

**Nomination Hearing of Kelvin James Cochran
To be Administrator of the United States Fire Administration
At the Department of Homeland Security
Chairman Joe Lieberman
August 5, 2009**

Good morning and welcome to this hearing on the nomination of Kelvin James Cochran to be Administrator of the United States Fire Administration (USFA) within the Department of Homeland Security. Senator Landrieu, we are honored that you're here.

The U.S. Fire Administration, which was established in 1974, has been the primary federal agency addressing the needs of the nation's firefighters, with the goal of reducing life and economic loss due to fire and related emergencies.

Among its many activities, the agency trains mid- and senior-level fire and emergency medical services officers at the National Fire Academy, and also online; collects, analyzes, and disseminates data and information on fire and other emergency incidents; researches and develops fire prevention and fire safety technology; and helps the FEMA Administrator by carrying out the duties under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program (AFG) and the

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program (SAFER) – which provide critical assistance to local fire departments and means a lot to this Committee and members of both parties.

Ever since September 11 and the catastrophe that was Hurricane Katrina, USFA has also served as a national focal point for the expanded role of firefighters in the response to terrorist and natural disasters, such as Katrina. The Fire Administration really is a lifeline for these firefighters, who, like other first responders, run directly into the face of danger while everyone else is running away from it. This Committee has always felt they deserve all the support we can give them.

Last year, Congress reauthorized the U.S. Fire Administration, and during that process, we had a chance to study the agency closely. What we found was a solid organization that serves a unique and important role within FEMA, DHS, and the federal government, and which merits continued support for its programs.

I won't go into your background because Senator Landrieu did such a great job with it, but your background to me is such a classic Horatio Alger, American Dream story.

Clearly, Chief Cochran has an understanding of the needs of the firefighters, spanning the local and national levels. You have given back to your community not just in his career choice but also by being a volunteer in the Boy Scouts, the Salvation Army, and Volunteers of America.

Your nomination has been endorsed by the International Association of Fire Fighters, whose president is here; the International Associate of Fire Chiefs; and the National Fire Protection Association. I would say that you come before the Committee with the all-star team of endorsements and that means a lot to us. I wish you the best of luck.

Senator Collins?

