

Statement of Alexander D. Hoehn-Saric
Nominee to be Chair and Commissioner of the
Consumer Product Safety Commission
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
July 28, 2021

Good morning Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and distinguished members of the Committee. It is an honor to have been nominated by President Biden to Chair the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

And it is a special privilege to appear before the Senate Commerce Committee. For five years, I worked as a staffer on the Committee and had the pleasure of supporting many of you and your staff. Sitting on this side of the table is humbling as I have the greatest respect for the Committee and the work that you do.

Before going forward, I'd like to introduce my wife, Loren, and my son, Arden. I'm sad that my daughter, Daria, is not here, but she is away at camp. My wife has always been my strongest supporter, my partner, and the love of my life. Every day, I count myself blessed. And our children are our greatest joy and accomplishments.

Not here today, but always close in spirit, are my parents, Evanne and Rudolf. My mother, at the age of 12, fled from China shortly before the Communists took over. She grew up in Blacksburg, Virginia, in the only Chinese family for miles. My father grew up in Austria after leaving then-Yugoslavia where his step-father was executed by the Nazis in the waning days of the war for helping the resistance. They met in the U.S., fell in love, and then were told that mixed marriages were not allowed in Virginia. These were the days before *Loving v. Virginia*. Luckily, they were able to get married in neighboring Maryland where they lived for decades before moving to D.C. Their tenacity, caring, and dedication as doctors serving their community have been touchstones throughout my life.

For nearly 50 years, the CPSC has been tasked with a vital mission: protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury and death associated with the use of consumer products. This description, however, fails to adequately capture the lives saved when the Commission does its job well or the tragic consequences when it falls short. When noncompliant products make it into consumers' homes, the harms suffered can be immense. Defective elevators can crush small children, infants can die as result of using poorly designed products, and shoddily made electronics can burn houses to the ground.

I have been fortunate to work with members of this Committee on a range of laws implemented by the CPSC, including the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, the COVID-19 Regulatory Relief and Work from Home Safety Act, and the Portable Fuel Container Safety Act. These laws have saved

lives, reduced property damage, and prevented the heartbreak that comes when a child or loved one is lost.

I also have had the privilege of working with the staff of the CPSC and witnessed their dedication to the agency's mission. And I have worked with consumer groups and industry to address difficulties facing the Commission in today's rapidly changing marketplace.

If confirmed, I commit to working with the members of this Committee, the other Commissioners, and CPSC staff to protect the public and help the agency take on the challenges of the modern age.

Specifically, the CPSC must meet consumers where they are. More and more this means the online world. The public has a right to expect that the products they buy online are as safe as those they buy at the corner store. Unfortunately, that is not always true.

The CPSC also must do a better job at the ports. Imports represent less than half of the consumer products available in the country, but they constitute approximately 75 percent of identified noncompliant products. If confirmed, I will use CPSC's resources strategically, in coordination with other government agencies, to reduce the flow of violative products entering the country.

Finally, the CPSC must work deliberately but quickly in all its endeavors. This includes working with industry to develop strong voluntary safety standards, and where appropriate, adopt CPSC developed standards, consistent with the law. Uncertainty in the marketplace does not benefit consumers or industry. If confirmed, I will work with the staff and my fellow Commissioners to make the agency more efficient and engaged with stakeholders.

In closing, I want to assure you that, if confirmed, I will be your partner in protecting the health and well-being of consumers.

I thank you for your consideration of my nomination and would be happy to answer your questions.