

**Statement of Dan Huff**  
**Nominee to become an Assistant Secretary of Commerce**  
**Before the**  
**United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation**  
**November 10, 2020**

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before your Committee, it is an honor.

Saying “it’s an honor” is something of a stock phrase in Washington, but I do not mean it in a perfunctory way. I grew up in Boston where history was all around me. My mom used to read to me about Paul Revere, Sam Adams and the Boston Tea Party. It filled me with pride in our country and set my sights on a path to public service. My first job in Washington was as a staff member on the Senate Judiciary Committee. I vividly remember sitting at hearings like this one in the staff row behind Senator Specter brimming with excitement. If you had told me then that I would one day be on the other side of that dais, I don’t think I would have believed you. So thank you again for affording me the opportunity to appear before you as you consider my nomination.

What I love about the Commerce Department is its broad jurisdiction. From marine life, to the census, to international trade to patents, it spans a breadth of scientific and economic knowledge with which the members of this Committee are intimately familiar. When I went off to college, I was not sure in what to major. My dad, who taught math at Harvard, suggested a broad path of study. He told me that mathematics and economics are the language of modern policy analysis and that I should focus on getting the building blocks. I added history for good measure. I believe that my broad educational background in these areas makes me uniquely suited to communicate with you, if confirmed, about the myriad of issues within the Department’s jurisdiction. I love learning new things and, I know that, if confirmed, the Commerce Department portfolio would be an endless source of interesting issues for me to help you tackle.

But of course, as with any job interview, I need to explain not just why I want the job, but why you should want me.

The position of Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs requires a deep understanding of both the Senate and House. The Assistant Secretary serves as a bridge between the Department and Congress.

I spent nearly a decade as counsel to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. In those roles, I was responsible for both oversight and legislative initiatives. Accordingly, I have deep experience with, and healthy respect for, the oversight responsibilities of Congress. I know what it is like to make reasonable oversight requests only to have them stonewalled by an agency. Having seen both sides, I will be an effective advocate for Congress’s prerogatives within the Department.

In addition, I have a proven record of finding creative solutions to problems. As issues arise between Congress and agencies, whether on oversight requests or constituent needs, I would be able to inject fresh thinking that could help foster compromise.

Finally, the Assistant Secretary position is responsible not just for relationships with Congress, but also with the States. As a staff member on the House Judiciary Committee, I was the lead staffer on a number of interstate commerce issues, most prominently the Internet sales tax issue. Through this work, I built relationships at the state and local level and came to a better understanding of the way that these jurisdictions view and interact with the federal government. If confirmed, I believe this perspective would be valuable in helping to advance the Commerce Department's trade promotion agenda.

In closing, I want to thank President Trump for nominating me, and my family and friends who have been with me every step of the way.

With that, I am happy to answer any questions. Thank you Mr. Chairman.