

**STATEMENT OF MELANIE R. SABELHAUS
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U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

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Good morning Mr. Chairman, Senator Bond and distinguished members of this committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration. This is truly an amazing moment for me.

I am very enthusiastic about this opportunity to serve at the SBA. I've experienced what many entrepreneurs are searching for, the American Dream – turning an idea into a prosperous business while employing people in my community. It was the thrill of a lifetime. And now I have this incredible opportunity to work with entrepreneurs around the country, to help them turn their visions into reality.

Throughout my journey in business, I have always been surrounded by a close supportive family and loyal dedicated friends, many of whom are here today. These are the most important people in my life. They have shared my vision and have served as my sounding board for years. I would like to thank them for coming today. My husband Bob, who is my best friend in the world and my advisor in life, is here, along with my son Bobby, who is here from Los Angeles. Bobby has always made me proud. My daughter Alexa is unable to join us, as she's in the middle of mid-terms at Boston University. She certainly is here in my heart, as are my dear parents Nick and Millicent Radlick, ages 90 and 88, who are truly the wind beneath my wings.

I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, the only child of a steelworker and homemaker – my role models in life who worked hard for their community and family. My father was a city councilman for 30 years, president of his local union for 29 years and the backbone of his Serbian Orthodox Church. My parents taught me early on that hard work, dedication, high moral values and passion are the keys to shaping one's life mission. They taught me to dream big and to become whatever I wanted to be. They wanted me to have everything they didn't.

I graduated from a public high school in a class of 1,000 students as a class officer and then earned a BS at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. It was at Ohio University where I met my husband Bob. He was the bus boy in my sorority house, and we married right after college. We have always shared dreams and the drive to make those dreams reality.

Mr. Chairman, I had the opportunity to work for IBM, one of the finest corporations in the world, for 15 years. IBM provided me with excellent management training. I held various management positions for IBM and had the opportunity to develop an entrepreneurial venture, the IBM Product Center, which consisted of retail stores selling directly to the consumer. This opportunity gave me first-hand experience in building a business from the ground up.

I continued working for IBM throughout the United States, moving several times with Bob as he was relocated with Merrill Lynch. With each relocation, our family would be put up in a hotel for several months, which was very costly for the company and terribly inconvenient for us personally. Experiencing this time after time exposed me a need in the marketplace that I could fill with my own business.

With Bob's encouragement, I started Exclusive Interim Properties, LTD, literally in my own back yard. We provided totally furnished accommodations, condominiums, townhomes, apartments and homes for relocated executives, individuals on temporary assignment, professional athletes, persons in the movie industry and anyone else who needed short-term, furnished housing. It was my IBM marketing training that provided the foundation for my business to get started and to grow, allowing the concept to take off. At our peak my company had offices in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. and employed 75 people, including sales professionals, accounting and administrative personnel and housekeepers. With the 650 furnished units, my company generated \$10 million in revenue.

The greatest job of my life was building this small business with my team. My highly motivated employees were passionate about their jobs, and their efforts were key to making Exclusive Interim Properties a huge success. We were all engaged in the community, networking professionally and volunteering. We had a mission to give back as much as we could. Most importantly, we were a team!

Several other entrepreneurs around the country were doing exactly what we were doing, and we decided to consolidate, becoming Bridge Street Accommodations. We went public with an IPO in 1997, and I became Vice President of Global Sales. I was involved in acquisitions in London and Canada until retiring in 1998.

For the past three-and-a-half years, I have dedicated my time to my community, including raising money for charitable institutions and focusing on women's issues, both of which are passions of mine. I would like to help lead the way for woman entrepreneurs. There are currently an estimated 6.2 million majority-owned, privately-held women-owned businesses in the United States, and they account for 28% of all privately-held firms. These firms generate \$1.5 trillion in private sales and employ 9.2 million workers. These firms are growing at twice the rate of all U.S. firms, and this is just the tip of the iceberg!

If confirmed, I will take all I have learned over the past 32 years and help all small businesses around the country succeed. I am very excited about the prospect of working closely with you, the President's administration and agency partners. I hope you will allow me to have this opportunity. I will gladly answer any questions relating to my confirmation that you may have. I thank the President for his confidence in me, and I thank this Committee for its time and effort on my behalf.