

**Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery
Full Committee Hearing: Nominations of Colleen J. Shogan to be Archivist of the United States, National Archives and Records Administration; Vijay Shanker to be an Associate Judge, District of Columbia Court of Appeals; and Laura E. Crane, Leslie A. Meek, and Veronica M. Sanchez to be Associate Judges, Superior Court of the District of Columbia
September, 21 2022**

The National Archives and Records Administration, often shortened to the National Archives, is responsible for adequately maintaining and preserving presidential and federal records.

These records are not just essential to keeping an accurate account of government activities or holding the executive branch accountable, they critical to ensuring that our nation's history is fully and accurately preserved for future generations.

The National Archives preserves some of our nation's most foundational documents, like the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, as well as letters, photographs, newspapers, and congressional papers that tell the story of the United States from its earliest days to today.

The National Archives also protects and provides access to critical records and documents for the public to use from historical documents to educational resources, and most importantly, for veterans and servicemembers who need military personnel records to access the benefits they earned through their service.

Preserving all of these important records is a significant undertaking, and it requires qualified, independent, non-partisan leadership that is committed to serving in the best interests of the American people.

Dr. Shogan, if confirmed, you will not only oversee the National Archives' responsibility to preserve these essential documents, you will also face several challenges, including antiquated resources and technology, the rapid proliferation of electronic records, extensive backlogs from veteran requests, and the need to ensure all records, from every President and federal agency, are completely and adequately preserved.

I am confident that Congress can take the necessary steps to help address these challenges, modernize the government's record-keeping processes, and restore transparency and access for all Americans.

As Chairman of this Committee, I am working to build support for legislation I am drafting that will strengthen existing laws, update regulations, and modernize recordkeeping processes to incorporate emerging technologies. We held a hearing on this issue earlier this year as well, and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to build on these efforts and protect our public record.

Dr. Shogan, I'm pleased to welcome you here today to discuss your nomination to serve in this important role and how we can better work together to achieve these vital goals.

Not only are you extremely well-qualified for this position, in our meetings about your nomination you have demonstrated keen judgment, nonpartisan independence, and the necessary capabilities to succeed in this challenging role.

Your nomination is also historic, and once confirmed, you will be the first woman to serve as the Archivist of the United States. Congratulations on your nomination and I look forward to hearing more from you today.

Today we are also considering four nominees to serve as Judges for the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and D.C. Superior Court. Those nominees are Vijay Shanker to be an Associate Judge on the D.C. Court of Appeals, and Laura Crane, Leslie Meek, and Veronica Sanchez to be Associate Judges on the D.C. Superior Court.

I am pleased to these qualified nominees before us today, each with a longstanding commitment to public service.

The D.C. Superior Court and the D.C. Court of Appeals function as the state-level trial and appellate courts within the unique justice system here in the nation's capital.

Both Courts are responsible for large volumes of cases each year, and the National Center for State Courts reports, the D.C. Superior Court files approximately 83,000 new cases across its five divisions each year, one of the highest per-capita rates in the country.

Despite these enormous caseloads, both courts are suffering from extensive judicial vacancies which have delayed resolutions for parties before the court and increased workloads for judges. If confirmed, you will not only take on these caseloads but determine matters that impact the freedom, livelihoods, and families of the many people who will come before you.

Today's hearing is an important opportunity for the Committee to learn more about your qualifications and how you plan to serve.

Welcome to each of you and your family members who are joining us today, and thank you for your willingness to serve. I look forward to hearing more from you all today.