

Statement of
The Honorable Christopher A. Padilla
Under Secretary-designate for International Trade
U.S. Department of Commerce

Committee on Finance
United States Senate

November 1, 2007

Chairman Baucus, Senator Grassley, and Members of the Committee:

Having the opportunity to serve the United States in public office is a rare and special privilege, so I was deeply honored that President Bush nominated me to be Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade. I appreciate the President's confidence, and that of Secretary Gutierrez, and hope to have the chance to work for them and with you in advancing our nation's economic interests. And as all of you know quite well, public service is a family undertaking, so I want to thank my family – my wife Christina, my parents Mario and Arlene, and my sister Leslie – for their unwavering support.

I thank the Committee for holding this hearing today, and am grateful to the many Senators who have taken time to meet with me to discuss my nomination over the past several weeks. I look forward to continuing this close collaboration if I am confirmed.

Mr. Chairman, I learned early on about market access barriers in my first job as a junior marketing staffer at AT&T, when I tried – unsuccessfully – to sell U.S. telecommunications equipment to government-controlled phone companies in Europe. With nowhere else to turn, I took a trip to Washington and met with the staff of the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration (ITA). Almost a year later, after plenty of high-level commercial diplomacy, the technical and procurement barriers were relaxed and exports started flowing.

That was my first interaction with the people of ITA, but I've been fortunate throughout my career to be a frequent customer of the Commerce Department's services. When I worked at Kodak, I filed anti-dumping cases against unfairly traded imports of photographic paper from Japan. During my time at Lucent Technologies, I worked with ITA on technical standards that blocked U.S. sales in South Korea. In my time at USTR, at the State Department, and in my current post as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration, I have relied on the talented Americans and local nationals working in our Commercial Service offices overseas. The people of ITA are well known for their commitment to American competitiveness, and if confirmed I look forward to renewing old friendships and meeting new people.

My personal experiences have led me to some core principles that would guide me if confirmed as Under Secretary. First, I am optimistic about America, and believe strongly that Americans can compete and win in the global economy. All America asks for is a reasonable chance to compete, which the Commerce Department helps provide by tearing down barriers, opening new

markets, promoting competitiveness, and relentlessly promoting America's products and services in foreign markets.

Second, I believe that promises made should be promises kept, and that means the Commerce Department must vigorously enforce our trade laws as well as monitor and enforce compliance with trade agreements. Not only is this important in itself, but public support for open markets at home requires that trade be perceived as fair, and that trade agreements and laws be enforced.

Third, I know from experience that trade policy works best when there is close cooperation between the legislative and executive branches of government. I assure you that I am well acquainted with the constitutional role of Congress in trade, and if confirmed would look forward to working with this Committee and the Congress on the vital trade issues facing our nation.

Finally, I have always believed that an important source of America's strength is its openness – to goods, services, investment, ideas and people. Our openness and dynamism set us apart, make us nimble and innovative, and allow us to respond to emerging challenges. And I know from experience that when other countries are open too, Americans can compete anywhere in the world. If confirmed as Under Secretary, I look forward to making the case for trade, expanding opportunity and hope, and keeping America prosperous and strong.