

Statement of Senator Susan M. Collins

**Chairman, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Committee**

**Nomination Hearing of
James H. Bilbray and Thurgood Marshall, Jr.
to be Governors of the U.S. Postal Service
and
Dan G. Blair
to be Chairman of the Postal Rate Commission**

**This morning, the Committee is considering the
nominations of former Congressman James Bilbray and
Thurgood Marshall, Jr., to be Governors of the United States
Postal Service, and of Dan Blair to serve as Chairman of the
Postal Rate Commission.**

**The Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service works
in many ways like the Board of Directors of a large
corporation. The Board selects the Postmaster General, and
together, they direct the Postal Service - controlling its
expenditures, conducting long-range planning, and setting**

policies on all postal matters. The Board's primary obligation is representation of the public interest. Fulfilling that obligation is a significant responsibility as the Postal Service faces increasingly complex policy choices.

James Bilbray currently serves on the Board of Governors. He was nominated on August 1, 2006, to fill the remainder of a term on the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service that will expire on December 8, 2006. At the same time, the President also nominated Mr. Bilbray for an additional nine-year term expiring December 8, 2015.

Mr. Bilbray has significant experience serving the public interest. From 1987 until 1994, he represented Nevada's first congressional district in the United States House of Representatives. Before that, he served in the Nevada Senate for several years.

In addition to his service as a representative of the people of Nevada, Mr. Bilbray has held various other positions. Notably, he served in 2005 as a member of the BRAC Commission, making difficult decisions about closing military bases that affected communities across the country.

Thurgood Marshall, Jr., is a partner with Bingham Consulting Group. Mr. Marshall has a long history of public service, from work as a staff member on committees here in the Senate to service as an assistant to President Clinton from 1997 to 2001. As a current member of the Board of Directors for the Corrections Corporation of America, he is responsible for helping to set the direction for a company that employs more than 15,000 professionals nationwide. His experience on the Board of such a large employer will prove valuable as the Postal Service faces challenges in its workforce composition.

The third nominee, Dan Blair, is proposed to chair the Postal Rate Commission, an independent regulatory agency. The five Commissioners review Postal Service requests for new domestic mail rates, fees, and classifications. The Commission reviews these requests in public proceedings and then makes recommendations to the Board of Governors.

The Commission also has the authority to propose changes in mail classifications and investigate certain nationally significant complaints of postal customers concerning rates, fees, classifications, and services. The Commission issues advisory opinions in response to requests from the Postal Service to change postal services substantially, and the Commission hears appeals from postal customers concerning decisions to close or consolidate retail post offices.

The President has nominated Mr. Blair to become Chairman of the Postal Rate Commission for a six-year term that expires in October 2012 .

Mr. Blair has over 21 years of service in both the legislative and executive branches. He has been the Deputy Director for the Office of Personnel Management for over three years. He also has several years of experience as a staff member for various Senate and House committees.

From 1985 until 1995, Mr. Blair was Counsel for the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service in the House of Representatives. Following that, he served as Staff Director for the House Subcommittee on the Postal Service. In 1998, he came to the Senate as Senior Counsel for the Committee on Governmental Affairs – this Committee’s predecessor. Throughout his time on Capitol Hill, Mr. Blair has dealt

**directly with the diverse issues and interests affecting U. S.
Postal Service rates and operations.**

**As the members of this Committee know well, the
United States Postal Service is a vital part of our society and
our economy. Currently, the fiscal status and prospects of the
Postal Service threaten the national commitment to affordable
universal service. These nominees appear to possess the
knowledge, experience, and talents that are required to deal
with the challenges that lie ahead for the Postal Service. I
welcome them to the Committee, and I look forward to hearing
their views.**