

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SEN. PETERS**  
**HSGAC HEARING - MARCH 12, 2019**

Thank you, Chairman Johnson and Senator Carper. I am looking forward to partnering with you this Congress on addressing the Postal Service's financial challenges.

The Postal Service plays a vital role in our society and our economy by connecting every community, business, and household across the country.

The Postal Service has a public service mission to serve all Americans, regardless of where they live, providing equal service to people in rural, suburban, and urban communities.

The Postal Service's reach is unmatched in government or the private sector and it employs more than 634,000 hardworking people to fulfill its mission of universal service.

About one out of every six of these employees are veterans, who are now committed to serving their hometown communities after serving their nation in the armed forces.

I highlighted the important role veterans play in the Postal Service when I introduced a bipartisan resolution with Senator Moran last week.

This resolution recognizes the Postal Service's unique role and opposes any potential privatization of this vital institution.

No one disputes that the Postal Service is in an unsustainable financial condition. And we know what factors have exacerbated these challenges: the burdensome requirement to prefund retiree health benefits, the Great Recession and changes in technology that have led to declining mail volumes.

Congress has been working for some time on solutions that are bipartisan, evidence-based and have support from stakeholders across the postal community.

I cannot say the same about the Task Force's proposals, especially since we have not yet seen all the evidence behind them.

The Postal Service is a public entity with a public mission. It has an obligation to provide universal service, and this must remain at the heart of its business model.

Congress must prioritize the postal customer and get the Postal Service back on track as soon as possible.