerce Department. As Under Secretary for BIS, Mr. Estevez would play a pivotal role in helping advance our country's national security, foreign policy, and economic objectives by implementing an effective export control regime.

As Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration, Ms. Kendler would be responsible for safeguarding our national security by overseeing BIS's export licensing system.

As the Treasury Department's Assistant Secretary for International Markets, Ms. Latortue would be responsible for strengthening and promoting U.S. interests in global financial and investment markets.

And, as Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions at the Treasury Department, Mr. Steele would be responsible for coordinating financial institution policy, community and economic development, and efforts to increase the resiliency of our financial system.

All four nominees today have an impressive record of public service.

Mr. Estevez spent 36 years at the Department of Defense in various roles. From 2013 to 2017, he served as Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. Prior to that role, Mr. Estevez served as Assistant Secretary of Defense, focusing on logistics and material readiness.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Estevez served as a Program Manager at the U.S. Army Strategic Logistics Agency.

Welcome to the Committee, Mr. Estevez, and thank you for your many years of service to our country.

Thea Kendler currently serves as a trial attorney in the Department of Justice's National Security Division, Counterintelligence and Export Control Section. At DOJ, Ms. Kendler investigates and prosecutes crimes related to export control and economic espionage.

Prior to serving at the DOJ, Ms. Kendler served as Senior Counsel in the Commerce Department's Office of Chief Counsel for Industry and Security, providing legal advice on export controls regulations and enforcement.

We are glad to have you here today, Ms. Kendler, and thank you for your public service.

Alexia Latortue has more than 20 years of experience in international development and development finance. She is currently Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation – an independent U.S. government agency working to eradicate global poverty.

From 2013 to 2017, she served in the Obama Administration as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Development Policy, where she worked on inclusive growth and poverty reduction through multilateral development banks.

Ms. Latortue's experience includes serving at international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Welcome, Ms. Latortue, and thank you for your career of service. Glad to have you here today.

Our final nominee today is Graham Steele.

Mr. Steele spent more than seven years in my personal Senate office and on the Banking and Housing Committee as a senior, trusted aide. From 2015 to 2017, Mr. Steele served as Minority Chief Counsel for the Committee, where he crafted legislation and provided strategic advice and counsel on banking, housing, and national security issues.

During that time, he worked on a broad set of issues with Chairman Crapo and Shelby's staff, as well as the other Republicans and Democrats on the Committee. He also worked with a diverse set of stakeholders, forging close relationships with civil rights groups, consumer advocates, and organizations like the bipartisan Ohio Bankers League – who have written in support of his nomination.

Prior to serving as Chief Counsel, he served as my Staff Director of the Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection Subcommittee fighting to protect all Americans' finances.

And he did vital work during and after the Financial Crisis of 2008, as we worked to stabilize our financial system. In his work for my office, he traveled around Ohio in the years that followed, and talked with Ohioans who lost their homes and saw their communities devastated by Wall Street's great recession. I know he hasn't forgotten those Ohioans, and understands the far-reaching effects the financial system has on workers and their families all over the country.

And I know he has worked closely over the years with many of my colleagues and their staff, on both sides of the aisle, to make our financial system work for everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Steele, for your many years of service to this committee, to the people of Ohio, and to our country – welcome back.

We are grateful to the nominees for appearing here today.

I look forward to your testimonies.