

Opening Statement by Jason E. Kearns
Nominee to be Member of United States International Trade Commission
Before Senate Committee on Finance Confirmation Hearing
October 5, 2017

Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, members of the Finance Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee for the position of Commissioner on the U.S. International Trade Commission.

I would like to introduce the members of my family who are with me here today. I wouldn't be here without the love and constant support of my wife, Lindy Arnof Kearns, who manages the logistical mess of our busy lives while adding levity to our home. I am also very proud of my three children, Eleanore (14), Keevan (12), and Sander (9), who help me keep things in perspective. My mother, Betsy Starks, has taught me to stand up for my principles and to stick to them. And I'm proud of my sister, Lauren Sulcove, who serves as First Assistant District Attorney in Franklin County, Pennsylvania.

I would like to thank all of my family, those who are living and those who have passed, for all of their support over the years. I also thank my mentors, colleagues, and friends for their help.

I seek this position after serving the past eleven years as trade counsel to the House Committee on Ways and Means. I want to thank Ways and Means for that honor. I also want to express my appreciation to Representatives Levin and Rangel, and Senator Wyden, for first recommending my appointment as a Commissioner several years ago, and to Presidents Obama and Trump for nominating me.

I am also grateful to Senate Minority Leader Schumer for his support, as well as the support I have received from this Committee, including the Chairman, the Ranking Member, and Senator Bennet from my great home state of Colorado.

The ITC administers the trade remedy laws – or, as Senator Isakson so aptly put it in our meeting last week, it serves as an “umpire,” calling balls and strikes. The ITC also provides Congress and the Executive Branch with independent analysis and information on matters relating to tariffs and international trade, that is, raw materials from which policy makers may craft and execute trade policy.

In my view, the work of the ITC may be more important today than ever before, as trade has become a much larger part of our economy, and as policymakers consider and debate trade policy reforms.

I believe my upbringing, education, and work experience have prepared me well for this role. I grew up in a farming town of 500 people in Colorado, where I learned to enjoy hard work, whether it was the midnight feedings of my 4-H lambs or being the first kid at my high school in the morning to work on my jump shot. In small towns, you learn to do

your part, and you learn to try to get along. And that's where I developed a deep respect for people who work with their hands for a living.

Since moving away from that small town, I have learned about trade from a wide variety of perspectives, over more than 20 years. I have counseled Democratic Members of Congress, as well as Republican trade officials at USTR, including my former boss, Senator Portman. Before that, in private practice, I counseled businesses that petitioned the ITC for relief under the trade remedy laws, as well as businesses that opposed relief. I have counseled exporters as well as importers.

I have been honored to serve as an advocate for these clients. I now look forward to serving in a different role – not as an advocate, but as an impartial, independent, and objective decision maker and source of information and analysis.

If confirmed, I will administer the trade remedy laws fairly, objectively, and in accordance with congressional intent. And I will work with my fellow Commissioners to respond as fully and quickly as possible to Congressional and Administration requests with the most reliable information and independent and insightful analysis possible.

Thank you for your consideration.