

Statement of Colleen Duffy Kiko
Before The Committee on
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
November 7, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Lankford, Senator Heitkamp, Members of the Committee, I would like to thank you and your staff for all the kindnesses that have been shown to me as I have prepared for this hearing.

I also deeply appreciate Congressman Sensenbrenner for taking the time away from his very booked schedule to introduce me today. I respect his dedicated service to the U.S. House of Representatives and am deeply honored to call him a friend.

I am here today with some of my family members – who represent the others. My son Philip and his wife Molly, who are expecting our 5th grandchild, my son Michael, my sister, Tama, and of course my best friend and husband, who currently serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives – Phil Kiko. I appreciate their support and the support of all of those who are not here.

I would like to thank Mr. DuBester and Mr. Abbott for the genuine kindnesses that they have shown me. I look forward to working with both of them as we journey forward, should I be confirmed. I would also like to personally thank Fred Jacob, the Solicitor at the FLRA for helping me get through the ethics clearance process and Gina Grippando, Counsel for Regulatory and Public Affairs at FLRA, who has truly gone above and beyond to offer me any assistance I needed – even responding to my emails at midnight or early, early morning. She has been of invaluable assistance.

It is indeed an honor to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority and, if confirmed, to be designated as Chairman of that agency.

My career with the Federal government began after I moved here from North Dakota in 1972. My first job was a GS-3 clerk typist in the Department of Treasury, Office of Personnel. My father, Lawrence Duffy, proudly spent over 49 years (almost ½ century) in the Federal service before he retired. He was a railway mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service on the Soo Line Railroad that ran from Enderlin, North Dakota to Portal, North Dakota. He later became an inspector for the U.S. Customs Service at the North Dakota/Canada border. He always considered Federal service to be an honorable profession. His work ethic, extreme pride in his job, and impeccable character were examples for me and I hope I live up to his standards. My mother, Angie Duffy, was also an example to me as someone who always wanted to learn new things, to have different and varied experiences (she began oil painting in her 50s), and to broaden her horizons. In her quiet, loving way, she pushed all four of her children to be strong and independent.

Congressman Sensenbrenner was very kind to speak about my background. But I would like to point out a few areas of my career that I believe affirmatively qualify me for this position. Before FLRA became an agency, I was working in the Department of Labor, Labor Management Services Administration. The duties of that organization were transferred into the new agency in 1979 when it was created – so I was there when FLRA opened its doors. I was there celebrating with a cake on its first birthday party. It was a very important part of shaping me into a professional employee. It was a great place to work.

I have worked in almost every component of the FLRA. In the Regional office, I investigated unfair labor practice charges, chaired hearings on representational disputes, monitored federal union elections, and conducted training for both agencies and unions. In the Authority level, I reviewed representation disputes, Administrative Law Judge decisions and drafted decisions for the Authority Members. My last position was a supervisory labor relations specialist handling procedural motions before the Authority when I decided that I needed to broaden my career perspectives by attending law school.

I graduated with my law degree from George Mason Antonin Scalia Law School in 1986 and, who knew, that just 19 years later I would find myself back at the agency serving in the Senate-confirmed position of General Counsel in 2005. And now – another 10 years later and I have again been nominated to serve as a Member of the Agency. My career keeps taking me back to my roots.

Most recently, having served as the General Counsel of the FLRA provided me more specific experience in managing a diverse and geographically dispersed staff. I managed the seven regions of the FLRA which included all aspects of management from budgeting and budget management, instituting performance standards and evaluating performance, leading change, policy development, staff and customer training, etc.

In my current position as a Judge of the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board, where I have served for 12 years, I have polished the attributes necessary to render decisions on issues that would come before the FLRA. Those attributes include reviewing the facts presented, considering arguments provided by the parties, and applying the existing law to the particular facts of each case. Further, as a part of the management team, we managed a staff at that time of approximately 50 employees, which included updating performance standards, initiating mentor programs to assist staff in increasing the quality, quantity, and timeliness of the work, and developed an updated case tracking system to more readily track the time it takes for cases to work their way to issuance, to name a few of our initiatives. I believe this experience has prepared me well to become a Member of the FLRA.

I believe my 29 years in the Federal government should serve me well in this agency where we are commissioned to provide leadership in establishing policies and guidance relating to matters of Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute and by effectively administering the nine specific mandates of the statute. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and am willing to answer any questions.