

**United States Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee
Hearing on the Nomination of Neomi Rao to be the Administrator of the Office of
Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget**

Statement of Neomi Rao

June 7, 2017

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member McCaskill, and Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. I am grateful to the President and Director Mulvaney for their trust and confidence.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Members of this Committee and their staff for taking the time to meet with me. I appreciate your graciousness and the chance to connect and discuss issues about the regulatory process. For those of you I did not have an opportunity to meet, I hope we might have a chance after the hearing. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Members of the Committee on issues relating to regulatory and information policy.

If you will indulge me, I will take a moment to recognize my family. I am here today with my husband, Alan Lefkowitz, and my two children Isabella and Ezra. Alan's unwavering support has made it possible for me to even consider the demands of public service. My father, Dr. Jehangir Rao, is also here, and has believed in me at every stage of my life. I remember also my remarkable and loving mother, Dr. Zerine Rao, who died too young of cancer, and wish she could have been here to share this day. Leaving India in January 1972, my parents arrived in Detroit in the middle of a snowstorm without winter jackets, but with their medical degrees, \$16, and the optimism of the recently married. They always imparted by example the importance of integrity, perseverance, kindness, and a commitment to service.

Let me share some information about my background. For the past ten years, I have been a law professor at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University, teaching constitutional law and legislation and statutory interpretation. My scholarship has focused on the framework of constitutional accountability for administrative agencies. About two years ago, I founded the Center for the Study of the Administrative State. The Center commissions academic research and hosts public policy conferences, bringing together scholars, practitioners, and government officials to analyze and debate difficult questions of administrative law.

Prior to my academic career, I worked in the Office of the White House Counsel, where I oversaw the legal work of a number of agencies and helped to coordinate interagency discussions about law and policy. I have also served on the Senate Judiciary Committee as counsel for nominations and constitutional law. My other experience includes working for several years at a law firm in London and clerking for Justice

Clarence Thomas of the U.S. Supreme Court and Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

My academic background and practical experience in all three branches of the federal government have helped me to understand the regulatory process and the respective roles of Congress, the President, and the courts in administration.

Since Congress established OIRA in the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, OIRA has operated with a consistent mission to improve the quality of decisionmaking in administrative agencies through regulatory review and the coordination of information policy. OIRA plays a vital role within the Executive Branch to ensure that administrative agencies follow the law, base their decisions on the best possible economic and technical analysis, and fulfill presidential priorities. Within the requirements set by Congress, OIRA works with an overarching goal of creating the greatest benefits for the American people while minimizing regulatory burdens.

Reading through OIRA's statutory authorities as well as Executive Orders and OMB Guidance, I have been struck by the consistency of the principles guiding the work of the office across administrations. Perhaps this is one reason so many talented professionals work at OIRA and often stay for many years serving presidents of different parties.

I am humbled to be nominated for this role. If confirmed as Administrator, I would work to ensure the continuity of OIRA's principles, updating and refining when necessary, but maintaining the integrity of the process that has developed. I would also look forward to working with Members of this Committee and other Members of Congress on legislation relating to regulatory reform and other issues within OIRA's purview.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to answering your questions.