

Written Statement of William John Valdez
Nominee for Under Secretary for Management
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Before the
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

February 3, 2022

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman, and distinguished Members of the Committee.

I am honored to appear before you today. I want to express my deep appreciation to President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas for their confidence in me. It would be the capstone and highest honor of my professional career, if I am confirmed, to return to public service as the Under Secretary for Management at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

I would like to acknowledge the contributions that my family, friends and my many former colleagues in the Federal government and the private sector have made to my career, including my mentors inside and outside of the government. With me here today is my lovely bride of 45 years, Marlana Valdez. We met on our first day at the University of Texas and she has been instrumental in whatever success I have enjoyed personally and professionally. Our three extraordinary daughters—Jayme, Maryn and Sydney—are accomplished professionals in their own right. I am thankful that my daughter Sydney and son-in-law Drew can join me today as well. Jayme and Maryn are watching today's hearing, along with my four grandchildren, River, Beck, JD, and Layla. They are very proud of their Papi and are cheering me on.

I mentioned my mentors and foremost among them were my late father and mother, Pete and Donna Valdez, who instilled a public service ethic in me, my late father-in-law James Ramey who believed in me when few else did and encouraged me to pursue a career in public service, and a host of Federal and private sector leaders too numerous to name who I emulated and learned from during my career. I thank them all.

For too long, the Federal government has been bogged down by inefficient business systems and processes that were out of date in the 20th Century, much less the 21st Century. I believe the DHS Management Directorate is well positioned to be an exemplar for other government agencies and could be at the forefront of changes in the way the Federal government operates. For example, financial systems are being improved, Government Accountability Office recommendations are being implemented, and employee engagement and morale scores are rising across the Department.

As part of my confirmation process, I have had the privilege to meet with senior officials within the Management Directorate and I can attest to their dedication, knowledge, and professionalism. I was deeply impressed with their passion for the DHS mission and their commitment to

ensuring that our homeland is secure. I also know, and hold in high esteem, many of the senior career leaders at DHS from my past public service and I very much look forward to working with them again, if I am confirmed.

My experience is that today's civil service is highly expert and is ready and eager to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. They can do this if they are afforded the opportunity to be creative and innovative. Accomplishing this will require a team effort – Congress, other parts of the Administration, including the Office of Management and Budget, and good government groups like the National Academy of Public Administration and the Partnership for Public Service, to name a few.

Throughout my career, I have built a reputation as someone who engages with stakeholders to find solutions to tough problems. I am eager to undertake this challenge at DHS. My goal, if I have the privilege to be confirmed as Under Secretary for Management, is to work with Department and Component leadership, Congress, and other key stakeholders to make the Management Directorate a world class operation that is at the forefront of new ways of doing business.

I believe that the knowledge and experiences I have acquired throughout my career have prepared me for this opportunity. The DHS Management Directorate is one of the most complex organizations of its kind in the Federal government. With a large scope of authorities and responsibilities, its work impacts every aspect of DHS operations. If I am confirmed, it will be my solemn obligation to do everything in my power to make the Management Directorate as successful and effective as possible to enable the Department and its Operational Components to undertake their vital missions.

Thank you for considering my nomination and I look forward to your questions.