

Opening Statement of Robert M. Duncan
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
Confirmation Hearing, U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors
April 18, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaskill, and members of the Committee, thank you for holding this hearing to consider nominations to the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors. I am Robert M. Duncan of Kentucky, and I am pleased to be joined today by nominees David Williams of Illinois and Calvin Tucker of Pennsylvania. I thank President Trump for having the confidence and trust to nominate me for this important job. I greatly appreciate the encouragement of my Kentucky Senators, Majority Leader McConnell and Senator Paul.

As you know from the material submitted, I have been involved in government, business, and politics at all levels over my career. I believe that my experiences in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors make me uniquely qualified to serve as a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service Board. I have studied management and leadership in the different sectors and have an appreciation of the differences, similarities, and best practices in each. The Postal Service is an interesting blend of a public, private, and nonprofit organization. My service on the Tennessee Valley Authority Board helps me understand this unusual but important structure. I was selected a member of the President's Commission on Executive Exchange in 1989-1990 and worked at the White House in the Office of Public Liaison while studying public and private organizations. I have served in many other governmental positions at the local and state levels and currently serve as Chairman of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

My work with nonprofit organizations include the Christian Appalachian Project, a large social service organization, chairing a state University board, and serving for many years as Chairman of Alice Lloyd College. In addition I was the Treasurer, General Counsel, and, finally, the Chairman of the Republican National Committee.

As a community banker in Appalachia, I have worked with many small businesses and have an appreciation for the challenges and potential of rural America. My work with the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity gave me experience with CEO's of the largest railroads, utilities, and energy companies in the country. In addition to my undergraduate and law degrees, I have attended numerous Executive Education programs including programs at the Kennedy School of Government and the Harvard Business School. I believe I have both the practical and theoretical knowledge to be an effective member of the Postal Board of Governors. On a personal note, my grandfather Walter Duncan carried mail on horseback in rural east Tennessee and worked for one year as a mail sorter on a train.

I consider the Postal Service a public trust as every American citizen enjoys universal service. Referenced in the Constitution, the organization has served to bind America together for over two hundred years. The Postal Service is in daily contact with virtually every business and citizen. The local postal employees are the primary contact of most Americans with the federal government.

My approach to leadership and governance is simple. It is my goal to include all stakeholders through aggressive outreach and communications. The working relationship with the Postal Service, Congress, and the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) is critical. More transparency in governing helps stakeholder's better plan for the future. An adequate staff is necessary for the Board to carry out its planning and oversight responsibilities. I believe the reconstituted Board will be strong and independent.

As a new Board member, I do not begin with an agenda of specific recommendations. I support a thorough and transparent planning process. The basic business model must be examined carefully. I will learn as much as possible as soon as possible to understand the financial condition of the organization.

The work of the Board will be particularly challenging as we begin our tenure. Many unresolved issues and pending legislation require flexibility in our approach.

Issues that I expect to confront are:

1. Governance structure: What are the relationships with Congress and the PRC?
2. Universal service: What is the intent of Congress?
3. Delivery frequency: What is the optimum number of days of service each week?
4. Delivery Standards: What is reasonable and affordable?
5. Change in Rates: What are the constraints?
6. Rural Service: What is fair to all Americans?
7. Opioids: What can be done to protect the mail, customers, and employees?

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, my colleagues, the leadership of the Postal Service, the Postal Regulatory Commission, and stakeholders. The Board's role is to establish policy, monitor results, and evaluate management. As a board I believe we can accomplish this mission.

Thank you for your considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.