

**Statement of Robin C. Ashton
Nominee for Inspector General of the Central Intelligence Agency
Before the United States Senate
Select Committee on Intelligence**

June 9, 2021

Chairman Warner, Vice Chairman Rubio, and Members of the Intelligence Committee, it is an honor to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be the Inspector General of the Central Intelligence Agency. I am grateful to President Biden for placing his trust and confidence in me to lead this important office.

If confirmed, I would be honored to work with you, and with the courageous, hardworking, and remarkable people of the CIA, including Director Burns and Deputy Director Cohen. I will strive each day to justify the trust placed in me, and to uphold the highest standards of the office. I am also deeply grateful to Dan Coats for his generous introduction. His long history of dedicated public service is not only impressive, but truly inspiring.

I would like to recognize my family and friends who are here today or watching remotely, especially my husband of 26 years: Dr. Yves Rosenberg, my children: Jacques and Juliette; and my sister Anne Riopelle. The love and support of my family and friends has been invaluable to me over the years, as they have taught me through their examples how to weather the bad times and cherish the good.

As noted in my pre-hearing materials, I have spent nearly 35 years in public service, holding numerous positions across both Republican and Democratic Administrations, including as a federal prosecutor working in the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Columbia; as the Director of the Department of Justice's Office of Professional Responsibility; and as the Principal Deputy Inspector General of the Intelligence Community.

Over the course of my career I have had the privilege of serving alongside hardworking federal employees in numerous capacities – the administrative and personnel staffs, lawyers and paralegals, agents, law enforcement officers, investigators and analysts, those who clean the offices and work in the cafeterias, security personnel, and countless others. They all come to work, day after day, knowing that they will probably never be publicly recognized for their tireless efforts; they work hard not for recognition, but because they derive satisfaction from

working on a shared mission. After 35 years, I am still inspired by these dedicated public servants whom I am so fortunate to call my friends, colleagues, and mentors. Their honorable service, and countless acts of kindness toward me and others, have taught me how to be a better public servant and a better person. I know that the brave officers of the CIA have also demonstrated this extraordinary and selfless commitment to public service, and I would be honored to work with them.

However, when you review my resume and hear me speak about my decades-long career as a lawyer in the federal government, you cannot fully glean who I am as a person. Before I could embark on my rewarding legal career, I first had to work my way through both college and law school by holding numerous, often-grueling jobs: as an assembly line worker with the Ford Motor Company in the Detroit area; as a waitress; and as a custodian working the night shift at the University of Michigan Hospital.

These tough jobs taught me a number of valuable lessons about hard work and respecting those who do these demanding jobs every day – perhaps the most significant being that someone punching the clock at the start of a long shift, or wearing a waitress’s or custodian’s uniform, deserves the same level of respect as everyone else – if not more.

These experiences have impacted every part of my life, my way of thinking, and the way I view myself and my responsibility towards others.

Living paycheck to paycheck also taught me that the tax dollars of hardworking Americans should not be squandered. I therefore believe that Inspectors General hold some of the most important positions in the federal government. It is through their efforts that waste, fraud, and abuse, as well as mismanagement, abuses of authority, and unlawful practices, can be and are detected and prevented, and systemic solutions can be and are found.

If confirmed, I will treat my responsibility to identify and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse with the seriousness it deserves. I will highlight the CIA’s incredible strengths, while also identifying areas that could benefit from modification or improvement. I sincerely believe that the American people desire and deserve a government that is as effective and accountable as possible.

It is important to acknowledge the critical role whistleblowers play in ensuring a responsible and honest government. They are often the first people to witness or learn about wasteful practices or possible wrongdoing. Because members of the

Intelligence Community must work in a classified environment in which information about intelligence programs and activities is not available for public review, their duty – and ability – to lawfully disclose information regarding potential wrongdoing is critical to the oversight process.

I know this Committee supports whistleblowers. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the CIA continues to have an effective whistleblower program. Those who demonstrate the personal ethics and moral courage to bring concerns forward must not fear or suffer from reprisal for speaking up.

I deeply respect this Committee's important oversight role. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with many of you before this hearing, so that I could answer your questions, listen to your concerns, and learn from your insights. If confirmed, I pledge to work with this and other intelligence oversight committees in an open and productive way as we engage in our shared effort to ensure continued efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in the programs and activities of the CIA.

I am genuinely honored to be here today. Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.