

Opening Statement of Senator Claire McCaskill

Business Meeting – October 4, 2017

I want to thank the Chairman and his staff for having this markup. We have a lot of good, bipartisan bills that meet the mission of this committee: to improve the functioning of the federal government, enhance our national and economic security, and reduce waste, fraud and abuse. I want to briefly mention a few bills today.

First, I want to thank Senator Lee for working with me on the REPORT Act. One thing we learned after the attacks of September 11 is that our federal agencies, and in particular, our intelligence agencies, can be very stovepiped and territorial, which creates gaps in our intelligence and hinders our ability to detect and deter terrorist attacks. Even now, 16 years later, there is no requirement for agencies to come together after a domestic attack and work to identify those gaps, and no requirement that Congress be made aware of these attacks. The REPORT Act addresses these problems, and I hope we can move it through committee today and get it to the President's desk as soon as possible.

I also want to thank the Chairman for his continued work on behalf of whistleblowers. We have a bill on this markup, the Whistleblower Protection Coordination Act, that permanently establishes a whistleblower coordinator within IG offices. Blowing the whistle on waste, fraud or abuse can be a difficult undertaking. Whistleblowers can be alienated by coworkers and managers and retaliated against, and the process for redress is often long and difficult. But they are willing to go through this because they are trying to right a wrong; to save taxpayer dollars from being flushed down the drain while no one is looking. This bill ensures that whistleblowers have someone available who can explain the process to them and tell them what they're going to be up against. We originally created this position in the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 with a sunset this year. It's important that we keep this position in place for whistleblowers.

Finally, the Postal Service this weekend missed \$6 billion in payments to the Treasury because they're perilously close to not having enough cash on hand to run their operations. They have no board of governors, either. Mr. Chairman, they are in dire straits. I know you are waiting on some data from the postal service, and I'd like to see that information as well. But it's time for this committee to move forward on a postal reform bill. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has reported a bill out of committee that has the support of the mailers, the unions and the Postal Service. I know that bill isn't perfect, and the House still has some work to do on it. But I think we can put our heads together, put partisanship aside, and make sure that the USPS can keep delivering mail to every address in the country. I propose that we begin that process by holding a hearing next month to hear from stakeholders about the House bill, and I hope you will consider my request.