

Statement of Senator Susan M. Collins

Nomination of Gus Coldabella to be General Counsel
at the Department of Homeland Security

Washington, D.C., July 15, 2008

★ ★ ★

The Office of the General Counsel at the Department of Homeland Security is one of special interest for members of this Committee. The General Counsel provides legal advice to the Secretary on the missions that Congress has assigned to DHS and on the Department's compliance with federal laws on civil rights, employment, and many other matters. And the General Counsel serves as an important point of contact with Congress, especially with this oversight Committee.

The General Counsel's operating principle should be that the oversight and investigative committees of Congress and the GAO should receive maximum feasible departmental compliance and cooperation in the performance of their Constitutional and statutory duties.

Gus Coldabella's nearly three years of experience at DHS and his current service as Acting General Counsel have given him ample opportunities to appreciate the importance of the position for which he has been nominated. And I have no doubt that his impressive legal background has served him well in dealing with the wide variety of issues that face DHS every day.

The Department of Homeland Security operates a multitude of programs that are critical to promoting the safety of American citizens and the security of America's infrastructure and economy. Those programs require the

cooperation and support of state and local governments and the understanding and trust of citizens, if they are to succeed.

The official actions of the Department and the conduct of all its employees must therefore meet the highest standards set by the letter and spirit of the law.

I look forward to exploring these and other matters as we proceed today.

#