

Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Klobuchar, and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration:

It is a privilege to appear before you this morning to discuss my nomination to the Federal Election Commission. I am grateful to the President for his confidence and to this Committee for providing me with this opportunity.

I am sorry we are meeting by videoconference. It is a wise and responsible decision. But something is lost when an event of this gravity is held remotely. For me, that includes the ability of my wife, Rachel, to be present in person for this important occasion. But I understand that she has taken a break from her work as a child psychologist to watch our live feed. And the fact she is not physically present does nothing to diminish my great appreciation and affection for her as a woman, wife, and mother. Nor does it lessen the many sacrifices she has made to support my career and to allow me this opportunity for public service.

And while our daughter is too young to follow today's discussion, I hope that, in the fullness of time, she will be proud of her father's career in the law and service to his country.

It has been a long road from California's Mojave Desert to a hearing before the United States Senate. I am grateful for my parents, Terry and Gayle, and to my sister, Iris, for setting me on the path. And my thanks, finally, go to my colleagues at the Institute for Free Speech for nearly a decade of warm collegiality and companionship.

I have spent the last several years bouncing between two very different worlds.

As Legal Director of the Institute for Free Speech, I represent clients in court, and advocate in public, for a robust view of the First Amendment. In that capacity, I have represented clients from across the political spectrum, including Republican elected officials and donors, the Libertarian National Committee, a progressive San Francisco ballot committee, and the Coalition for Secular Government. And I have authored scores of briefs joined by groups as diverse as Color of Change and the Tea Party Patriots, the ACLU and the Cato Institute.

At the same time, as an officer and lawyer in the Army Reserve, I advise soldiers in the very different context of uniformed service. There, rights of expression and association take a different form, limited by the needs of the Service and the requirements of good order, discipline, and fidelity to the chain of command.

From both roles, I have come away with a great respect for the diversity, character, and wisdom of the American people. And I have developed a deep trust in the vibrancy and resilience of American institutions.

Congress created the FEC to protect those institutions. In the aftermath of Watergate, it established the Commission to prevent corruption of our elected officials and to enlighten American voters as they choose our representatives. It is an important role.

And it is a challenging one. All of us – members of the bar, the Congress, the courts, and the Commission – have worked hard to find the delicate balance between the legitimate anticorruption

and disclosure interests of the government, on one hand, and the First Amendment rights of the citizenry on the other.

If the Senate chooses to confirm me, I will work every day to provide the American people with an independent Commission that faithfully administers the law as written by Congress and interpreted by the courts. Just as when I don or doff a military uniform, I recognize that I have been asked to apply my experience to a new role. And I am prepared to work hard in the service of this agency and its public mission.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues, and with the dedicated civil servants at the FEC, to explain a complex body of law, clarify it where appropriate, and enforce it in the fair and nonpartisan manner Congress envisioned.

I thank you again for the opportunity to be here and look forward to your questions.

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Mr. Dickerson received his undergraduate degree from Yale College and his J.D. from New York University School of Law.