

STATEMENT OF JULIE SU  
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BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS  
OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

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Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Burr, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today and am grateful for the time you made to meet with me prior to this hearing. I have enjoyed our discussions about the Department of Labor and its critical role in meeting the challenges of our time. I have appreciated the chance to share my vision with you for the Deputy Secretary position.

I want to start by also thanking President Biden for this incredible opportunity. I also want to thank my parents, who are watching today from California along with my daughter AnLing, a high school senior who will attend Amherst College in the fall and play on the basketball team. I'm also fortunate to have my older daughter, LiMei, with me today. She is a student at Yale, and I'm so grateful she could join me in person. My children and I are proud to be products of the American Dream.

I am the daughter of Chinese immigrants. My mom came to the United States on a 30-day voyage on a cargo ship because she couldn't afford a passenger ticket. Both of my parents came to America for opportunity, and they found it in Provo, Utah, where they studied; Madison, Wisconsin, where my sister and I were born; and ultimately in the home they built in search of warmer weather in Southern California.

My parents worked minimum wage jobs while going to school and instilled in me a deep appreciation for the struggles and pride in work. My mom eventually got a job working at Los Angeles County, starting as an office clerk, and retired after 27 years. That job gave our family financial security and health insurance, and also gave my mom stable, predictable hours and, now that she's retired, a pension. I know well what a good union job does for a family because I am a direct beneficiary.

While I was growing up, my family also owned a dry cleaning and laundromat business and then a pizza restaurant. I remember for years my dad would work his day job and then go directly to our business, returning home after 10 pm often with a pizza that a customer had rejected for my sister and I to pack in our school lunches the next day. I have a first-hand appreciation for small business owners, who are the engines of our economy.

I also grew up translating for my parents, a common experience in immigrant families. After college, I went to law school and became the first lawyer in my family. My experience as a translator at home shaped my commitment to making the law understandable and meaningful to individuals and communities too often left out of our economy. I spent nearly two decades representing workers, including immigrant workers and workers of color—garment workers, hotel housekeepers, caregivers, nurses, restaurant and retail workers—many of the same workers

who have been hardest hit by the COVID pandemic. What I learned from these courageous individuals is that too many people still work full-time year-round and live in poverty. Too many are denied a just day's pay for a hard day's work. As we've seen during the pandemic, too many workers have to choose between their safety and their livelihoods. At the same time, I learned that working people, when given a chance to organize, to be heard, not only make things better for themselves but bring the hope of such opportunity to those around them. If confirmed, I will bring these lessons and experiences to my role as we collectively continue to navigate these trying times.

For the last 10 years, I have served the people of California to build a fair and inclusive economy that values workers and supports businesses, all of whom want a fair shot at opportunity and security. I have prioritized innovative partnerships with employers, ensured robust enforcement of labor laws, and worked to combat wage theft. During my time leading and managing labor department programs in California, the world's fifth largest economy, I saw firsthand that:

- With a clear vision, bold ideas, and commitment to making government work—rejecting the idea that it has to be this way because we've always done it that way, for example—we could transform what we do and how we do it.
- Government has a meaningful role to play in providing support to employers who play by the rules. One of these roles is investments in workforce programs to provide training to meet the need for skilled workers and give more workers access to quality jobs. So much of what government can do is good for both employers and employees. I have been a leader dedicated to finding and expanding those areas of common ground.
- The lowest-paid workers, who often work crushing hours under brutal conditions, deserve their government's effort and respect. It is possible that we not only can ensure their earned wages make it into their pockets, we can also build their faith in the very idea of government itself.

These lessons drive my desire to serve in the federal government. I am grateful for this chance to work to preserve and expand the American dream for all Americans, and, if confirmed as the Deputy Secretary of Labor, I look forward to my partnership with you in the years ahead. I look forward to your questions.