

Opening Statement of
Senator Susan M. Collins
Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs

Business Session of June 13, 2007

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We have a full agenda today touching on important issues ranging from voting rights and privacy protection, to federal employment.

Each of the ten items before us today merits our consideration, but I would call special attention to three of them.

First, after carefully considering the constitutional issues, I have come to believe, on balance, that Senate Bill 1257 is a legitimate mechanism for providing residents of the District of

Columbia with full voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

I will therefore offer an amendment providing for expedited judicial review if a constitutional challenge is mounted. This would minimize uncertainties and complications that could arise if the Congress and the States took actions in reliance on the bill during what would likely be protracted legal proceedings.

I will also offer an amendment to clarify that S. 1257 does not contemplate or provide support for District of Columbia representation in the Senate.

The second item in which I take special interest today is Senate Resolution 22. It would simply affirm that the President's signing statement on enactment of the bipartisan Postal Reform Act in no

way diminishes the legal or regulatory privacy protections afforded sealed domestic mail.

My third item of particular interest involves a small number of U.S. citizens, but a matter of great unfairness. Senate Bill 1099, cosponsored by Senator Harkin, would make 10 Maine residents who work at the Roosevelt Campobello International Park eligible for federal-employee health benefits.

This bill would correct an oversight in the treaty governing park operations. By putting these Maine employees on an equal footing with employees at other parks along our border with Canada, we can end a financial hardship for them and their families.

I look forward to a productive discussion of these and the other matters on today's agenda.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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