

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
THO BELLA DINH-ZARR
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND
TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE
ON
NOMINATION TO THE
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD (NTSB)
WASHINGTON, DC
DECEMBER 3, 2014**

Thank you, Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Thune, and Members of the Commerce Committee. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and I am honored to be President Obama's nominee for Member of the National Transportation Safety Board.

Before I begin, I would like to introduce my family who has always been so supportive of me. With me today is my husband, Dr. Robert Zarr, a pediatrician, and my 6 year old son, Kairan Zarr. My mother, my three brothers and their families are supporting me from the states of Texas, Florida, New Jersey, Washington, and North Carolina. I would also like to thank the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta, whom I consider a mentor and an inspiration. I am grateful to my friends and colleagues who are able to be here or who are watching from around the country.

I believe strongly in public service and, if confirmed, it would be my great honor to serve our country by supporting the mission of the NTSB to advance transportation safety. I have had a lifelong passion for transportation in all its forms and I am committed to ensuring that transportation is as safe as possible for everyone. My personal and professional background has uniquely prepared me to be an NTSB Board Member. My childhood on the Gulf Coast and my early years working at the Railroad Museum in Galveston, Texas, have made me acutely aware of rail, marine and pipeline safety. My graduate training and work in highway safety and injury prevention at the University of Texas and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute reinforced in me the importance of transportation safety to the health of our country. And, of course, I will never forget that it was an American airplane that carried my family to safety when we fled Vietnam in 1975 – an airplane that we were able to board because of my

father's lifesaving work as a physician and his friendships with American colleagues. My late father instilled in our family a deep respect and love for this country – a love that my three older brothers demonstrate every day in their lifesaving work as surgeons. After seeing the devastating effects of traffic crashes while working as a young volunteer in a Level 1 Trauma Center, I became committed to finding ways to *prevent* families from experiencing this needless suffering.

I have a diverse background of experience working in both the public and private sectors, and I am proud of a long history of collaboration with state and local organizations throughout the country, as well as with safety colleagues around the world. My training and practical experience in public health and injury prevention has prepared me for an approach to safety that translates to all modes of transportation. My passion for keeping people safe and my expertise in data analysis constantly drive me to find good solutions to real problems threatening people's lives. I am especially proud that my highway safety work has spanned the generations, from child passenger safety research and legislation to innovative transportation solutions to ensure that seniors stay safely mobile for as long as possible.

If confirmed, I will not forget the grieving families I have met over the years. I will work hard to do everything I can to provide victims and the American public with the answers they need, and to ensure that data from crash investigations and safety studies are used to prevent future such tragedies.

The NTSB is in the unique position of being an independent body whose mandate can help prevent countless deaths and injuries. If confirmed, it would be my honor to dedicate myself to the lifesaving mission and legislative mandate of the NTSB. It has always been my belief that each of us must strive to serve our country and our communities in the best way that we are able. I can think of no greater privilege than to serve my country by ensuring that transportation, whether by air, land or sea, is as safe as possible for all people, now and for generations to come.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.