

Statement by Parisa Salehi
Nominee for Inspector General at the Export-Import Bank of the United States
Before the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
United States Senate
December 7, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Brown, Ranking Member Toomey, and Members of the Committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Inspector General of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

I would not be here today without the generous support of my family, friends, and colleagues. I would particularly like to recognize my mother, whose hard work and determination has afforded me many opportunities. She grew up far away from this free land, in a place where she was legally required to get her husband's permission to do many simple things, like travel. Through selfless acts she ensured that her kids would have better and brighter life choices than the ones available to her. I would also especially like to thank my partner, Burk, who is here with me today and has been supportive of my professional growth for the past 18 years.

I have also benefitted from the wisdom of many formal and informal mentors along the way, who have graciously invested in and supported me. The list is long, so I can only name a few: My sister Atousa, Peter Briggs, Jeanie and Kent Henricksen, Allison Lerner, and Mark Greenblatt. I have learned many life lessons from all of them, which I hope to pass forward.

If confirmed, I will be living proof of the American story – that if you work hard, you will one day go places no one thought possible. I am a first-generation American and very proud of it. Common to many first-generation Americans, my professional path has not been easy or without sacrifices. To know that someone like me can appear before you, is the fulfillment of the American dream – my dream.

With many years of experience both in the public and private sectors, I believe I offer unique qualifications to lead as the IG for EXIM. My experience as Counsel to the EXIM IG and subsequent service as EXIM's Acting IG allows me to hit the ground running. I have learned from strong leaders at the Offices of Inspector General at the U.S. Agency for International Development and Department of State, where I currently serve as the Chief of Staff. Both agencies have taught me important lessons on effective oversight. If confirmed, I hope to build on that foundation.

I appreciate EXIM's important mission of supporting American jobs by facilitating the export of goods and services. IGs play an important role in conducting reliable, objective, fact-based oversight. Should I be confirmed, I am committed to conducting audits and investigations relating to the programs and operations of EXIM, as required by the law, and to serving in this role independently, with fairness and integrity. I will seek to bring positive change to EXIM programs through constructive relationships with EXIM leadership. As Acting IG, I invested considerable time in building those relationships and I will continue to do so, if confirmed, while maintaining the independence of the Office.

IGs play a vital role in rooting out bad actors. By partnering with other stakeholders, government agencies at the federal and state level, and by promoting a "whole of government" approach, we can make progress in this effort and foster trust in government programs. Bad actors can erode trust in

federal programs, which can prove fatal to the long-term success of any agency program. If confirmed, I will ensure that my office helps deter those actors by maximizing accountability.

If confirmed, I will uphold the IG Act's dual reporting requirements to keep the agency head and Congress "fully and currently informed" about problems and deficiencies relating to agency programs and operations and commit to direct and transparent communications with congressional stakeholders.

EXIM's Inspector General position has been vacant since June 2014 – the longest-running IG vacancy in the Federal Government. Even in the absence of a permanent IG, OIG professionals at EXIM have worked hard to advance the mission and conduct meaningful oversight. I acknowledge their accomplishments and dedication under these challenging conditions and would welcome the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with them, support them, facilitate their work, and bring about the stability of a permanent IG should I be confirmed.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity to give back and serve the American people and the country that has made my first-generation American story possible.

Thank you and I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.