

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR GEORGE V. VOINOVICH
NOMINATIONS OF SUSAN GRUNDMANN TO BE CHAIRMAN, MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION
BOARD AND ANNE WAGNER, TO BE VICE CHAIRMAN, MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD**

NOMINATION HEARING

OCTOBER 20, 2009

Good afternoon, and thank you, Chairman Akaka. I am pleased to be here today to review the qualifications of two individuals nominated by the President to fill important positions at the Merit Systems Protection Board, or the MSPB: Susan Grundmann and Anne Wagner, who have been selected to serve as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the MSPB, respectively.

With the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, Congress established the MSPB to serve as a guardian of merit principles across the federal workforce. If confirmed, the nominees will be charged with providing a fair and efficient forum for employees, retirees, candidates for federal employment, and agency management alike when reviewing personnel decisions and agency policy. Properly fulfilling this role is necessary to sustain a top-notch workforce.

In light of the coming demographic transition in the federal workforce, it is vital that agencies are seen as attractive to today's best and brightest. The next generation of federal employees, many of who will be joining the workforce directly from undergraduate or graduate study, are accustomed to competitive and intellectually rewarding environments. To be an attractive alternative to the private sector, prospective federal employees must be assured that in the federal sector they will succeed or fail according to the quality of their work, not by the

arbitrary will of an agency manager or the transient initiatives of Presidential administrations. Today's best and brightest expect nothing less.

At the same time though, we must be sure that our concern for protecting individual employees does not grant *de facto* tenure for federal workers. Front-line managers need the training, tools, flexibility, and leadership support to discipline poorly performing employees. When an employee's shortcomings seriously affect the quality of government services provided to the public, the option to terminate employment must be a practical remedy. In today's difficult economic environment, thousands of Americans are losing their jobs despite outstanding performance. We must ensure that federal employees are held to similar standards.

On both counts, the nominees will play a pivotal role, if confirmed.

I look forward to hearing from Ms. Grundmann and Ms. Wagner about their plans for leading this important agency. Specifically, I am interested to hear how the nominees intend to respond to the demographic, statutory, and administrative changes that are expected to increase the Board's caseload. I am also curious to learn what tools the nominees feel would help reduce the time required to adjudicate appeals and improve the quality of decisions issued by the MSPB. Finally, I am interested to hear about the nominees' plans to help inform federal workforce policy through the Board's "special studies" function.

Ms. Grundmann and Ms. Wagner, I commend you for willingness to answer the President's call to service, and I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.