

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ERNIE DUBESTER OF VIRGINIA TO BE A MEMBER
OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE
SEPTEMBER 25, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of the committee:

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to come before this Committee again for its consideration of my nomination to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). I also would like to thank the Committee's staff for their work and assistance in reviewing my nomination and scheduling this hearing.

Before making a brief opening statement, I would like to introduce my wife, Karen Kremer. This year we celebrated our 25th Anniversary. When I first met Karen, she was working for Senator Howell Heflin on the Senate Judiciary Committee. So this Body will always hold a special, personal meaning in my life.

It is also a great pleasure to appear alongside my friend and colleague, Carol Waller Pope, and my new friend and, hopefully, soon to be colleague, Pat Pizzella.

I also want to recognize the presence here this afternoon of quite a few people from the FLRA. These dedicated public servants, as well as many FLRA staff who are not present, are the key to the FLRA's many successes of the last four years.

Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to appear before you after being nominated again by President Obama to be a Member of the FLRA. I have served as a Member for the last four years. And, I am privileged to have served as Chairman since January of this year.

When I last appeared before this Committee, Senator Akaka noted that "big changes" were needed because for "far too long" the FLRA had "failed to carry out its mission", with a serious backlog of cases and low employee morale. I respectfully submit that, indeed, big changes have occurred.

The last four years reflect many accomplishments at the FLRA based on an energetic period of revitalization, reinvention, and re-engagement. At the end of the last calendar year, not only had we eliminated our case backlog, but we had eliminated all overage cases. Exercising our statutory responsibility to provide leadership in labor-management relations, we have delivered a variety of

training sessions to tens of thousands of labor and management representatives in the federal Sector community. And with an agency focus on human capital initiatives, such as training and development, performance management, and work-life balance, employee morale has improved dramatically. For the last two years, we have ranked in the top 10 in the Partnership for Public Service rankings for “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government”, receiving #3 rankings in the specific categories of teamwork and effective leadership.

Mr. Chairman, in my nearly 40 years of experience in labor-management relations, working as a public servant, advocate, mediator, arbitrator, and academic, over 20 of those years are in the federal sector. I remain strongly committed to the FLRA’s mission and to the importance of stable, constructive labor-management relations in the Federal sector. And, if reconfirmed, I will continue to work tirelessly so that the FLRA is recognized as one of the stellar agencies in the federal government.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and I would be pleased to answer any questions that you have.