

Chairman Thune; Ranking Member Nelson; Members of the Committee,

I am Joel Szabat. I have the honor to be nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of Aviation & International Affairs for the United States Department of Transportation (DOT). I hope you will find my record of public service worthy of confirmation.

Secretary LaHood, thank you for your kind introduction. Joining me today is my wife, Chiling Tong, President of the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship. Almost 20 years ago, Chiling and I established a non-profit to teach Asian Pacific American youth that our government derives its just power from the consent of the governed. Fellows are taught how to use their power as citizens to make government responsive to their needs, and those of the community. Three Fellows from the foundation join us today - Jessica Li, Jamie Atilano and Justin Lee – as well as Soo Kyung Koo, the foundation's former Executive Director.

If confirmed, I will pursue three key goals; first, support Secretary Chao's primary mission of safety, through the economic licensing of air carriers; second, ensure that our Anti-Trust Immunity determinations and international agreements, to include Open Skies and other aviation accords, provide a fair deal for the American taxpayer, traveling public, labor and industry; and third, work for the small, rural communities that are the customers of the Essential Air Service and Small Community Air Service Development Programs. If confirmed I will manage these programs to the benefit of the affected rural communities while controlling costs as a steward of the taxpayers' dollars.

Since 2002, I have been a Senior Executive in the federal service. I strive to exemplify the ideals of the Senior Executive Service, whose members can be moved to lead programs wherever and whenever they are needed. In my first four months as Chief of Staff of the Small Business Administration, we resolved a year-old backlog of 100,000 Hurricane Katrina disaster-assistance requests. In DOT, I was the designated federal government official responsible for standing up \$48 billion of Recovery Act programs, eventually completing over 15,000 transportation projects. Under my watch, the Maritime Administration quantified the size of the US-flag fleet necessary to employ enough American mariners to meet our military sealift requirements. I hope my record in these positions, and elsewhere, assures the Committee and the Senate that I have the skills necessary to lead this office.

Since January, I have been managing the Office of Aviation & International Affairs. I also have prior experience in most of the missions of this office, including negotiating with foreign governments during my time at USEPA; serving as the Transportation Counselor at the US Embassy in Iraq; and in multiple roles at the DOT, to include talks on the agency's accession into the US-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue. In two prior stints at the DOT, I managed the staffing and budget of the Office of Aviation & International Affairs, including the Essential Air Service and Small Community Air Service Development Programs.

I have 25 years of Federal service as an Army cavalryman and as a civil servant. In every role, my philosophy of public service remained the same. I am oath-bound to follow the constitution; honor-bound to follow the law, and the directions of my superiors- in that order- and duty-bound to provide my superiors my best advice, and the advice of my staff. If confirmed, I will continue that approach, unchanged.

Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson and Members of the Committee, thank you again for your consideration. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.