

**Opening Statement of Anton Hajjar**  
**Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee**  
**April 22, 2021**

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman, and honorable members of this committee, thank you for the privilege of appearing before you in connection with my nomination to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service.

At the outset, I want to extend my gratitude to my wife Sandra Hughes, who is here today and who has been most patient with my many distractions during the confirmation process while she has been recovering from knee replacement surgery, and my children Claire and Greg, who cared for Sandra while I was not available.

I'd like to tell the Committee about my background and qualifications for this important role. I am the oldest of six children raised in a working-class family, and the only person in my family to attend college. From an early age, my parents instilled in me the value of hard work, and work is the defining element of my identity. If my parents were still alive, I know they would be proud to see me appearing before you today.

My interest in the Postal Service started from an early age when I was hired as a summer substitute letter carrier in high school. I was assigned to the Dyker Heights Station in Brooklyn, New York – serving the same neighborhood where Dr. Fauci was raised and close to where Janet Yellen grew up. I was initiated into the ranks of letter carriers when I was bitten by a dog and needed medical treatment. I don't mention this lightly: dog bites are a serious hazard for letter carriers.

After college, I worked for three years as a U.S. Customs Inspector assigned to the Bush Docks in Brooklyn. I spent time working in a factory, driving a cargo truck and a taxi, serving as a hospital attendant and janitor, among many other jobs. I was also a seaman in the United States Merchant Marine for a year.

Each of these roles exposed me to a wide variety of backgrounds and gave me a deep respect for working people. Based on my career path, it seems almost inevitable that I would end up as a labor lawyer.

Upon graduating from Tulane Law School, I had the inestimable honor of clerking for the eminent Judge John Minor Wisdom of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, who was renowned for his groundbreaking civil rights opinions. You may have heard stories about the Judge from Senator Lamar Alexander, who was also a Wisdom clerk.

After my clerkship, I worked for the New Orleans field office of the National Labor Relations Board. For over three years, I investigated cases and conducted representation elections throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle. In 1982, I left a position at NLRB Headquarters and I went into private legal practice representing employees and unions.

Gradually my work focused mostly on the American Postal Workers Union (APWU). The APWU was and still is one of the largest postal unions, with over 200,000 members today. My decades of experience with the APWU exposed me to a broad spectrum of postal regulatory and legal issues from ratemaking to operations.

My career also gave me important insight into the postal workforce, which is one of the most dedicated and skilled in the nation. What President Richard Nixon said when he proposed postal reforms in 1970 is still true decades later. He said: "Laws do not move the mail, nor do dollars. What moves the mail is people – people who have the will to excel, the will to do their work to the very best of their ability. The United States is fortunate to have such people in its postal system today."

The COVID pandemic has been a reminder that we are fortunate to have postal employees delivering for Americans every day. We know that the USPS provides stable, middle class jobs in every community across the country. But to me, the crowning achievement of the USPS workforce is its diversity. For many underrepresented communities, the USPS is the first rung on the ladder of economic opportunity. Today, the USPS is one of the largest employers of underrepresented communities including minorities, women and veterans. Investing in the workforce will ensure that a new generation of Americans finds their opportunity in their Postal Service.

Certainly, the Postal Service faces huge challenges, particularly when it comes to declining mail volume and the need to be self-sustaining. One thing of which I'm certain and recent events confirm is that people care about the mail. When the residents in my apartment building learn that the mail is in, we all congregate around the mailroom. I have heard plenty of complaints about service recently and have had a few bad experiences myself. But these complaints are not bitter; rather, they sound disappointed. There is a vast reservoir of good will towards the Postal Service, and I think we can all agree that the Postal Service must make it a priority to keep the trust of the American people before all else.

Despite the challenges facing the USPS, there are also incredible opportunities to grow the business and service to the American people. The strength of the USPS is in delivering to 161 million doors six days each week. I am pleased that the Postmaster General's recently released 10-year plan protects six-day delivery and seeks to find new ways to utilize technology, expand services and invest in the career workforce. I am concerned, however, about other parts of the plan, such as reducing delivery standards, and raising prices that could disproportionately affect small businesses and rural communities. Additionally, any plans to close and consolidate facilities must be carefully evaluated to minimize the hardship on the postal workforce and the communities they serve.

It is an honor to be nominated to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service. I hope that I will be given the opportunity to find solutions to the problems facing the USPS. Working

closely with management and postal stakeholders, I am confident that Board can position the USPS to deliver the affordable and reliable service that all Americans deserve.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.