

OPENING STATEMENT OF SUZANNE SUMMERLIN  
TO BECOME GENERAL COUNSEL  
OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY  
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

November 2, 2023

Chairman Peters and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as nominee for the position of General Counsel at the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). I am deeply grateful for the trust that President Biden has placed in me through this nomination.

Further, I would like to thank the members of this committee and their staffers for reviewing my qualifications for this position; the staff at the FLRA for their support during this process; and my colleagues throughout the federal sector labor bar for their confidence in me to fulfil the role of General Counsel of the FLRA.

It is a profound honor to be considered for this critical role. Through my experience, I understand that the demands of the General Counsel require not only legal expertise but also a deep understanding of the unique challenges and responsibilities of managing labor relations in the federal sector. If confirmed, I will be committed to upholding the Statute's mission to promote fair, effective, and efficient relationships between Agencies, their Employees, and their Unions.

I myself have been in the working world, in one career or another, since I was six years old. And whether it was a job on a film set as a background actor, producing live television, or working as an attorney... I have learned that disputes at work are inevitable.

Oliver Wendell Holmes referred to labor struggles as the "one of the eternal conflicts out of which life is made." Fortunately for us, in the case of the federal sector, Congress has devised a way to manage that eternal conflict. It created the Statute.

Since 1978, the Statute has established the rule-book by which Agencies, their Employees, and their Unions resolve labor disputes.

I have witnessed firsthand that, when the players follow this rule book, everyone benefits. And I do mean everyone. When Agencies and Unions follow the rules, follow the Statute, it "promotes the efficiency of the federal service." And to me – what that means – is that taxpayer dollars, agency resources, and the time and talent of dedicated civil servants can all be focused on the mission of their agency instead of tied up in labor disputes.

If confirmed as General Counsel, I will dedicate myself to applying the law judiciously - balancing the interests of employees, unions, and management in a fair and impartial manner. I will work tirelessly to ensure that the FLRA continues to promote labor-management harmony and effective government operations.

In conclusion, I am honored to be nominated to serve as General Counsel at the FLRA and to work closely with its dedicated staff. If confirmed, I pledge to approach this role with integrity, transparency, and an unwavering dedication to the principles of fairness and justice under the Statute.