

**STATEMENT OF CRAIG BECKER
NOMINEE FOR MEMBER, NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD**

**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE**

FEBRUARY 2, 2010

Thank you Chairman Harkin, Senator Enzi, and members of the Committee. It is a great honor to appear before you today as well as to be considered to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board.

I am joined here by my wife, Amy Dru Stanley, and two sons, Tom and Isaac Stanley-Becker. I would like to thank them not only for being here today but also for their willingness to uproot their lives on the South Side of Chicago.

I would also like to thank my parents, Sam and Ruth Becker. My parents instilled in me many of the core values that I will carry into my work at the Board, should I be confirmed. My mother, who is no longer with us, fled the terror of Nazi Germany as a young girl, and later became a nurse in the United States. From her, I gained a profound appreciation for the liberties we enjoy in this nation – of speech, of belief, and of association – as well as a vivid awareness of the security I might otherwise have taken for granted growing up amidst the rolling corn fields of Iowa. My father, who cannot be with us today, played on the banks of the Mississippi as a boy in Quincy, Illinois, fought for our country in the Pacific during World War II, returned to college on the G.I. Bill, and became a beloved teacher at the University of Iowa. From him, I learned the value of hard work and the imperative of respecting the views of others – no matter how different from my own. From both my parents, I learned a reverence for our country and a desire to serve it.

My father often told me stories of growing up just up the stairs from his father's shoe repair shop. My grandfather came to America on a steamship from Poland. A young man with nothing but what was in his pockets, he made his way from New York to Quincy, and there somehow scraped together the money to start his own shop – Star Shoe Repair. For my father's family, the shoe shop represented the American dream. And my grandfather embodied the vital, creative, and productive forces that our nation's federal labor law seeks to bind together in harmony. My grandfather was an entrepreneur – staking everything on his shop and ever dependent on his customers to stay in business. Simultaneously, he was a worker – bent over his bench with hammer in hand, proud of his craft. I keep one of the iron shoe lasts from his shop on my shelf to remind me of where I come from.

I have devoted my entire professional career to teaching and practicing labor and employment law. I have represented not simply unions but also individual employees, belonging to no labor organization, in diverse trades and professions – from prison guards to retail clerks, from hospital administrators to home-care workers. I have appeared both before the Board and in

courts ranging from county courts of common pleas to the United States Supreme Court. I have debated central questions of labor law with colleagues and students at Georgetown University, the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Chicago School of Law. As a scholar, I have had the opportunity to reflect on the broad sweep of the law and join in robust, open, and provocative dialogue, which is the lifeblood of the American system of higher education. As an attorney, I have sat across the table from management and also on the same side of the table, in both postures gaining an understanding of employers' concerns and often finding common ground between labor and management. It is this range of experience that, should I be confirmed, I will draw on in collaborating with my fellow Board Members to fairly, efficiently and faithfully apply the law.

It is humbling to contemplate serving on the National Labor Relations Board, an institution that has protected the rights of working Americans for 75 years. In my practice, over the course of almost three decades, I have had the opportunity to work with the Board's staff at almost every level. I have participated in representation cases and I have been present when ballot boxes were opened and at the charged moment when the vote tally is announced. I have met with General Counsels – nominated by Presidents from both parties – to discuss whether complaints should issue. I have represented parties on both sides of unfair labor practice cases, argued before the Board itself, and appeared alongside the Board's counsel and across the courtroom from the Board counsel in the United States Courts of Appeal. In every instance, my understanding of the law has been enhanced by the Board's highly skilled staff, who are committed to the purposes of the Act. And I would be remiss if I did not underscore the dedication and professionalism of current Chairman Liebman and Member Schaumber, particularly during the last two years when they have continued to perform the work of the Board while the other three seats on the Board remain vacant. It would be an honor to serve with them and work with the entire staff of the Board and its General Counsel.

Finally, should I be confirmed, I will always remain faithful to the will of Congress. Like other members of both the labor and management bars who have served on the Board and applied the law impartially and fairly, I will do the same. Although the labor relations bar tends to be a divided one, I embrace the opportunity, should I become a member of the Board, to transcend the adversarial process in order to serve a larger purpose – the fair and faithful enforcement of the law. I fully understand that, if confirmed, I will occupy a position far different from the positions I have occupied as a scholar, teacher, and advocate. I fully understand that, if confirmed, my decisions, unlike the views of a scholar, will have practical, concrete, and important consequences for labor, management and the public at large. In sum, I fully understand that, if confirmed, I will have a duty to implement the intent of Congress as expressed in the law, to consider impartially all views appropriately expressed to the Board, to deliberate with my fellow Board Members, to use the wealth of knowledge and experience possessed by the Board's career staff, and to decide cases fairly based on the relevant facts and applicable law. That is exactly what I pledge to do, should I be confirmed.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these opening remarks. I welcome your questions.