

Ranking Member Peters Opening Statement
Full Committee Hearing: Nominations
June 17th, 2026

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the nominees, and certainly thank you for your willingness to serve, and congratulations on your nominations.

We have a record-setting eleven nominees before the Committee today, each for roles that impact people as well as communities across our nation.

I am very disappointed with this process that has been unnecessarily rushed. An overcrowded lineup today severely limits our ability to have transparency for the American public.

Members of this Committee should have the opportunity to hear from them and thoroughly question each nominee in front of the American people.

The Chairman is not even bothering to let the nominees make public opening statements. Members of the Committee have not received their written testimony.

Even more troubling, the Chairman has disregarded this Committee's longstanding basic requirement for nominees appearing before us.

Two of the nominees, Mr. Brodsky and Mr. Baldis, have not completed financial disclosures and ethics agreements certified by the Office of Government Ethics. Two nominees, Mr. Baldis and Mr. Hamilton, have not completed FBI background investigations. Always the minimum requirement for this Committee.

The FBI review can provide a more complete picture of the nominee's background and integrity. The ethics review certification process is essential for providing transparency into a nominee's financial interests and potential conflicts of interest. This is even more critical when nominees, like some of us today, have significant financial holdings.

To my knowledge, it is completely unprecedented for this Committee to proceed to a hearing before these very fundamental steps are complete.

It has always been that way. Always should be that way. The American people expect it to be that way.

I recognize that this timing is out of the nominees' control. However, it does a disservice to these nominees and everyone on the Committee.

It seems like the nominees are being treated like a box-checking exercise rather than a core constitutional duty.

I take our responsibility to thoroughly evaluate each nominee's qualifications seriously. I have supported and opposed nominees based on what I've learned through this Committee process. I know my Committee colleagues on both sides of the aisle also want to thoroughly consider each nominee before us.

But when the process is this haphazard and rushed, it certainly looks like this Committee's Republican majority is simply rubber-stamping the President.

The Constitution is very clear of our oversight responsibilities of the Congress, and it's clear this checks-and-balances system doesn't work if Congress simply is a rubber stamp for the President. That is what we are seeing here today. Someone who is shirking basic constitutional responsibilities. People who claim they are protecting the Constitution, yet they will want to get trampled today.

Today, we are considering nominations for ten different agencies, any one of which could warrant its own hearing.

Hearings for nominees is even more critical as this Committee has been ignoring its obligation to conduct public oversight of Administration officials after they are confirmed. Since the start of this Congress, we have had only two oversight hearings where Administration officials appeared as witnesses. We have abandoned our duty to conduct oversight of our homeland security apparatus by skipping the annual hearings that were conducted by this Committee for decades. For decades. Including the annual threats hearing or hearing on the DHS budget request.

We are considering two nominees for the Postal Service Board of Governors today, and I hope to hear detailed explanations on how they plan to uphold the Postal Service's independence and public service mission if confirmed.

I am also concerned the President has failed to consult with the Senate Minority and nominate any Democratic members of the Board. Instead, he has nominated four members of one party. The Board is designated by statute to be bipartisan in

nature. Lopsided political representation undermines public confidence in the Board's ability to serve the public above partisan views.

We are also considering nominees for several agencies that Congress has charged with providing independent oversight of the executive branch.

The Merit Systems Protection Board and the Office of Special Counsel are critical to protect whistleblowers and ensuring the federal workforce is free from political coercion.

The Federal Labor Relations Authority ensures federal workers' collective bargaining rights are upheld.

The DOJ Inspector General leads efforts to combat waste, fraud, and abuse across the Department of Justice.

As this Administration continues to attack and dismantle independent oversight bodies and erode protections for nonpartisan public servants, it is more important than ever we have principled, independent leaders in these critical roles.

Similarly, this Administration has resisted and undermined all forms of transparency and accountability, taking unprecedented steps to keep information and records hidden from Congress and the American public. Even more troubling are actions to rewrite history through a partisan political lens.

The National Archives protect our national records and ensures the American people have a complete and accurate account of our shared history as the American people. I hope to hear an unwavering commitment of transparency in leading NARA in a nonpartisan manner from Professor Wilson.

Mr. Duncan, the Office of Management and Budget has been at the center of many of these administrative-wide efforts to evade transparency, oversight, and accountability.

Throughout the process, you have emphasized your view that the chief purpose is to serve the President and his agenda. Since returning to office, this President has made clear he does not respect Congress's congressional role as a coequal branch of government.

So far, many of my colleagues are OK with that. They believe they are a rubber stamp. I get that. But flouting spending laws, ignoring oversight, and manipulating all aspects of government for personal and political gain.

Today, you will have an opportunity to explain your involvement and views on OMB's actions.

Nominees to serve at the Department of Homeland Security, including FEMA and TSA, unfortunately because of the way this Chairman has stacked this hearing and made transparency and accountability next to impossible, I may not have time to ask questions of each of you today.

But I would like to thank you all for your engagement through this process. Each of you has expressed willingness to examine and reevaluate some of the decisions made by the Department's prior leadership.

Mr. Cavanaugh, I appreciated your commitment to reviewing the severe staffing cuts at the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and ensuring the office can effectively carry out responsibilities that Congress signed into law.

Thank you again for all of you being here today. I look forward to hearing more about your nominations.