

STATEMENT OF DANIEL K. AKAKA

Nominations of Dennis Walsh to be Chairman, Special Panel of Appeals; Dana Bilyeu and Michael Kennedy to be Members, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board; Milton Lee, Judith Smith, and Todd Edelman to be Associate Judges, Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Today, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs meets to consider the nominations of Dana Bilyeu and Michael Kennedy to be Members of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, and Dennis Walsh to be Chairman of the Special Panel on Appeals. On the second panel, we will consider the nominations of Milton Lee, Judith Smith, and Todd Edelman to be Associate Judges on the District of Columbia Superior Court.

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board was established in 1986 by legislation modernizing the Federal retirement system and creating the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The Board administers the TSP, which is a retirement savings plan similar to a 401(k) plan for Federal employees as well as military service members.

Ms. Bilyeu is well qualified to join this Board. She has decades of experience with retirement funds, and she currently is the Executive Officer of the Public Employees' Retirement System of Nevada. In that role, she is responsible for fund management, including investment oversight.

Mr. Kennedy also has strong credentials. He is a Trustee for the Georgia State Employees' pension fund, a position he has held for over a decade. He also has spent many years in the private sector and currently is a Senior Client Partner at an executive recruiting firm in Atlanta.

The Special Panel on Appeals resolves disagreements between the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). These disagreements arise on occasion in mixed cases – where an employee appeals a personnel action to the MSPB and also petitions the EEOC alleging that the action was based on discrimination.

Mr. Walsh is a distinguished attorney who currently serves as the Associate General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority. Prior to that, he spent twenty years working at the National Labor Relations Board and served both as a Member and Associate General Counsel.

Furthermore, we consistently receive excellent D.C. court candidates nominated by the President from those recommended by the District's non-partisan Judicial Nomination Commission.

Each of the nominees has served as attorneys for the D.C. Public Defender Service. Mr. Edelman currently is a professor in Georgetown Law's Criminal Justice Clinic, and he practiced civil litigation before that. Mr. Lee has been a Magistrate Judge for the D.C. Superior Court for more than a decade, and he currently is the Presiding Magistrate Judge. Ms. Smith also is a D.C. Superior Court Magistrate Judge, serving in the court's Family Division.

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I am impressed with the qualifications of the six nominees before us, and am confident that if confirmed, they will have much to offer the Federal Government as well as the District.

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