

Statement of James Edwin “Trey” Trainor, III Nominee for Commissioner of the Federal Election Commission

Thank you, Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Klobuchar, and Members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you as President Trump’s nominee for the position of Commissioner on the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

Before I begin, I would like to introduce my wife, Lucy, the mother of our six children, James, Abigail, Patrick, Mary Catherine, Charles and Andrew. I am so pleased and proud to have her here with me here today as I could not have had any success in my career up to this point without her unwavering support. I would also like to thank my parents, Jim and Teresa, unfortunately my father cannot be here with us today and my mother passed away in 2011, but I know both are here with me in spirit. I’d also like to thank my grandmother, Wanda, who has always been one of my biggest fans. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family, both here with me today and those watching, for their support and encouragement as I have been engaged in this process since my original nomination in September 2017.

Lucy and I are from an unincorporated area of Hays County Texas near the little town of Driftwood, population 144. We are both proud graduates of Texas A&M University, where I was a member of the Corps of Cadets, and I’m a proud veteran of the U.S. Army Reserves. It is a privilege for me, as someone who isn’t intimately ingrained in the Washington, DC legal community, to be considered for this position, and to testify regarding my qualifications and interest in serving as an FEC Commissioner.

As you know, the FEC’s mission is to protect the integrity of the federal campaign finance process by providing transparency and fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws.

The origins of campaign finance regulation in America date back to President Theodore Roosevelt’s administration and have evolved greatly from 1907 to the present. In 1971, Congress created the current regulatory environment by enacting the Federal Election Campaign Act and instituting stringent disclosure requirements for federal candidates, political parties and political action committees (PACs). Congress amended the Federal Election Campaign Act in 1974 to set limits on contributions by individuals, political parties and PACs and established an independent agency, the FEC, which began operating in 1975.

Over the past 40 years, the FEC has served an important function in our republic by providing the American people assurances against political corruption through the disclosure process. Moreover, it has provided the regulated community – elected officials, candidates, and PACs – with guidance on how best to work within the confines of the law.

Having graduated from, what is today, Texas A&M University School of Law, I have been practicing law for over 15 years. The vast majority of that time has been spent advising political candidates, PACs, and other organizations on compliance with mostly state and some federal election laws. I particularly pride myself on working closely with my clients to avoid

instances which would trigger administrative action, but I also take my ethical obligation to vigorously defend my clients, should the need arise, very seriously.

If the Senate votes to confirm me to this post, I will approach my work at the FEC in an objective and methodical manner. I fully recognize that the touchstone for all regulation of political speech is the First Amendment, and that the U.S. Supreme Court has held that our current campaign finance regulations, particularly the disclosure regime, are an allowable exception to the First Amendment for the purpose of deterring corruption. Accordingly, I will always look to the statutes as passed by Congress and adjudicated by the courts as my guide in reviewing the matters that come before me at the FEC to ensure that all parties are treated fairly and impartially.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you may have.