

Testimony of

# The Honorable Orrin Hatch

June 6, 2003

Opening Statement of Chairman Orrin G. Hatch

Before the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Hearing on the Nomination of

Eduardo Aguirre to be Director of Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security

I am pleased that we have the opportunity to consider this morning the nomination of the Eduardo Aguirre for Director of the newly created Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, or BCIS.

As all of you know, the functions of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service were split into several different agencies within the Department of Homeland Security. The BCIS is charged with handling matters relating to benefit services. The creation of a bureau focusing exclusively on immigration benefits is designed to enhance the quality of service for the tens of thousands who apply for naturalization and other immigration benefits.

I am convinced that Eduardo Aguirre is a qualified candidate for this job. Mr. Aguirre brings with him more than three decades of management experience, which includes serving as president of the International Private Bank at the Bank of America, and vice-chairman and chief operating officer at the Export-Import Bank. Throughout his service in both the private and public sectors, Mr. Aguirre has made customer service a top priority, a much needed quality for the director of an agency that emphasizes service. Furthermore, in his most recent capacity as vice-chairman and C.O.O. of the Export-Import Bank, Mr. Aguirre brought his managerial expertise, energy, and a fresh private sector perspective to the job. He has developed and introduced a reorganization dedicated to customer service and fulfilled the Bank's mission to preserve and create jobs for the American people. He brought innovation and was not afraid to institute reform when necessary as he always looked for ways to improve the operation of a sixty-eight year-old agency. One example of such innovation is his willingness to take advantage of modern technology to improve efficiency, which leads to better customer service.

It is this kind of innovative thinking, fresh perspective, and willingness to institute reform that will make Mr. Aguirre a strong leader at the BCIS. Although the BCIS is a brand new agency, it has inherited the legacy of its predecessor, such as an enormous backlog of applications waiting to be adjudicated. I am confident that with Mr. Aguirre's spirit of innovation and dedication to customer service, the BCIS will resolve these problems and will become a first rate service-oriented organization.

When looking at all of his professional successes, it is easy to forget that Eduardo Aguirre came to the United States as a young boy of 15, without his family, without any money, and without knowledge of the English language. His parents sent him here to escape an oppressive regime in Cuba, and he has never forgotten those in our society that need a helping hand. This is evidenced by his dedication to his community, as he has generously lent his time and talents to many worthy causes, ranging from healthcare for the elderly to education of our youth. Even as vice-chair and C.O.O. of the Ex-Im Bank, he was committed to helping women and minority exporters, as well as small business owners.

I support the nomination of Eduardo Aguirre and I look forward to my colleagues' support of his swift confirmation.

###

