

US Senate Committee on
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
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STATEMENT OF
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UNITED STATES POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION NOMINEE

Senator Carper and honorable members of the Committee:

I am honored and very proud to appear before you today. Each time I have been lucky enough to be nominated by the President for the position of Commissioner and have undergone the thorough process of advise and consent before the Senate, I gain increased respect for our nation's unique system of shared power among government branches that assures accountability to all citizens. I sincerely hope you will, once again, find me worthy of your support.

I greatly appreciate the thoughtful and considered attention that you and the members of this committee and your excellent staff have given and continue to give to postal matters: in the careful review of each of the candidates for this position who has come before you over the years, in your robust oversight of postal operations, and especially in the foresight and imagination you provided in crafting the fundamental reforms embodied in the 2006 Postal Accountability & Enhancement Act (PAEA). Thank you.

And thank you Senator Clinton for introducing me today. Little did I realize when, in the winter of 1998, you encouraged me to seek a Commission appointment, pointing out that the Postal Service is the only government agency to touch every household in America six days a week, that ten years later I would still be engaged in exciting work representing the interests of ordinary consumers and average citizens. Thank you for your strong leadership on regulatory issues. Thank you for your instrumental efforts on behalf of the semi-postal stamps raising funds for breast cancer research and for the heroes of 9/11. Thank you for setting a standard of hard work and participation in government that inspires all of us, especially the members of a new professional group I helped to form, Women in Logistics and Delivery Services or WILDS. And thank you for the many kindnesses you have shown to me and my family in trying times. There is no one I am prouder to call a friend.

Senator Carper, I'd like to introduce some of the people in the audience who have joined me here today. First, my invaluable staff assistant Michael Ravnitzky. Three of my fellow Commissioners are here: Commissioner Tony Hammond, Commissioner Mark Acton and our newest Commissioner, Nanci Langley. They along with Chairman Dan Blair who wasn't able to be here, are exceptional public servants. We have been seeing a great deal of each other since the enactment of PAEA and the resultant responsibilities the new law. The Chairman has set us a furious pace so that we meet or beat every deadline imposed by the law. In the process, and in spite of our partisan differences, we have developed a deep respect for each other and made accommodations for our various and unique points of view that serve to enhance the final outcome of our decisions. I hope you don't mind me

taking this opportunity to thank them. Former Chairman George Omas is here as well. He was instrumental in creating the enormous respect for our agency that can be seen so clearly in the final outlines of the PAEA.

Also in the audience are many of the good people who make up our postal community. As I have been a member of that community now for ten years, many of them have become good friends as well as colleagues. Publishers; mailers; printers; citizen advocates; unions representing clerks; letter carriers; supervisors and postmasters; shippers, and, of course their legal counselors - all of us are engaged in a communications industry that adds up to a nearly one trillion dollar economic force essential to the day-to-day commerce of our nation. More importantly, we all recognize that we participate in a system that has vital social and cultural significance. It binds our nation together and plays a key role in our democracy. I thank them all for their contributions. If confirmed, I am really looking forward to working with these good people for the next six years.

During my tenure on the Commission, I believe I have demonstrated my commitment to maintaining and improving the Postal Service. I have used my position to forcefully advocate on those issues that are of special importance to the residential customer, the single-piece mail user and to small businesses.

I have filed separate concurring and dissenting opinions that clearly state my views on fairness. For example, I've discussed the degree to which negotiated service agreements are fair and effective products for generating new mail volume while maintaining postal revenue, and how post office

window service should be provided to users of insurance or of the bound-printed mail category. Through op-ed pieces published in national newspapers and in public appearances, I have suggested new services such as the Forever Stamp and Expanded Vote-By-Mail.

Most recently, during the frequent consultations between the Commission and the top executives of the Postal Service – a key requirement of the PAEA – I have been urging that the Service’s measurement standards include a component to assess retail access. After all, the neighborhood post office is a vital social link in most communities throughout the nation. I also believe that maintaining a vibrant, inviting and ubiquitous network of convenient access points will be of utmost strategic advantage to the Service as it moves into the more competitive role envisioned by the PAEA.

In 1999, I was the first Commissioner to attend the Universal Postal Union Congress as a member of the U.S. delegation. And from that time I have participated in every UPU Congress, expanding the Commission’s regulatory role and gaining expertise regarding the rapid structural reforms other national posts have undertaken to adjust to a changing world.

The next six years will most certainly see major transformations within the Postal Service. First of all, the Commission, as the regulator, and the Service, the operator, will be finalizing and implementing all the new rules and responsibilities defined in the PAEA. The decisions that we are making now, in the first few years of the PAEA, will set the course for a decade to come. Transparency and accountability must be the keystones of the system. But just as we are making these decisions that ask all the players to live by

the new rules, we will likely face a steady and marked decline in mail volume that will challenge the Postal Service in new and perhaps unanticipated ways. We must be sure the Service is flexible enough to respond with new products that will surely come to replace old-fashioned letters, and we must be sure that cost-savings measures are not so draconian that the Postal Service deteriorates before it can take advantage of the opportunities created by changes in communication technology.

If you honor me again with another term in office, I pledge to work more diligently than ever with the Senate, especially the members of this committee, your staff, members of the House of Representatives, with the Postal Service, the mailing community and with Chairman Blair and my fellow Commissioners, to assure the health, vitality and the future of the Postal Service. I will be grateful for the opportunity to continue as a public servant. The challenges I will face are certain to be more exciting, more important and more personally rewarding than ever. Again, thank you for your consideration.

I am pleased to answer your questions.