

Opening Statement of Robert G. Taub
Nominee, Commissioner, Postal Regulatory Commission
September 7, 2023

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Paul, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and for your consideration of my qualifications to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission. I would like to thank President Biden and Leader McConnell for the opportunity they have afforded me through this nomination, and I am honored by their trust. I would also like to thank New York Senators Schumer and Gillibrand for their kind support.

While my wife and daughters, my siblings, and my 91-year-old father could not be here due to commitments outside of Washington, I feel their presence with me today. I am grateful for the support they have provided in my chosen career of public service. Like good families everywhere, they have lent me love, encouragement, and a good dose of understanding.

When the Senate first confirmed me as a Commissioner, I was serving as a senior executive in the Department of the Army as the principal civilian advisor to Secretary John McHugh, helping him oversee a workforce of more than 1.2 million people, and manage an annual budget over \$200 billion. I had arrived at the Army with Secretary McHugh, having served as his Chief of Staff in Congress and his leading staffer on postal issues within the House Oversight & Accountability Committee. Over the course of my 40 years in public service, I have worked in bipartisan fashion to craft solutions to many public policy issues, particularly the challenges confronting our Postal Service.

I served as Chairman of the Commission for more than 6 years, from December 2014 to January 2021. During those years, the Commission improved its efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out its mission, as measured by budget savings and timeliness of work, and achieved improvements in employee satisfaction and engagement, as measured by the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. If confirmed, I would work with my fellow Commissioners to achieve further improvements.

The Commission is the regulator, not the operator of the Postal Service. Why a regulator for another government agency?

Unlike almost any other federal entity, the Postal Service operates in a commercial marketplace with a large contingent of captive customers, given its market dominance over certain products and services. The law provides the Postal Service statutory monopolies over mailboxes and the delivery of letters. The public interest role of a regulator in this case is clear: a need to protect the captive customers, ensure fair competition, and enforce transparency and accountability of the Postal Service.

The need for a strong postal regulator has never been more critical. Despite billions of dollars in legislative relief from last year's postal reform bill, as well as a modified price cap system that the Commission finalized in 2020, the Postal Service is continuing to lose billions of

dollars. Revenue and volume are dropping, even while the Postal Service has lowered service standards and moved to twice a year or more rate increases. At the same time, the Postal Service is undertaking the most massive transformation of its network in decades. The Postal Service's strategic plan has the potential to help its operations and revenues. But how well the plan is implemented will affect how much help it provides. The important task of improving the financial condition of the Postal Service remains daunting.

I want to assure this Committee that I appear before you today with few delusions as to the difficulties that lie ahead. I believe I have a clear understanding of the serious and numerous challenges that face America's postal system.

But the fact is, for all the challenges the Postal Service faces, it still plays a vital role in our economy, our society, and how Americans across this land communicate. The Postal Service is the one government agency that touches every American, serving 165 million households and businesses on a typical day. It facilitates trillions of dollars in commerce. For 248 years, our Postal Service has provided universal service at a uniform price, no questions asked. Very few in this country go to their mailbox or local post office wondering if the mail will be there. It is always there. It has always been there.

If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to focus my executive and management skills on ensuring transparency and accountability of the Postal Service, and fostering a vital and efficient universal mail system. I would bring to the job 40 years of public service achievement

and experience, and I pledge to work with all stakeholders to address the current difficulties.

There are no easy answers, but answer, we must. And I promise you, if confirmed, my priority

will be, along with this Committee, the entire Congress, the President, and my fellow

Commissioners, to engage in a constant search for the discovery and effective implementation of

solutions. I am truly honored to be considered.