

STATEMENT OF THOMAS B. CHAPMAN
NOMINEE, MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE
JUNE 24, 2026

Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be nominated by the President to serve a full second term as a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board. And I am grateful to my remarkable colleagues at NTSB for all they do to promote safety in transportation. My work as a Board Member has been a rewarding opportunity to apply my experience and skills in a role allowing me to give back through public service.

I know you won't mind if I say a few words about the two people most important to me. My wife Scotty O'Connell is here with me today. Scotty is my partner and best friend, and she has been for these past 40 years. Our terrific son Patrick is watching online from Great Britain. Patrick recently graduated with his Master's degree from the London School of Economics. He is now seeking to begin his professional career. Because he has very much enjoyed his time in London, he is hoping he might have an opportunity to remain and work there for the next few years.

Mr. Chairman, my nearly five decades of experience, much of it in the aviation industry, have prepared me well for the tasks I find so fulfilling at NTSB. Throughout my career, I have been deeply involved in an extensive range of issues, often playing a key role in identifying and negotiating resolutions. Virtually every aspect of aviation involves considerations of safety. Consequently, I came to NTSB with a keen awareness and sensitivity to the importance of safety culture. I have sought to apply that perspective to my work as a Board Member, in pursuit of the critical safety mission of the NTSB.

In addition to my experience, I bring at least two qualities to the position which I believe are valuable. First, I benefit from an established reputation for collegiality and consensus building. Second, I am committed to public service and believe that much is expected from those who are most fortunate.

I am an aggressive advocate for the policy positions I am professionally obliged or personally committed to represent. However, I strive to demonstrate respect and appreciation for the views of those with whom I may disagree. I believe in compromise, and I take pride in crafting solutions that will accommodate seemingly conflicting points of view. Several of those I consider my most valued professional friends and associates are also those with whom I have most significantly clashed over past policy disputes.

As for my commitment to service, I view it as a responsibility for those who are fortunate to have prospered from professional life in the private sector. Immediately prior to joining NTSB, I was privileged to serve for six years on the staff of the Senate Committee on

Commerce, Science, & Transportation. In 2014, I left the airline industry and joined the Aviation Subcommittee staff in anticipation of the major legislative effort required to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration. Throughout my years with the Committee, I worked collaboratively with the bipartisan Senate team. Our efforts contributed to passage of various significant legislative measures, including the FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016 and the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018.

As an NTSB Board Member, I devote much of my attention to traffic safety, because that is where our greatest safety challenges lie. I speak extensively on the Safe System Approach to traffic safety, pedestrian safety, alcohol and drug impairment, and rail worker and highway-rail grade crossing hazards. I am especially active on key initiatives to address two stubbornly persistent challenges – alcohol impaired driving and excessive speed.

I am proud of the important public policy accomplishments to which I have contributed as a former member of the Commerce Committee staff and since joining the National Transportation Safety Board. I welcome the prospect of building on those efforts through additional service as a member of the Board.

Finally, for the convenience of the Committee, I have attached a list of the accidents and highway crashes to which I have launched with our NTSB investigators during my tenure as a member of the Board. As you will see, I have personally launched to a total of eight accident sites. I have also contributed by conducting two additional virtual media briefings when our teams were on scene conducting investigations in relatively remote locations.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my formal remarks. I am happy to respond to questions.

List of NTSB Board Member Chapman's Accident Launches & Media Briefings:

Date	Accident	Location	Mode
1/26/2020	Helicopter crash (nine fatal, including basketball star Kobe Bryant) [<i>training launch</i>]	Calabasas, CA	Aviation
3/27/2021	Helicopter crash (five fatal, including prominent Czech businessman)	Knik Glacier/Palmer, AK (virtual media briefing only)	Aviation
1/29/2022	Multi-vehicle crash (nine fatal)	North Las Vegas, NV	Highway
9/4/2022	Water impact of floatplane (ten fatal)	Mutiny Bay, WA	Aviation
1/28/2023	Box-truck/bus head on collision (solar-farm workers, six fatal)	Louisville, NY (virtual media briefing only)	Highway
7/12/2023	Greyhound motorcoach crash (three fatal)	Highland, IL	Highway
9/29/2023	Anhydrous Ammonia tanker crash (five fatal)	Teutopolis, IL	Highway
5/28/2024	Natural-gas explosion (one fatal)	Youngstown, OH	Pipeline
8/22/2025	Motorcoach rollover (five fatal)	Pembroke, NY	Highway
5/29/2026	Motorcoach crash (five fatal)	Stafford, VA	Highway