

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Gary C. Peters**  
**Nomination Hearing**  
**July 24, 2025**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am relieved to see that Paul Ingrassia, the nominee to run the Office of Special Counsel, has been pulled from today's hearing. The Office of Special Counsel is an independent, non-partisan agency that investigates allegations of prohibited personnel practices involving federal employees, including whistleblower retaliation.

Mr. Ingrassia is unqualified for the position both in terms of legal experience and given his long record of bigoted statements, and I urge the Administration to formally withdraw his nomination.

We have a number of nominees for critical roles in the Department of Homeland Security, the intelligence community, and in the courts of our nation's capital before us today.

Sean Plankey is nominated to lead the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency – or CISA. Mr. Plankey, thank you for joining us today.

If confirmed, you will be tasked with overseeing an agency that has been gutted by the Trump Administration.

As you know, CISA is the backbone of our nation's cybersecurity defense system, protecting federal networks and partnering with the private sector. CISA is the only civilian agency with the infrastructure, expertise and statutory authority to carry out this critical work.

Since President Trump's first term, he has worked to decimate CISA, most recently slashing its workforce by more than 30 percent and eliminating key leadership positions.

The Administration has also proposed a nearly 20 percent budget cut for the agency for Fiscal Year 2026.

Cyberattacks are one of the most significant national security threats our nation faces, and I'm extremely concerned by this Administration's actions that are undercutting CISA's capacity to defend our nation.

We are also considering the nomination of Christopher Fox to be the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, a role that demands full independence and credibility. This nomination, also, deserves serious scrutiny.

Mr. Fox's decision to accept a political appointment in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence even after he was nominated to serve as Inspector General gives me pause. Not only is he a senior advisor to the Director, but he is also currently running the Information Management Office, which handles FOIA, declassification, and records retention issues – all

matters that would likely need independent review from the eventual confirmed Inspector General.

We also have Mr. Pedro Allende who is nominated to lead DHS's Science and Technology Directorate.

This directorate plays a critical role in ensuring DHS components have the most reliable and effective technology to carry out their homeland security missions. The threats we face are getting more complicated each day, and DHS must have the right tools to address those threats and keep Americans safe.

And finally, we have Edward O'Connell, who is nominated to be an Associate Judge on the D.C. Superior Court. The D.C. Superior Court functions as the state-level trial court here in the nation's capital.

The court handles some of the highest case volumes in the country and is strained further by extended vacancies on the bench. Every day, Judges on the Superior Court decide matters that impact the freedom, livelihoods, and safety of individuals and families across the District of Columbia.

Currently 15 of the 62 seats on the court are vacant, with two more judges set to retire in September. These vacancies delay cases and place serious burdens on the current judges. I'm glad to see the Administration is moving forward with the nominees for these important roles that will help carry out justice in our nation's capital.

I look forward to hearing from all of you here today to hear more about your experience and how you plan to approach these very important roles that each of you have been nominated for.

Welcome to the committee.