

**STATEMENT OF DR. DAVID WEIL
NOMINEE FOR U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR
CONFIRMATION HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS**

Thank you Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Burr, and distinguished members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider my nomination to serve as the United States Wage and Hour Administrator.

I am deeply grateful to President Joe Biden for nominating me to the position of Wage and Hour Administrator and to Secretary Marty Walsh for the confidence he has shown me in supporting my nomination. I want to thank Senator Warren of Massachusetts for such a kind introduction this morning. I also wish to acknowledge and thank my wife, Miriam Weil for joining me today and, along with my daughters Rachel and Lani, for supporting and inspiring me.

I am humbled by the opportunity, if confirmed, to once again serve my country by leading the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division. Serving as Administrator during the Obama administration and leading its dedicated and capable staff of men and women was one of the greatest professional honors and experiences of my life.

As you well know, the mission of the Wage and Hour Division is to assure that working people receive a fair day's treatment for a fair day's work and that the businesses that employ them comply with the law and compete on a level playing field. Through enforcement, education, and stakeholder engagement, the agency assures that basic concepts of fairness that underpin our fundamental workplace laws like the Fair Labor Standards Act are realized in the day-to-day experience of working people.

My appearance before you today arises in large part by the opportunities afforded my parents and grandparents by this country. My maternal grandparents Rose and Abe Shapiro came to the United States at the turn of the last century. Like thousands of other immigrants, they worked for years in the garment industry in order to save enough to start a small business to support their family and educate my mother Nancy and her brothers and sister.

My father Jerry Weil and his family fled Nazi Germany and arrived in the United States in 1939 with little more than their desire to build a new life in a free and democratic nation. My father, now 90, often recounts the many jobs he held as a young man. Whether stocking shelves in a grocery store, selling shoes, delivering mail, or working on a truck assembly line, he was able to earn enough to help support his family, go to college, and attend medical school, eventually providing a solid economic foundation for my sisters and me.

Growing up in Greeley, Colorado, a small farming and ranching town, I had many classmates whose families were seeking the same pathway—they were the sons and daughters of farmers or farm workers, of workers in the local meatpacking and livestock industry, or of small business owners. Many of those families made their way into the middle class. But other families were not

so fortunate. The Greeley of today is a much larger and economically vibrant place, but many of its families still struggle to get by.

Throughout my academic life, as a business school professor and now as Dean of Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, I have focused on understanding the forces that shape economic opportunities for workers. As an economist, I understand that a market acts as a positive force in allocating the scarce resources of society towards economically productive outcomes. But I also know how our workplace laws seek to *balance* those market forces to make sure that the economic value created by businesses are shared with the workforce who helps create them.

For decades following World War II, families like mine benefited from that balance. But since the 1980s, the economic value created by businesses and their workforce and the earnings of working people have diverged, leading to wide scale wage stagnation and growing inequality.

This work informed my approach as Wage and Hour Administrator and would continue to do so if confirmed by the Senate. That approach was grounded in the mission of the agency: "Promote and achieve compliance with labor standards to protect and enhance the welfare of the Nation's workforce." When I led Wage and Hour previously, we prioritized our resources towards industries, workers, and employers most hurt by failure to comply or most in need of assistance. We were data-driven and committed to evaluating the impact of all our efforts as well as developing multiple ways to engage with our many stakeholders.

The pandemic revealed starkly what has been true long before it hit: too many hard-working people who provide essential services fail to receive the pay and treatment that the law requires. That not only harms them, but undermines the social fabric we depend on as communities. If confirmed and given the opportunity to lead the Wage and Hour Division, I would redouble my commitment to the responsible, effective, and transparent administration of the agency and in that way contribute to President Biden's efforts to build back better.

Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Burr, and members of the Committee, I once again thank you for the opportunity to discuss my views with you and I look forward to addressing your questions.