

Statement of Senator Thomas R. Carper

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

April 15, 2008

Nomination of Nanci E. Langley

The committee will come to order.

I am pleased to be able to serve as chairman today as the committee considers the nomination of Nanci Langley to be a Commissioner on the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Ms. Langley, your nomination comes at a difficult time for the Postal Service. The economic slowdown we've found ourselves in has hurt a number of families and business but it hit the Postal Service early and hard. We actually heard some testimony in my subcommittee about the Postal Service potentially being on track for the first time in many years to suffer significant losses – perhaps in the billions.

And there is always the chance that some of the mail volume that the Postal Service has lost as a result of the slowing economy could be lost for good. The number of communications options available to postal customers continues to increase - and grow easier to use, as well.

But this is also a time of great opportunity for the Postal Service.

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act – a bill that Ms. Langley played a key role in helping us get enacted – has been the law of the land for more than a year now. And we're starting to see some real benefits as a result.

The Postal Service is set to change prices this spring using the streamlined, cap-based rate system called for in the Act. It is my hope that the Postal Service can use this new rate system in the coming years to offer customers some level of predictability and to be more competitive in the advertising and mailing markets.

And we also have a new set of service standards for most postal products that I hope will make the Postal Service more relevant and more valuable to customers that now have a lot of other communications options.

All of this makes it vitally important that we have strong, experienced leadership not just at the Postal Service, but at the Postal Regulatory Commission as well.

The Commission can play a key role in helping the Postal Service through the challenges it faces. In some ways, they can do this by standing back and letting the Postal Service take advantage of the commercial opportunities Congress has given it.

The Commission must also ensure that the Postal Service is acting in compliance with the law and fulfilling its service obligations.

I look forward to hearing how you, Ms. Langley, can help the Commission fulfill the important role it has under the new postal system we worked so hard together to make reality.