

Comments of Charlotte Brody, RN
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I am Charlotte Brody, a registered nurse and the Vice President of Health Initiatives for the BlueGreen Alliance, a national coalition of 10 labor unions and 4 environmental organizations dedicated to good jobs, a clean environment and a green economy. Thank you for this hearing and for the opportunity to speak.

The President for whom this building is named was a master of the big screen. Ronald Reagan knew how to talk to the American people in the broadest most cinematic way and to leave the details for others.

I want to talk to you in the master of optics Ronald Reagan way for a minute.

First, if there is a hearing about OSHA's unacceptable responses to CSB recommendations, what are the plans for the rest of the series? When will you call out industry groups, when will you call out Congress and OMB, when will you publicly review your own incomplete responses?

Second, in your opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, you elegantly quoted Tammy Miser and other members of the families of chemical safety tragedies for asking for government agencies to care. For expecting and demanding action.

It is a very simple and compelling plot line. Action versus inaction. Caring or non-caring. If there are missed deadlines, then OSHA must not care. If the recommendations have not been implemented the problem must be inaction. Neat, simple and dangerously wrong.

There has been plenty of action. There has been plenty of caring. But most of it has been the action and caring of the industry and political groups who don't want strong regulations and enforcement. Who make good livings taking action and taking care to make sure that OSHA and other regulatory authorities stay weak and ineffective.

It is shameful that workers in the United States are less safe than the women and men who do the same jobs in other countries. Shameful. I share your frustration. But how much safer are we making workers when we point fingers rather than strategically determining how to be the model agency in finding the ways out of no way: the strategies that allow us to overcome the pressure and power of the opponents of more protections.

CSB has the mandate, the talent and the bully pulpit -- the stage presence to invoke Ronald Reagan -- to tell the real story to the American people. Not a story of OSHA's lack of caring and action. But the more nuanced story of the power and pressure of the U.S. chemical and petroleum industry and the only good government is no

government elected officials. And the ways to effectively find our way under, over and through that power to better protections for American workers and communities.