Statement of Dr. Ethan A. Klein

Nominee for Associate Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

September 17, 2025

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and other members of this esteemed committee for the opportunity to appear before you this morning.

It is the honor of my life to sit before this committee as President Donald J. Trump's nominee for Associate Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

I would like to begin by thanking the people without whom I would not be here today. To my parents, Steven and Shoshana, thank you for instilling in me a deep appreciation and respect for education and lifelong learning. To my twin sister, Dahlia, who will be starting as a professor of physics at the University of Chicago, thank you for setting the example of American scientific leadership we seek to preserve. And to the love of my life, my incredible wife, Jennifer, and her family, thank you for supporting me every step of this journey, from government service to academia and back again. I am the luckiest man in the world to have you as my life partner. To my friends and family – I love you all. And of course, I must give thanks to my G-d.

Our national science and technology ecosystem is the engine that has driven America to become the most innovative nation in the world, built on the bedrock of academia, industry, and government working in tandem. I am blessed to have worked across all three of these pillars, giving me a comprehensive perspective on how to fine-tune their interactions to maximize impact.

In the first Trump Administration, I served as a policy advisor in OSTP, leading emerging technology initiatives in artificial intelligence, unmanned aircraft systems, and agricultural biotechnology. I witnessed the role the government can play in laying the foundations of the technological revolutions defining our times.

My academic journey began in the public schools of South Jersey and brought me to the laboratories of MIT to study chemistry and physics as an undergraduate, and nuclear engineering for my Ph.D. During my graduate work, I explored new frontiers of nuclear technology in collaboration with our national laboratories.

Later, as an MBA student at Stanford, I saw firsthand how the co-location of capital and talent in Silicon Valley created an unparalleled innovation ecosystem. Across my roles, including in financial advisory and at a deep-tech incubator, I've engaged with hundreds of technology companies, spanning hyperscalers to university spin-outs, guiding them on how to engage more effectively with government.

OSTP will celebrate its 50th birthday in May, but the role of providing scientific and technical advice to the President is much older. Its precursor, the Office of Scientific Research and Development, led the Manhattan Project. And it was the President's Science Advisory Committee that recommended the creation of NASA, taking America to the Moon and victory in the Space Race. Today, OSTP can lead America to victory in the next race: to achieve global dominance in AI and other critical and emerging technologies.

In a letter to OSTP Director Michael Kratsios earlier this year, President Trump laid out three charges for the office: (i) to secure our position as the unrivaled world leader in critical and emerging technologies; (ii) to revitalize America's science and technology enterprise; and (iii) to ensure that scientific progress and technological innovation fuel economic growth and better the lives of all Americans. Under Director Kratsios' leadership, OSTP has already taken significant actions to answer that charge: authoring America's AI Action Plan and assisting the President with issuing executive orders to promote artificial intelligence, accelerate nuclear energy, and spur advanced aviation.

While much has been done, there is yet much to do. If confirmed, my mission will be to continue implementation of those actions and to drive new efforts aimed at removing unnecessary barriers to innovation, leading national science and technology efforts across the ecosystem, and establishing new models for public-private partnerships.

To meet today's challenges, OSTP must focus further on national technology policy, modernizing its models for government to partner with academia and the private sector, which now leads a growing share of technological development. That requires a forward-leaning approach to public-private collaboration that reflects the realities of 21st century innovation.

Furthermore, technology now cuts across every domain of government. Consequently, OSTP must more fully engage across the policymaking, operational, and implementation arms of the Federal Government. In addition to coordinating interagency R&D efforts, OSTP actions should further synchronize with national efforts in workforce development, infrastructure, manufacturing, and supply chains.

Emerging technologies promise to expand economic opportunity, improve public health, and enhance national security. Yet in policy discussions about their governance, discourse has at times leaned too far toward restraint, slowing the pace of progress. As a technologist, I remain fundamentally hopeful that technology can improve American lives and further our nation's flourishing.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering your questions.