

STATEMENT OF
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Good morning, Chairwoman Woolsey, Ranking Member Wilson and members of the subcommittee. My name is Melissa Lindsay. I am the bookkeeper at Marlin Steel Wire Products in Baltimore, MD. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today on behalf of Marlin Wire, and most importantly, my 23 excellent coworkers. I was pleased to learn of the subject of today's hearing—balancing work and family life—and appreciate that members of Congress are taking the time to discuss the issues many working families face every day.

Since 2003, I have worked for Marlin Steel Wire Products as its bookkeeper. Marlin was founded in 1968. We manufacture wire baskets, hooks, rack hooks and wire forms. We also have the capability to produce a wide range of custom products for our customers. Our products are used in the medical industry and by large international companies like Caterpillar, Boeing and Toyota.

My husband Ed and I are from Massachusetts. When Ed learned of an opportunity to join the Fort Meade Fire Department, we moved to Maryland in 2003. Soon after arriving in Baltimore I got a job at Marlin. In 2006, we were proud to welcome our first child, Jayden, into our family. Prior to that I worked forty hours a week until the Friday before I had my daughter in November, at which time I began my maternity leave for 6 weeks. While out on maternity leave I made myself available by email to assist Marlin Steel Wire if an occasion arose. I then returned to work on a part-time basis on January 4, 2007.

Because my husband is a firefighter, he works crazy hours. For instance, he works 24 hour shifts and then has the next day off. Other times, Ed has to work mandatory overtime, which could be up to 24 hours at a time. We knew that once Jayden joined our lives, we would need to find a way so that Ed or I could be home as much as possible to care for and raise Jayden. I spoke with Drew Greenblatt, President and owner of Marlin, about how best to meet the needs of my family and Marlin Steel Wire.

So each week, Drew and I sit down to determine my work schedule for the upcoming week. This is after I get a sense of when Ed will be working. When Ed is home, I can spend a full day at the office. Other times, I work from home or work a partial day. There are even times when I bring Jayden to work for important meetings. My fellow coworkers always warmly welcome both of us.

Marlin Wire Products provides all of its employees great benefits and a great environment to work. For instance, I participate in the 401(k) plan, to which I contribute 10 percent of my earnings. My employer matches 40 percent of my contribution. I also receive paid time off for sick days, vacation days, holidays and bereavement leave. Marlin even paid for my college courses in accounting, so I am better at my job and have additional skills that I can use the rest of my working life. I was even offered health insurance, but I declined and Ed and I chose to stay with his insurance through the fire department.

I currently work part-time, and this is my choice to meet my needs and the needs of my family. A normal work week for me consists of 30 or more hours either at the office or telecommuting from home. A typical day for me starts like any other Mommy's day. I wake up, well Jayden usually wakes me up, and then I get Jayden dressed, and prepare us both breakfast. If it's a stay at home day, I turn on my computer and check my work email and address anything

that needs attention. I leave the computer on most of the day so as soon as I am notified of a new email I can quickly respond. If it is a go to the office day then I leave and my daughter stays home with Daddy. Occasionally, there are issues that arise that require me to go into the office, so Jayden and I will go to the office together. Recently, Jayden and I came to the office for a meeting. She is 6 months now so she is always very awake and alert. She stared at Drew the entire time fixated on his voice and what he was saying almost as if she understood. She just sat there and smiled the entire time he was talking. A few employees actually thank me for bringing her by. It brightens up their day, they tell me. The fact that I am able to do this and not miss these important meetings is one of the things I love most about my job. Without the family friendly atmosphere of Marlin Steel Wire, we wouldn't be able to raise our daughter the way we want to.

You might be thinking to yourself, "Wow, did Melissa find the right job or what?" Well, I did. I know that the main reasons I was able to ask for and receive these benefits is because I work hard at my job, take pride in being a part of the team at Marlin, and my boss is employee friendly. Working closely with Drew in managing Marlin's daily operations, I can personally attest to how challenging it is for a small wire company in Baltimore to succeed against cheaper products from our larger competitors, many in foreign countries with little or no environmental and labor laws, not to mention cheaper taxes. I think we are successful because of the hard work of everyone at Marlin to produce a quality product that more than meets the needs of our customers. Plus I believe that Drew goes the extra mile to take care of each of us.

I'd like to share with you some of the benefits my coworkers take advantage of at Marlin. Like me, Dong Moon works part-time. He is an operator of one of our assembly robots. He is in his mid-70's and participates in the company 401(k) plan. Aaron Heisler, an engineer, has a

longer commute than most of us, so he takes advantage of telecommuting too. He sometimes transmits blue prints for product designs remotely from his home office. Right now, Chung Lim, another robot operator, is taking five weeks of vacation in Korea. Hector Carmona, a model maker, has taken a month off every July since the 1990's to visit family in the Dominican Republic. Our plant manager, Simon Matthews, took advantage of Marlin's tuition benefit and attended college by taking night courses in Mechanical Engineering. Finally, last week, Kendall Browning, a fixture maker, took the morning off to present to his daughter's class for "career day".

It's clear to see that when a company is successful it is because of its employees. Thankfully for all of us at Marlin, our employer realizes this and goes the extra mile to help us meet our personal needs. Drew tells us all the time that it is so hard to find a skilled, dedicated person to hire that our team can rely on to do the job, so he works hard to keep us. I feel blessed that Drew found me and that I now have a job that allows me to be there for my family and to build a company that provides good jobs to its employees and make good products for its clients.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak today about not only my story but that of the wonderful people at Marlin whom I have the pleasure of working with everyday. I would be happy to answer your questions.