

Statement of Lisa Gordon-Hagerty
Before the United States Senate
Committee on Armed Services
February 8, 2018

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, it is a tremendous privilege to appear before you today. I am honored and grateful for this incredible opportunity to serve my country again and wish to thank President Trump and Secretary Perry for having placed their trust and confidence in me, putting forward my nomination as Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security and Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

Mr. Chairman, if you will permit me, I would like to introduce my family. Here with me today is my husband, Walt Houston, a retired Navy special operations veteran to whom I am incredibly grateful for his unwavering support throughout this process. Thank you, Walt, for your love and for your past and continued service to our great nation. Also with me today is my step-daughter, Ocie. Watching from afar is my mom, Irene Gordon, who just turned 92 and is the bedrock of our family. My parents instilled a strong bond within our family and without the unconditional love and support of my brothers, Mike and Ted, my sisters, Jil, Gail and Lynne and their families, I would not be the person I am today. I also thank my mother and sister-in-law who are watching from California. I am also extremely grateful to the many close friends and colleagues who are here today and I thank them for their prayers and support.

The Department of Energy and NNSA, through its world-class scientific and technical expertise have several unique, but interdependent responsibilities: stewardship of a safe, secure, reliable, and robust nuclear weapons stockpile; supporting Naval Reactors and their unparalleled capabilities to power the nation's nuclear fleet of aircraft carriers and submarines; and international efforts to prevent a rogue nation or terrorist group from acquiring a nuclear or radiological device and preventing or deterring proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

If confirmed, my top priorities will be the effective execution of these enduring national security missions. To ensure that our premier workforce has the tools needed to accomplish its mission, I will be focused on several top priorities, in particular, infrastructure modernization. More than half of NNSA's facilities are over 40 years old, and nearly 30 percent date back to the Manhattan Project era. I will work closely with Congress to meet the long-term challenges of modernizing NNSA's infrastructure. That said, even with the successful execution of a modernization plan, no institution can operate without a great team. If confirmed, I will ensure that the nuclear security enterprise continues to employ the brightest and the best by recruiting, retaining, and growing the highly skilled workforce needed to maintain the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, from our incredibly dedicated federal workforce to our partners throughout the national security enterprise.

The nature of the work done by NNSA does not always lend itself to a high profile. However, the agency's role is integral to maintaining a modern and appropriately tailored nuclear deterrent in an ever-changing geopolitical environment. NNSA and its stakeholders are part of the foundation for preserving peace and deterring aggression against the United States, our allies, and our partners. If confirmed, I will ensure that NNSA delivers on its commitments to its stakeholders and accomplishes these vital missions.

My work for or with NNSA's national security complex brings a unique skillset of more than 30 years of experience and vision to the position. During this time, I have had the privilege to work with some of our nation's most talented and dedicated scientists, engineers, and safety and security professionals. Upon completing graduate school, my first position was as a health physicist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory which instilled in me a great respect for the national security complex. Since that time, I have devoted my career to the national security mission, as a professional staff member on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, working at the Department of Energy in Military Application and as a member of the National Security Council Combating Terrorism staff. To lead NNSA would be the highest honor of my career and a challenge, if confirmed, I will relish.

The United States is at a crossroads regarding the foundation of our national security. Should I be confirmed, I will work tirelessly every day to ensure that our great nation has the tools in its national security apparatus so that the NNSA can provide the critical support to our customer, the Department of Defense, and our other very important stakeholders and partners.

I, again, thank you for inviting me to appear before this Committee today. I am prepared to answer any questions you have now and, if confirmed, to address questions that you may have in the future.