

**TESTIMONY OF
SANDFORD (SANDY) BLITZ
AT THE CONFIRMATION HEARING OF THE
U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
IN REGARDS TO HIS PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION TO BE THE
FEDERAL CO-CHAIR OF THE
NORTHERN BORDER REGIONAL COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

Chairman Boxer, Senator Inhofe, Members of the Environment and Public Works Committee, President Obama's submission of my nomination, and my appearance here today before this august body, is the greatest honor that has ever been bestowed upon me; not only me, but to my extended family. I am humbled by the confidence that has been shown in me, and pledge to you that, if confirmed, I will be sure to justify that confidence.

Speaking of my family, Chairman Boxer, I ask your permission to introduce those family members that were able to be here today to share this very significant event in our family's life.

My story is similar to others that have previously appeared before the Senate. That is to say, I am a second generation American; my maternal and paternal grandparents were born in Europe. My mother, very early in the lives of her children, became a single parent. Our mother, Ida Blitz, was the quintessential mother, protecting and nurturing her three children, to allow them to grow to be productive citizens in society, and to have their own families. As a result of my mother's emphasis on the importance of an education, I became the first member of my extended family to enter college and receive a degree.

I am a native New Yorker, who has lived and worked in New England since 1964.

My employment career history includes working in the private sector, for small and large corporations, as well as being employed in the non-profit sector. In addition, I created and operated my own consulting business for twelve (12) years. However, the majority of my career has been spent in public service, and I must say, the most satisfying of my vocational career.

Since 1971, when I became the Executive Assistant to the Mayor, City of Bridgeport, CT, I have worked with, and/or in the three levels of government. My federal career, which spans over 22 years, includes eight (8) years with the General Services Administration, thirteen (13) years with the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, and most recently, fifteen (15) months with the Small Business Administration. I served in Washington, DC headquarters, in regional offices, and in the field.

Throughout my government career, and my consulting business, I have been involved in economic development issues and intergovernmental relations. As an Adjunct Assistant Professor, with the Department of Public Administration, at the University of Maine, I teach graduate courses in Economic Development, Intergovernmental Relations, and Regional Governance. All three of these courses are directly related to the work of Regional Commissions.

I have been focused on the economic challenges faced by the northern border area for over ten years, and have witnessed how this region – which crosses four state boundaries – experiences common economic challenges. This is a region that is particularly well suited for the coordinated development approach pioneered by the Appalachian Regional Commission, and I hope that we can replicate many of that Commission’s successes. In November, 2003, I set up a conference to encourage this type of regional development with the theme “*The Emerging International Northeast: the Imperative of Regional Coherence.*”

Based on my years of economic development experience in the region, I am very encouraged by the potential that the Regional Commission will bring to the Northern Border States, and I applaud Congress for establishing it. Furthermore, I am honored to be nominated to be the first to hold the position of federal Co-Chair the Commission.

I believe that bringing Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont together with the assistance of the Federal Government, will result in farsighted, well-conceived approaches to bring opportunity to the northern border. Additionally, at this time of increased economic distress, the NBRC will be another vehicle, with resources, to assist in the creation of much needed jobs, in a region under enormous economic strain.

As I said earlier, I have worked for many years in the economic development field throughout New England, and I am dedicated to finding effective economic strategies, improving public infrastructure, as well as assisting private sector job creating initiatives. I believe that the Northern Border Regional Commission represents a unique and invaluable resource to improve the lives of all who live in this broad region. If confirmed, I will spare no effort to ensure that the Commission fulfills its great promise.

Chairman Boxer, Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you, and familiarize you with my background. I look forward to responding to any questions the Committee Members may have.