

**Opening Statement of Chairman Thomas R. Carper
The Nominations of Hon. Nanci E. Langley and Hon. Tony Hammond to be
Commissioners of the Postal Regulatory Commission
October 2, 2013**

As prepared for delivery:

The committee will come to order to consider the nominations of Tony Hammond and Nanci Langley to be members of the Postal Regulatory Commission. As my colleagues and those following this hearing certainly know, these are very challenging times for the United States Postal Service.

This week, while so many other vital federal services are shutdown, the mail continues to be delivered. Absent legislative action, however, the Post Office may face a similar fate unless Congress can get its act together. The Postal Service has maxed out its credit line with the Treasury and is rapidly running out of cash. Despite an improving economy and some positive signs from some parts of its business, its immediate future is unfortunately not very bright. Absent legislative intervention, the Postal Service will likely limp along for a few months unable to invest for the future, with its employees and customers uncertain of what that future holds. It can only limp this way for so long.

It's up to those of us on this committee and the rest of our colleagues in the Senate and House to do what we need to do to avert a postal shutdown, a shutdown that would threaten the jobs of some 8 million people at the Postal Service and in the private-sector industries it supports.

Over the past two weeks, this committee has debated some of the tough decisions that will need to be made in the coming months and years regarding the level of service the Postal Service should offer the American people, and the type of workforce we must develop to provide that service. We also discussed how it should price and market its products, and how much it should pay to fund its employees' health and pension obligations. Most importantly, we heard about some innovative ways the Postal Service can make itself relevant to new generations of customers by taking creative advantage of its one-of-a-kind retail, processing, and delivery network.

In the very near future, we will take what we learned from our hearings and go to work on crafting and refining a legislative response to the very real crisis we face on this issue. But today, we gather to consider two very qualified nominees who the President has put forward to continue their service on the Postal Regulatory Commission.

The Postal Regulatory Commission has played a key role in recent years in partnering with the Postal Service to develop a rate system that has, since it was implemented following the postal reform legislation signed into law in 2006, has given the Postal Service significant new commercial flexibilities that have helped it weather both a major recession and significant growth in electronic communication. It has also created a venue where postal employees and customers can have their voices heard about the painful but often very necessary changes that postal management has been forced to consider.

In the coming months and years, the work of the Postal Regulatory Commission will be no less important. I'm pleased, then, that Mr. Hammond and Ms. Langley are willing to continue their service. I have not always agreed the decisions made by the Commission, but Congress, the Postal Service, and the public in general rely on it to efficiently and effectively perform its responsibilities and to be a source of key knowledge and expertise during both good times and bad.

###