

Testimony of Grant T. Harris
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Analysis
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
July 28, 2021

Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and Members of the Committee, I am honored and humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Industry and Analysis at the U.S. Department of Commerce. I want to thank Secretary Raimondo for her support of my nomination.

I want to especially thank my family for their love and support. My wife, Jasmine, and our two children are watching from California with my parents. In my personal life and professional work, my highest goal is to make my family proud – and I strive every day to do so.

My parents, Tom and Lennie, are retired public servants. I was born and raised in California, where my mom was recognized as the state's "School Nurse of the Year" for her work supporting kids. My dad led city and district attorneys' offices to help cities and counties serve their citizens and combat crime. My parents instilled in me a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunities that I have been afforded and that this country presents, and a deep sense of responsibility to serve.

If confirmed, I would draw on my background in both the public and private sectors to serve as Assistant Secretary for Industry and Analysis. In my previous federal government service, I was honored to work at the White House and State Department. This meant working across a broad range of security, economic, and political issues. The work included initiatives to advance U.S. trade and investment as well as leading and coordinating national-security decision-making processes, supporting international peace negotiations, helping lead crisis response efforts in the face of emergency situations such as coups and terrorist incidents, working with governments in emerging markets to improve investment climates, and negotiating with foreign governments on a range of issues.

At the same time, I have direct experience helping American companies expand their business and compete in global markets, as the CEO of a strategy and political risk consulting company that I founded, and previously as a transactional attorney at a global law firm. I have worked with companies ranging from start-ups to large multinationals and witnessed the opportunities that exist. At the same time, I have seen firsthand how other countries are using both fair and unfair tactics to promote their own companies, and the challenges this poses to the international competitiveness of American industries. For instance, I have seen China's unfair business practices in seeking to push a U.S. company out of a project in favor of a Chinese state-owned enterprise. I have also had the privilege of teaching on strategy and risk in emerging markets as an adjunct professor at Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University.

As a country, I believe that we have major opportunities, even as we confront important challenges. As we seek to address the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we can rebuild a stronger and more resilient economy. We can do so by investing in our people, businesses, and communities. We can redouble our efforts to ensure that prosperity in our country is broad-based and that all communities have resources and pathways to good jobs. And as we directly confront threats to our economic competitiveness and values, we can make smart investments in innovation while tenaciously pushing for a level playing field for American companies.

Championing U.S. firms is vital to U.S. economic competitiveness and national security. This is precisely why I hope to serve at the U.S. Department of Commerce. Countless jobs and communities depend on American companies and workers being able to compete on a level playing field. If confirmed, my top priority would be to support the international competitiveness of U.S. industries. Industry and Analysis produces critical analysis to support public and private sector decision-making. The brain power and experience of the career staff in Industry and Analysis are indispensable to strengthening our global supply chains, combating predatory and unfair trade practices that undercut American manufacturing, and promoting travel and tourism, to name but a few key areas.

If I have the honor of being confirmed and am entrusted with leading the Industry and Analysis team, I would be a strong advocate for, and partner to, American industry. I would also be a strong partner to this Committee, you, and your staffs, to advance American business, workers, jobs, and economic security. In closing, thank you very much for your consideration and the opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to your questions.

###