

Statement of John T. Morton
Nominee for Assistant Secretary for
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, Members of the Committee.

Let me begin by expressing how honored I feel to be here today. As a career federal prosecutor, I am an ardent believer in public service and consider it a great privilege to have been nominated by the President for the position of Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). I thank the Secretary of Homeland Security for her confidence in me and thank the Committee for taking up my nomination.

Let me also introduce to you and thank my two daughters, Olivia and Lucie, and their mother, Laura. Without their support, I would not be in this position today.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with the dedicated men and women of ICE to ensure our nation's security. I promise you that no one will be more dedicated than I to ensuring that ICE is an effective and valued member of the law enforcement community.

I come before you the product of a life-long career in federal law enforcement, one that has been marked by a particular emphasis in the areas we now associate with homeland security—anti-terrorism, border control, customs and immigration enforcement, and the protection of our critical infrastructure.

I also come before you the son of an immigrant. As a result, I have a personal appreciation for our rich immigration tradition. Coupled with my experience as a prosecutor, this background serves as a constant reminder that law enforcement involves real people and must be pursued with a firm but measured hand.

I started my career in the business of homeland security fifteen years ago at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), first as a trial attorney and then as Special Assistant to the General Counsel. Since that time, I have gone on to serve as Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General of the United States, Assistant United States Attorney, Chief of the Domestic Security Section, and most recently acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division.

The work I have undertaken in these positions has provided me with a blend of enforcement experiences, policy expertise, and management skills directly related to ICE's responsibilities and the mission of homeland security.

I have prosecuted or supervised criminal cases involving national security, immigration offenses, customs offenses, document fraud, international violent crime,

human rights offenses, and the protection of the nation's critical infrastructure. I have prosecuted civil worksite enforcement cases involving unscrupulous employers and civil immigration cases against criminal aliens.

I have worked on a wide variety of relevant policy issues, including immigration reform, detention standards, refugee policy, fraud prevention, and the extension of federal jurisdiction over genocide, international sex trafficking, and crime committed by U.S. contractors and employees overseas.

I have managed people and offices directly involved in the work of homeland security. As Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General, I assisted then Attorney General Janet Reno and Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder to manage the major immigration components of the Department of Justice—at the time the INS, the Executive Office for Immigration Review, and the Office of Immigration Litigation. More recently, I have supervised five offices within the Criminal Division, four of which focus on investigations and prosecutions within ICE's purview: the Domestic Security Section, the Office of Special Investigations, the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, and the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

These experiences have led me here; and I now seek your confirmation to be the next leader of ICE—an agency with great responsibilities to protect national security and promote public safety. Responsibilities to secure our borders; to restore integrity to our customs and immigration controls; to prevent the entry of terrorists, criminals, and

harmful contraband; and to protect many of our federal buildings and the men and women who work within them.

If confirmed, my priorities would include—

- Improving the investigation and prosecution of major crimes, including international money laundering and organized crime, weapons proliferation and export controls, sex trafficking and child exploitation, intellectual property and counterfeiting, and frauds that promote travel by terrorists, criminals, and others who pose a threat to public safety.
- Securing our borders, both North and South.
- Addressing the ongoing crime and violence on both sides of our border with Mexico, particularly with regard to the illegal movement of drugs, money, guns, and people.
- Increasing the identification and removal of criminal aliens from our communities and of those who intentionally flout a final order of deportation.
- Reforming our immigration detention system.
- Refining our worksite enforcement efforts to deter employers from the knowing use of illegal labor.
- Improving coordination with Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, as well as with our other partners in federal, state, and tribal law enforcement.

If confirmed, I also want to bring focused attention to a number of important management issues, including—

- Improving the morale of the dedicated employees of the agency.
- Reforming the immigration detention system and the provision of medical care to those detained.
- Providing for greater accountability and performance measurement.

In short, I want to give the agency a greater sense of identity and purpose, improve its management, and increase its coordination with and support of its government partners.

Let me also say that if confirmed, I would look forward to working with this Committee very closely. The issues and challenges facing ICE are considerable, and I would very much want to continue the dialogue we have started in the confirmation process.

In closing, allow me to reiterate what an honor and weighty responsibility I feel in coming before you today. If you do confirm me, I will pursue my duties on the merits, with great dedication, and with any eye to innovation and excellence.

I thank you for your consideration.