

Madame Chair and distinguished members of the Committee,

My name is Suzanne Mencer and President Bush has nominated me for the position of Director of the Office for Domestic Preparedness in the Department of Homeland Security.

It is indeed a great honor to appear before you today. If I may, I 'd like to introduce members of my immediate family who are here to support me. Here with me is my advisor, my mentor and my biggest fan, my husband of almost 25 years, John, and our son Alex, who is here in support of me and to get extra credit for his American Government class. Our daughter Jessie, who has always encouraged me and has been proud of everything I've done, could not be here today as she is in college in Massachusetts. Thank you.

Thirty-five years ago this month, as I began my ten year career as a high school Spanish teacher in Worthington, Ohio, I never dreamed I would be sitting here today nominated by the President of the United States. Not even after a twenty year career in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, investigating and supervising foreign counterintelligence and international and domestic terrorism, did I dream of this. Not even when Governor

Bill Owens appointed me to become the Executive Director of Public Safety for Colorado three years ago, did I imagine being here today. Indeed, this is a great honor.

However, I do believe that my experience at the federal level in terrorism matters combined now with my years of service at the state level, working closely with first responders and local law enforcement, provide a truly unique perspective. I have seen what is necessary at the federal, state and local level to combat terrorism. I have seen it from an investigative, response and tactical perspective. I know first hand how important equipment, training, and exercises are to prevent another event from occurring, but if it does, to have the resources to respond in the most effective and efficient way possible.

I have worked closely in Colorado with Sheriffs, Chiefs, Fire Chiefs, Emergency Response Personnel, Health Care Providers and our federal partners to develop plans using a regional approach. We stress in Colorado that we must all work together, crossing city lines, county lines and state boundaries, because a weapon of mass destruction overwhelms the capability of any one community to respond but, more importantly, we stress that we must combine our resources. Terrorists are not

restricted by city, county or state lines, and we need to prepare accordingly.

If confirmed, I hope to use that perspective to ensure that the federal funds so necessary to the defense of our country are directed and applied throughout the United States to reap the greatest benefit to detect, deter and respond to a terrorist act.

If I am confirmed, I would be grateful, humbled and honored to have the opportunity to use my experience and my abilities to serve the President and my country in the Department of Homeland Security.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I would be pleased to answer your questions and those of the committee, Madame Chair.