

**Testimony of Mohsin Raza Syed**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs**  
**U.S. Department of Transportation**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation**  
**September 15, 2021**

Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and Members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of Governmental Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation. I am grateful to President Biden for the nomination and to Secretary Buttigieg for his trust in me to fulfill the duties of this position.

Here with me today is my wife, Sehar Siddiqi, whose love and support means everything. Sehar keeps me grounded and is a wonderful mother to our two young boys – Jafar and Babur. And we have another boy on the way this fall.

I am also here today because of the love, hard work, and sacrifices of my parents, Shaukat and Ruby Syed, who left their loved ones in Pakistan to seek a better life in America. Together they raised three children, including my brother Hasan and sister Fatima, who are both physicians and like me are doing their best to give back to the country that has given our family so much.

As a former congressional staffer, I am indebted to the opportunities provided to me by Senator Bill Nelson, Congressman Peter DeFazio, Senator Brian Schatz, and their leadership staffers, including Kim Lipsky, Susie Perez Quinn, Kathy Dedrick, and Arun Revana.

Assisting me in my current role as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs at the Department has been a truly talented team of career and non-career professionals. Thank you for being such wonderful teammates.

As a veterinarian trained in Pakistan, my father's professional background led to a 42-year career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Having been raised in the Washington, D.C. suburbs, my neighbors, like my father, worked for agencies across the federal government. This was my community – a community in which working in government was a meaningful way to serve our country and provide for our families. Growing up in a family and community grounded in public service has greatly influenced the opportunities I have pursued throughout my career, including serving as a civilian intelligence officer with the Defense Intelligence Agency, a career attorney at the U.S. Department of Transportation, and a staffer in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. These are the public service values and experiences I will bring to the position of Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs, if confirmed.

As a career attorney in the Office of the General Counsel, I learned about the many different aspects of the work done within the Department and its Operating Administrations. I subsequently had the honor of working for two of the Department's congressional authorizing committees – the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Senate Commerce) as well as the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (House T&I). In both positions, I worked on key legislative and oversight priorities for then-Ranking Member Bill Nelson and Chair Peter DeFazio, respectively. I cherish the bipartisan relationships that I

developed during my tenure on both committees, our collective accomplishments, and the opportunity to work on every aspect of the Department's mission – from aviation with Senate Commerce to aviation, surface, and maritime transportation matters with House T&I.

Working previously at the Department and later for its key congressional authorizing committees helped me to understand how important it is for the administration and Congress to have a close working relationship. I recognize that Congress has a constitutional duty to conduct oversight and legislate policy, and it is my responsibility in the role for which I have been nominated to be available, responsive, and helpful to your efforts. If confirmed, my experience will help me serve the needs of Congress at the Department, as well as those of states and local governments and Tribal communities.

I also want to address the dedicated teams of staffers and public servants who help make Congress run, who serve Governors, Mayors, and local leaders, and who support Tribal communities across the country. I am one of you – I know what it is like to need timely information from a government agency to inform a principal, assist constituents, conduct agency oversight, and enact good policy. If confirmed, my team and I will clearly communicate Department-wide that meeting statutory deadlines, responding robustly to oversight requests, and implementing laws passed by Congress is essential to achieving the Department's mission of ensuring the safety and efficiency of the country's transportation system.

In closing, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing my work with this committee and being your direct link to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Thank you, and I am happy to answer your questions.