

Mr. David Keeling  
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA),  
Department of Labor  
June 5, 2025

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Thank you, Chairman Cassidy, Ranking Member Sanders, and esteemed members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of Labor overseeing the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. I want to express my deepest gratitude to President Donald J. Trump and Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez DeRemer for entrusting me with this significant responsibility. It is a privilege to be considered for a role that plays such a crucial part in serving our nation, our workers and our citizens.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my family, friends and colleagues for their support. My amazing wife, best friend and rock, Jamie Walker Keeling, my son Charles and daughter Bethany. Everyone has a “why”. Why we get up in the morning, why we try harder each day and why we care about making the world around us a better place. These three are my “Why”.

I would also like to thank my parents James David Keeling, Charlotte Crouch Keeling and sister Becky Meade as well as members of the Keeling, Crouch, Walker and Meade families who are here with us today or are sending prayers my way. God has blessed me with a remarkable family. My outlook on life was in no small way a result of two sets of loving grandparents; James Hertlein and Geneva Jenkins Keeling; Stanley and Evelyn Wilkerson Crouch. Four angels who will forever be on my shoulder.

Throughout my nearly 40 years in occupational safety and health, I have dedicated myself to ensuring that every worker goes home to their loved ones healthy and whole at the end of each day. This passion was influenced by the death of my uncle; Lonny Crouch, who died in a farming accident at the age of 17. I never had the opportunity to know my uncle. Because of the pain his death caused, his name wasn't used every day. However, his loss was always there in my grandparents' house, an empty chair always present at their dinner table.

In my time as a safety professional, UPSer for 37 years, and Teamster, I came to understand that nothing is more beneficial than collaboration between employers and employees. I have had both the opportunity and the responsibility to walk on far more concrete than carpet in my career. I have learned that the best source of safety improvements originates with the people who perform the job every day. These experiences have equipped me with a deep understanding of the challenges we face and the importance of collaboration, transparency, and integrity.

I want to take a moment to commend the dedicated career employees of OSHA both past and present. I want to assure them that their passion is recognized and that they are greatly respected by their industry peers. I also want to reassure them that great opportunity lies in front of us.

I believe that we have reached a crossroad in terms of OSHA's future and direction. My fear is that OSHA is at risk of losing its position of leadership in the global health and safety space. Not because of any failure on the part of OSHA's people, but because of outdated systems and processes that have resisted past administrators' efforts at common sense improvement. If confirmed, my goals are straightforward and simple.

First, I hope to not only continue, but greatly accelerate, the pace of modernization in the area of “Regulatory Oversight and Rulemaking”, bringing to bare technology and predictive analytics, which move beyond simple regulatory compliance and post-injury response, to injury prevention through informed design. We must take advantage of existing global industry consensus standards which have gone through much more rigorous review, regular updating, and continuous improvement than have many of OSHA’s existing rules. It will not come as a surprise to this committee that many of OSHA’s existing standards have become antiquated or unusable in the face of job modernization or technological advancements within the workplace.

Second, expanding OSHA’s leadership in the areas of industry “Cooperation and Collaboration” between professional groups, companies, and unions. We all want the same thing, although we sometime differ on the best road to get there. We must move beyond existing silos and self-imposed barriers to achieve real improvement. Further, we must modernize and update existing Voluntary Protection Program’s. The current VPP programs provide a basic platform, but it is only a start. Critical work needs to be done in this area to achieve successful outcomes. I truly believe that greatness in employee safety is worth pursuing.

My third and final goal relates to OSHA “Enforcement Transformation”. Technology exists today that wasn’t available to us when OSHA processes were originally put into place in the 1970s. We now have the ability to use existing data to greatly enhance on-site safety efforts through predictive analytics. We must engage at-risk employers and employees through

proactive risk mitigation and reduction programs before a worksite tragedy has taken place or fatality as occurred. We should never get to a worksite after it is too late.

If confirmed, I am committed to working with each of you so that no family sits down to dinner at a table with an empty chair. I believe that by working with this committee and stakeholders across the ideological spectrum, we can achieve real and meaningful progress, and hopefully achieve these goals.

I welcome the opportunity to address your questions and to discuss how my vision aligns with the priorities of this committee and the constituent workforces we serve.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to our discussion.