

Opening Statement of Gordon Hartogensis
Nominee to Serve as Governor of the United States Postal Service
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

November 14, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Paul, and distinguished Members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as you consider my nomination to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service.

I want to thank the President of the United States for nominating me to this important position. I am here today with my wife Grace and I want to thank her for her support.

My journey to public service began when I was a teenager. I grew up in Rockville, Maryland and attended Montgomery County public schools from K through 12. I remember how proud I was watching my father serve on the Rockville City Council addressing the city's problems and making it a better place to live.

After a career in business which included working on Wall Street, co-founding two technology startups that were successfully acquired, and working as an angel investor, I came to Washington to give back and serve my country.

During the last five years, I served as the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or PBGC. When I started the position in 2019, the PBGC had insufficient funds to address a widespread crisis across many insured multiemployer plans which threatened drastic cuts to the pensions of workers in the transportation, mining, manufacturing, and construction industries by 2025. This crisis threatened not only these workers, but also the employers who participated in multiemployer plans. The desire to find a solution was bipartisan as could be seen in the Joint Select Committee on Multiemployer Pension Solvency in 2018. I worked with Congress to design a rescue and oversaw its implementation by the PBGC until my departure last spring.

If confirmed as a Governor of the United States Postal Service, I would be honored to dedicate myself to work to make the Postal Service fulfill its mission of universal service while operating in a financially sustainable manner. The USPS has some major challenges ahead, including the implementation of its ten-year "Delivering for America" plan. As a Governor, my role would be to work with the Board to review the strategy of the USPS to ensure it makes sense, provide oversight, and hold management accountable to the milestones and goals of the organization. Additionally, I believe there is a role of the Board to ensure there is transparency for outside stakeholders including Congress, regulators, and the public. The Postal Service is a part of government that touches every American and is an essential part of the infrastructure underlying the American economy and society at large.

I believe that my background in both the private and public sectors makes me an ideal candidate for this role. My private sector background in business and technology will allow me to review the operational plans of the organization and allow me to provide useful feedback to management. My time at PBGC will allow me to contribute to the discussion on compensation for employees, benefit structures, and pension funding challenges.

My experience in government has taught me to tackle big problems objectively and to view potential solutions through the lens of political reality. The US Postal Service is an essential service that touches everyone. Any disruption in service is going to be met with fierce backlash from stakeholders. It is important to communicate effectively the benefits of any changes that impact the end customer's experience.

At the same time, the Postal Service is a wonderful part of our lives – it brings us holiday cards, birthday presents, and love letters. Post offices bring together rural communities and give an identity to many small towns. While kids today still call it “snail mail”, the well-timed handwritten letter has never quite gone out of style when one wishes to make an impression. The USPS as an institution is worth protecting and, if confirmed, I would be extremely proud to have the opportunity to help it to evolve and thrive.

If confirmed, I would be honored to serve on the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service. My mother, who is 87, still uses the mail for all of her correspondence and bill payments. I met my wife Grace in 1989 and still have letters that she wrote to me during our first year together. The postal service is important to all of us and I would love the opportunity to put my skills and experience to work in service of this critical and beloved institution.

Thank you for allowing me to appear today. I am happy to answer any questions.