

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**  
**Opening Statement of Julia Akins Clark**  
**Nominee for General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority**

I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to appear before the Committee for the purpose of being considered for confirmation as the General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). It is a great honor to be asked to serve one's country as a public official. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to fulfill my statutory responsibilities in a manner that will serve the public interest, by providing federal employees, unions and agencies with high quality labor relations services.

The FLRA General Counsel is primarily responsible for the protection and enforcement of employee, union and agency rights under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (Statute) through the investigation of alleged unfair labor practices (ULP) and prosecution of ULP complaints. Further, the General Counsel has "direct authority over, and responsibility for" all employees in the office of General Counsel including the FLRA regional offices, which handle representation matters. In furtherance of these responsibilities the General Counsel may also provide training, guidance and leadership in the area of federal sector labor relations. The General Counsel is part of the FLRA management team, together with the FLRA Chair, Members and senior staff.

My professional experience has prepared me well for this role. I served on the Presidential Transition Project, Agency Review Team responsible for reviewing the FLRA during the time between the Presidential election and inauguration. This experience provided me with significant insights into short and long term challenges facing the FLRA and the capacity of the FLRA to meet those challenges. During my over

twenty years as a labor relations attorney, I gained significant practical experience in all aspects of labor relations practice relevant to the FLRA General Counsel's statutory responsibilities, including representation elections and unfair labor practice case processing. In addition, I have significant labor relations experience under other statutory systems including the National Labor Relations Act and the Railway Labor Act, which may provide models for solutions to challenges facing the FLRA. As the General Counsel of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), I have been part of the organization's management team. I am accustomed not only to providing leadership, but working collaboratively with a leadership team to accomplish difficult goals. In addition, I advise elected and senior union officials at both the national and local level on management and employment matters, including management's responsibilities with regard to the organization's employment relationship with staff and labor relationship with staff unions. I have lead collective bargaining teams in complex negotiations in both private and public sector contexts. As a result of this experience, I have gained relevant experience with alternative dispute resolution methods. Finally, I have significant federal prosecutorial experience. From 1980-1985, I served as a Trial Attorney at the United States Department of Justice.

I have the deepest respect and admiration for federal government employees. It is my opinion that civil servants, be they rank-in-file employees, supervisors, mid-level managers, or high ranking career employees and political appointees, seek to serve the public interest, which includes compliance with the federal labor relations statute. I believe that it is incumbent upon the FLRA General Counsel to provide them with clear, up-to-date and accessible information about their labor relations rights and

responsibilities and assist them in resolving disputes regarding those rights and responsibilities in a fair, consistent and timely manner. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the overall mission of the federal civil service, by serving as the FLRA General Counsel.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Committee and staff for making this hearing possible and look forward to answering any questions.