Statement of Gary M. Lawkowski
General Counsel Nominee
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Statement for the Record Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

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Chairman Cotton, Vice Chairman Warner, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the General Counsel to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

I will begin with a few words of thanks. Thank you to President Trump for the trust and confidence he has placed in me by selecting and nominating me for this position, and to Director Clayton for supporting my nomination. Thank you to my wife Heather, who is here today, for her support and patience. Thank you to my mother Helen, who is also here today, for all the work she did raising me and putting up with my early interest in world affairs. Thank you to my professional mentors, many of whom are former colleagues, without whom I would not be sitting before you today. And finally, thank you to the team at ODNI. Their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to service is critical to our mission.

I remember when I was a young boy, my father would come into my room, often before the day's first light, to say goodbye before leaving for work. He would not be home again until late in the evening. He was a career federal civil servant, who spent much of his career as a civilian with the Army. From his example, I learned the value of hard work. This is a lesson that stuck with me.

My experiences, both in and out of government, have prepared me well to lead the General Counsel's Office at ODNI. In the White House Counsel's Office, I have the privilege of helping to manage and lead a team of some of the brightest, most motivated attorneys you could hope to meet, as we provide legal advice on tough questions, often of first impression, concerning weighty issues of constitutional authorities. In my role, the White House Counsel and other top

national security lawyers have looked to me for advice and judgment on a range of sensitive matters. Before joining the White House Counsel's Office, I had the privilege of directly advising and learning from top agency officials including the Secretary of the Interior, the Solicitor of the Interior, and three Commissioners on the Federal Election Commission.

These experiences taught me a lot about how to be an effective lawyer in a fast-paced, high-stakes agency environment. I learned the importance of providing clear, accurate, and timely guidance to inform decisions and the value of a robust and open process for stress-testing ideas and interpretations against the best counter arguments. Perhaps most importantly, they taught me to recognize the distinction between providing legal advice and acting as a manager. Legal advice should be grounded in reasonable risk assessments and give leaders the information they need to make informed choices, while management involves setting office policies and directing operations.

My work in government and in the private sector has emphasized the importance of servant leadership, both at a personal level within the office and at an institutional level. After all, government officials are there to serve "we the people," not their own bureaucratic convenience. Thus, while we must be focused on the key mission of keeping the American people safe and secure, we must not overlook the need to safeguard key constitutional rights and to make sure the America people have the information necessary to make informed evaluations of what their government is doing.

Thank you very much for your time this afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today, and look forward to your questions.