

**OPENING STATEMENT OF  
SENATOR GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, RANKING MEMBER  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,  
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**MARCH 22, 2007**

**SAFEGUARDING THE MERIT SYSTEM PRINCIPLES: A REVIEW OF THE MERIT SYSTEMS  
PROTECTION BOARD AND THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this afternoon's hearing to discuss the reauthorization requests for the Merit Systems Protection Board and the Office of Special Counsel.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our witnesses, the Honorable Neil McPhie, chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board, and the Honorable Scott Bloch, Special Counsel.

The United States is well served by a professional, civil service hired and promoted based on a series of merit principles. Apart from political parties and disagreements in Congress or the White House, the dedicated individuals of the federal civil service ensure the needs of the American people are met, whether it is guarding our borders or processing Social Security checks. Mr. Chairman, I proud to say that I believe our system is admired around the world.

Guarding the merit principles that preserve the integrity of the civil service are two important agencies, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) and the Office of Special Counsel (OSC). These responsibilities require that these agencies lead by example and that their personnel management policies reflect the merit principles they are tasked to uphold.

As an independent investigative and prosecutorial agency, OSC protects current and former federal employees and applicants for federal employment from prohibited personnel practices; promotes and enforces compliance of the Hatch Act; and facilitates disclosures by federal whistleblowers about government wrongdoing.

As an independent, quasi-judicial agency, MSPB adjudicates cases brought by the Office of Special Counsel, as well as appeals over improver suspensions, removals, retirement benefits, and veterans' preference claims. Furthermore, the MSPB has the authority to conduct studies of the civil service.

Authorization for both of these agencies expires at the end of this fiscal year. Mr. Chairman, I believe it is important for us to act promptly to advance legislation to reauthorize

these agencies. I look forward to a continued, bipartisan collaboration with you in introducing and advancing this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.