

**Statement of the Honorable Elaine Duke
Before the
U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
On Her Nomination to Serve as
Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security**

March 8, 2017

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaskill, and distinguished Senators of the Committee, thank you for holding this hearing to consider my nomination to become the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS or the Department). It would be an honor to join Secretary Kelly in leading the men and women of the Department as they execute the mission.

Thank you for the kind introduction Senator Portman. My Midwestern upbringing shaped my values and made me the person I am today. I am proud to call myself a Buckeye.

First, I would like to extend my thanks to President Trump and Secretary Kelly for the great trust they have placed in my abilities to manage the Department's daily operations. I am honored to have been nominated for this position.

I'd also like to thank the former Deputy Secretaries of Homeland Security for their encouragement throughout this process. I draw great strength and inspiration from their support.

I'd like to introduce my family who is here with me today: my husband, Harold; my son Jason; and my youngest sister, Cynthia. I want to thank my husband for supporting me in this decision to leave retirement and answer the call to serve. It is a sacrifice and I am grateful. Also, my son, Brian, who is not here today, has provided encouragement to me throughout this process. Finally, I'd like to recognize my father, Frank Costanzo. He cannot be here physically today, but I know he is cheering me on, just as he was when I interviewed for my first entry level civil service position 35 years ago.

It would be an honor to serve as Secretary Kelly's deputy. I would welcome the privilege of supporting him as he leads the Department, maturing and strengthening its ability to execute critical and complex homeland security missions. When I retired from civil service just shy of seven years ago, I thought I had retired from public service permanently. However, when I received the call, I immediately knew I must say yes.

More than 15 years after 9/11, this country continues to face many challenges in homeland security. There is a continued threat to our homeland, but Americans must be able to go about their daily lives free from fear and secure in the knowledge that they and their loved ones may walk down the street or go to the mall in peace. DHS is key to addressing that threat and ensuring that the homeland is protected.

I served the last eight of my 28 years of public service at DHS. My final position before retiring was the Senate-confirmed Under Secretary for Management. I understand firsthand the challenges of DHS' missions, structure, and complex oversight; the diverse concerns of its many stakeholders; the urgency of the work; and the complexity of running the Department. I also know the Department's employees are the most dedicated and passionate group of civil servants with whom I have ever had the pleasure of working. If confirmed, I pledge to lead them in producing results for our beloved nation.

I am grateful to have this opportunity to further mature the Department and continue improving its efficiency and effectiveness. If confirmed, I promise to lead DHS in enforcing the law with respect and integrity. I will be honest in my assessments and recommendations, and relentless in pursuing excellence. Such commitments are critical at this juncture in homeland security.

I will do everything within my power to preserve our liberty, enforce our laws, and protect our citizens. I recognize the many challenges facing DHS, and if confirmed, I look forward to partnering with you all to protect the homeland.

I fully understand and support the role of the Congress in its oversight and support of the Department. Throughout my career in government, I have always strived to work in a collaborative manner with Members of Congress and their staff. I know this approach is very important to Secretary Kelly and, if confirmed, I will ensure that our Department continues to work closely with you.

Thank you for this opportunity. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.