

**OPENING STATEMENT OF ERNIE DUBESTER OF VIRGINIA TO BE A MEMBER
OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE
JULY 29, 2009**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to come before the Committee for its consideration of my nomination to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). I also would like to thank the Committee's staff for their work and assistance in reviewing my nomination and scheduling this hearing.

Before making a brief opening statement, I would like to introduce my wife, Karen Kremer. When I first met Karen 22 years ago, she was working for Senator Howell Heflin on the Senate Judiciary Committee. She now works for the Administrative Office of U.S. Courts and recently observed a milestone of 25 years of federal government service. Sitting with Karen is our friend George Honyara, a retired federal government employee.

Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be a Member of the FLRA. It is also a great pleasure to appear alongside Julie Clark, the President's nominee to be the FLRA's General Counsel.

I am strongly committed to the FLRA's mission and to the importance of stable, constructive labor-management relations in the federal sector. In my 35 years of experience in labor-management relations, working as a public servant, advocate, mediator, arbitrator, and academic, nearly 20 of those years were in the federal sector.

When I was still in law school and considering my first professional opportunity, I decided to join the staff of a Member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). In fact, it was during my tenure at the NLRB that Congress enacted the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute, a law generally modeled after the National Labor Relations Act. Indeed, this year marks the 30th anniversary of the FLRA.

During President Clinton's Administration, I was also privileged to serve as the Chairman and Member of the National Mediation Board, the independent agency that oversees labor relations in the airline and railroad industries. There, I was responsible for harmonizing the goals of another collective bargaining statute with the public demand for the highest standard of employee performance and the efficient accomplishment of the operations of government.

If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to working to ensure that the FLRA fulfills its mission by adjudicating disputes fairly, impartially, and expeditiously and by providing quality decisions that enhance the stability of federal sector labor relations. An important part of this effort will be to make sure that the Authority has the resources to fulfill its responsibilities.

Indeed, if confirmed, I look forward to working with each and every person on the FLRA staff, including my colleagues on the Authority, as well as the federal sector's labor and management representatives, to help establish the FLRA as one of the stellar independent agencies within the Federal Government.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.