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Former U.S. Senator (R-GA)
Nominee, Small Business Administration Administrator

Chair Ernst, Ranking Member Markey, and Members of the Committee.

It's a great honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

I'm as humbled to be here today as I was serving alongside many of you in the U.S. Senate. And I have appreciated the opportunity to meet with nearly every member of this distinguished Committee in recent weeks.

I am especially grateful to President Trump for entrusting me with the privilege and responsibility of serving America's 33 million small businesses. There is no stronger advocate for these job creators than our President. I share his commitment, and if confirmed, will work tirelessly to make Small Business Great Again.

Finally, I want to thank my incredible husband, Jeff, and my wonderful family and friends who have joined us here today in-person and via broadcast. Most importantly, I give all thanks and glory to God.

As someone who has spent my life either working in small businesses, starting them, growing them, or helping them succeed – I know that small business is big business for America. They comprise 99% of all businesses, create 2 out of every 3 new jobs, and employ nearly half of the private sector workforce. They are the opportunity and innovation engines that drive prosperity and growth, and they power the American economy as much as the American Dream.

In his first term, President Trump made historic strides to empower job creators and job seekers alike, driving small business formation and a blue-collar boom. Through historic tax cuts, trade deals, and deregulation, his agenda created seven million new jobs, delivered historically low poverty, and record employment for minority communities. His first-term accomplishments were so great that following the 2024 election, small business optimism recorded its largest jump since 1980 – more than two months before he even took office.

Small business is in my DNA. I grew up as the fourth generation on our family's farm in Illinois. My wonderful parents, Don and Lynda, didn't have degrees, but they had faith and grit. They worked relentlessly to sustain our farm and small trucking company – risking everything to provide for us while navigating volatile commodity markets and complex regulations, facing countless day-to-day challenges.

It's where my Midwestern work ethic was ingrained, working in our soybean fields and waiting tables at local restaurants – preparing me for a lifetime of starting and growing businesses. I became the first in my family to graduate college and later earned my MBA.

Since then, I helped grow a startup into a Fortune 500 company. For ten years, I co-owned a WNBA team. I later launched a financial technology company as the founding CEO and first employee. I recall managing budgets in Excel spreadsheets, hiring my first team member, and working with regulators as much as I recall ringing the bell when two of those companies went public.

In the Senate, I strongly supported President Trump's economic agenda and historic pandemic response. Having spent years as a small business owner, I made it my mission to serve as their voice. I spent much of 2020 delivering relief – traveling the state and meeting with Main Street entrepreneurs like Eric and Rachel from Dockside Seafood in Savannah, who were struggling to navigate their PPP application. The loan we helped them get didn't just save the restaurant – it saved the jobs of 35 Georgians – and I'm proud to say that they're still in business today.

No matter the business, the challenges are consistent – from managing inflation and capital, to hiring a skilled workforce and weathering uncertainty. Job creators in the last four years have faced rising demands to comply with new rules, often drafted with unknown cost and consequence. This regulatory complexity crushes growth, picks winners and losers, and denies opportunity to those who dare to dream of a better future.

If I have the honor of being confirmed, I'll leverage my decades of business experience to champion America's entrepreneurs. We'll cut red tape and modernize the agency while restoring the accountability and transparency that taxpayers deserve. I will crack down on fraud, with a zero-tolerance policy, while shifting SBA's focus from Washington D.C. back to Main Streets across America. And if confirmed, I'll collaborate across government and the private sector to deliver efficiency and results. Importantly – we will responsibly and urgently meet the challenge of disaster relief. I am committed to serving all who are impacted, from North Carolina to California.

Each taxpayer dollar entrusted to SBA should have an economic multiplier effect – delivering productive capital to grow manufacturing, strengthen rural communities, create jobs, and develop critical technology like AI and chips. I believe we must continue to empower entrepreneurs from all walks of life, including women and veterans.

Above all, the SBA's founding mission needs urgent restoration: empowering small businesses and growing our economy. That's exactly what the America First agenda does – by ending inflation, cutting taxes, unleashing American energy dominance, slashing regulation, and reining in fraud, waste, and abuse across government.

In the last four years, small business has lost ground - burdened by inflation, big government regulation, and uncertainty that threatens the very existence of Main Street. President Trump's proven agenda will restore the small business economy, marking a return to "Made in America" - with a golden era of prosperity and growth.

At the SBA, that means meeting today's dynamic challenges alongside America's entrepreneurs not by sitting in Washington or working from home. We will honor their jobs by doing ours.

Small businesses are the risk-takers, job creators, taxpayers, innovators - and the provider of first jobs to former waitresses like me. They represent the best of American free enterprise. Like President Trump, I've signed the front of a paycheck. We both understand that there is nothing "small" about small business.

Chair Ernst, Ranking Member Markey, and Committee Members: thank you for your dedication to small business. I welcome your questions and would be honored to earn your support to serve as the next Administrator of the Small Business Administration.