

Y4
.P 84/10

1022
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

9174
P84/10
91-17

91-17 **POSTMASTER APPOINTMENTS**

GOVERNMENT
Storage

HEARING

BEFORE THE

S  MITTEE ON POSTAL OPERATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIRST CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H.R. 8518 and Related Bills

A BILL TO PROVIDE THAT APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS
IN THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT AND POSTAL FIELD
SERVICE BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF MERIT AND FITNESS

JUNE 11, 1969

Serial No. 91-17

Printed for the use of the
Committee on Post Office and Civil Service



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

30-686

WASHINGTON : 1969

COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE

THADDEUS J. DULSKI, New York, *Chairman*

DAVID N. HENDERSON, North Carolina, *Vice Chairman*

ARNOLD OLSEN, Montana
MORRIS K. UDALL, Arizona
DOMINICK V. DANIELS, New Jersey
ROBERT N. C. NIX, Pennsylvania
JAMES M. HANLEY, New York
CHARLES H. WILSON, California
JEROME R. WALDIE, California
RICHARD C. WHITE, Texas
WILLIAM D. FORD, Michigan
LEE H. HAMILTON, Indiana
FRANK J. BRASCO, New York
ROBERT O. TIERNAN, Rhode Island
GRAHAM PURCELL, Texas

ROBERT J. CORBETT, Pennsylvania
H. R. GROSS, Iowa
GLENN CUNNINGHAM, Nebraska
EDWARD J. DERWINSKI, Illinois
ALBERT W. JOHNSON, Pennsylvania
DANIEL E. BUTTON, New York
WILLIAM L. SCOTT, Virginia
JAMES A. McCLURE, Idaho
THOMAS J. MESKILL, Connecticut
DONALD E. LUKENS, Ohio
LAWRENCE J. HOGAN, Maryland

CHARLES E. JOHNSON, *Chief Counsel and Staff Director*

B. BENTON BRAY, *Associate Staff Director*

JOHN H. MARTINY, *Counsel*

WILLIAM A. IRVINE, *Assistant Staff Director*

THEODORE J. KAZY, *Senior Staff Assistant*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTAL OPERATIONS

ROBERT N. C. NIX, Pennsylvania, *Chairman*

DOMINICK V. DANIELS, New Jersey
CHARLES H. WILSON, California
RICHARD C. WHITE, Texas
WILLIAM D. FORD, Michigan

GLENN CUNNINGHAM, Nebraska
EDWARD J. DERWINSKI, Illinois
JAMES A. McCLURE, Idaho

Ex Officio Voting Members

THADDEUS J. DULSKI, New York

ROBERT J. CORBETT, Pennsylvania

(Thomas R. Kennedy, Staff Assistant, Room B-345(b), Rayburn Building—Ext. 6741 and 6742)

(II)

CONTENTS

Statement of—	
Blount, Hon. Winton M., Postmaster General; accompanied by Frank Nunlist, Assistant Postmaster General, Operations; Kenneth Housman, Assistant Postmaster General, Personnel; David Nelson, General Counsel; and Paul Carlin, Executive Assistant for Congressional Liaison-----	Page 1
Costin, Thomas P., Jr., postmaster at Lynn, Mass., and president of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States-----	23
Hornor, Thomas, Jr., secretary-treasurer and legislative director, National League of Postmasters of the United States-----	19
Jaspan, Daniel, legislative representative, National Association of Postal Supervisors-----	20
Rademacher, James, president, National Association of Letter Carriers-----	12
Communications received from—	
Goodall, Don A., general manager for legislative action, Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Washington, D.C., letter dated June 16, 1969-----	25
Additional material—	
Text of H.R. 8518, subject of hearing-----	iv

91ST CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 8518

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 10, 1969

Mr. DULSKI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service

A BILL

To provide that appointments and promotions in the Post Office Department and postal field service be made on the basis of merit and fitness.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 That section 3311 of title 39, United States Code, is amended
4 to read as follows:

5 **“§ 3311. Method of appointment**

6 “The Postmaster General shall appoint postmasters in
7 the competitive service.”.

8 SEC. 2. The amendment made by the first section of this
9 Act shall not affect the status or tenure of postmasters in
10 office on the date of enactment of this Act.

1 SEC. 3. (a) Chapter 41 of title 39, United States Code,
2 is amended by inserting the following new section after
3 section 3108:

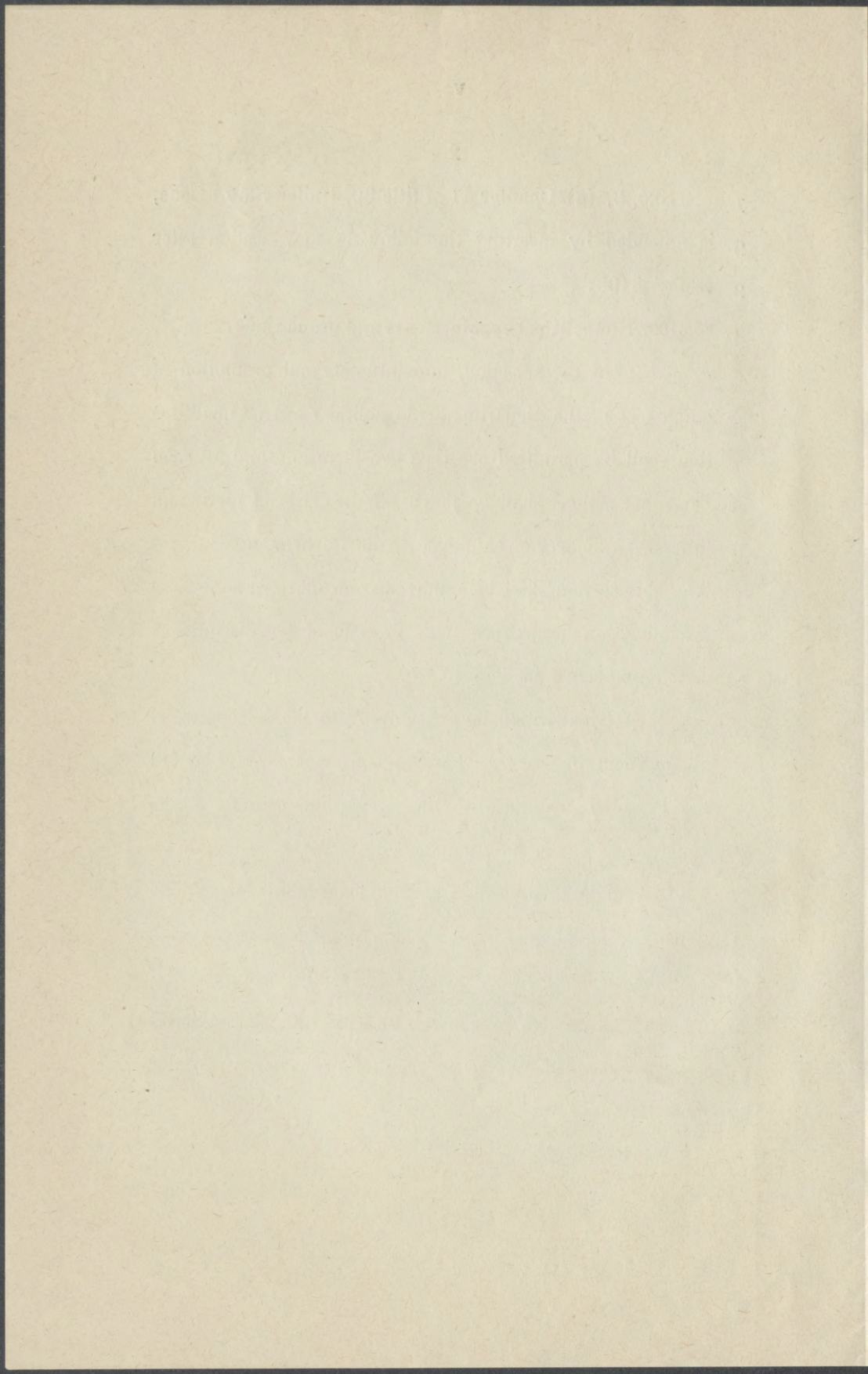
4 **“§ 3109. Nonpolitical appointments and promotions**

5 “(a) In the selection, appointment, and promotion of
6 employees of the Department, no political test or qualifica-
7 tion shall be permitted or given consideration; and all such
8 personnel actions shall be taken on the basis of merit and
9 fitness. Any officer or employee of the Department who vio-
10 lates this section shall be removed from office or otherwise
11 disciplined in accordance with procedures for disciplinary
12 action established pursuant to law.

13 “(b) This section does not apply to the selection and
14 appointment of officers whose appointments are vested in
15 the President by and with the advice and consent of the
16 Senate, nor to the selection, appointment, or promotion to
17 positions designated by the Civil Service Commission as posi-
18 tions of a confidential or policy determining character or as
19 positions to be filled by noncareer executive assignments.”

20 (b) The analysis of chapter 41 of title 39, United States
21 Code, is amended by inserting the following new item after
22 item 3108:

“3109. Nonpolitical appointments and promotions.”.



APPOINTMENT OF POSTMASTERS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 1969

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTAL OPERATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 10:07 a.m., pursuant to call, in room 232, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Robert N. C. Nix (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. NIX. The subcommittee will come to order.

Today we are going to take up several bills on the subject of taking the position of postmaster out of politics. This is a matter on which we had extensive hearings during the 90th Congress, when testimony was taken from 22 witnesses. There were 5 days of hearings.

During this Congress the Postmaster General, Mr. Rademacher, and representatives of both postmaster associations appeared before the Post Office and Civil Service Committee of the U.S. Senate on this subject.

The question raised during all of these hearings was whether or not the Senate should continue to confirm postmaster appointees. The power of confirmation, it seems to me, should be reserved for Cabinet- and sub-Cabinet-level appointments.

We will never reduce the level of politics in the postal service unless Senate confirmation is eliminated as a qualification for postmaster positions.

Since the Senate is giving this proposal serious consideration, it is important for us to lend our cooperation.

Mr. Postmaster General, I want to express my deep pleasure at your appearance here, and if you would care to introduce your associates, we would be pleased to have you proceed.

**STATEMENT OF HON. WINTON M. BLOUNT, POSTMASTER GENERAL;
ACCOMPANIED BY FRANK NUNLIST, ASSISTANT POSTMASTER
GENERAL, OPERATIONS; KENNETH HOUSMAN, ASSISTANT POST-
MASTER GENERAL, PERSONNEL; DAVID NELSON, GENERAL
COUNSEL; AND PAUL CARLIN, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT FOR CON-
GRESSIONAL LIAISON**

Mr. BLOUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am delighted to be here to testify on this subject. I would like to introduce my associates: Mr. Frank Nunlist, Assistant Postmaster General, Operations; Kenneth Housman, Assistant Postmaster General, Personnel; David Nelson, General Counsel; Paul Carlin, Execu-

tive Assistant for Congressional Liaison, and a number of our other assistants are present.

I have a prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. If you would like me to proceed, I would like to present it when you are prepared.

Mr. NIX. I would be very pleased to have you proceed, sir.

Mr. BLOUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am glad to be here today to testify on H.R. 8518, a bill to provide that appointments and promotions in the Post Office Department, including the postal field service, be made on the basis of merit and fitness.

I wholeheartedly support this bill, which Chairman Dulski introduced. It would carry out the recommendations which President Nixon made on February 25, 1969, in his message to the Congress on reform of the postal system.

Specifically, the President urged the enactment of legislation which would:

- Eliminate the present statutory requirement for Presidential appointment and senatorial confirmation of postmasters of first-, second-, and third-class post offices;

- Provide for appointment of all postmasters by the Postmaster General in the competitive civil service; and

- Prohibit political considerations in the selection or promotion of postal employees.

President Nixon made it clear that he considers it essential that the last vestiges of political patronage in the Post Office Department be swept away in order to make possible the development of a true career service for employees in the postal field service.

Proposals to eliminate appointment of postmasters on the basis of political considerations are not new or politically partisan. On June 24, 1949, President Truman, in his message to the Congress recommending further reorganization of the Post Office Department called on the Congress to enact legislation on this subject saying:

No authority of management is more important than that of selecting the personnel who are to operate the business. If the Postmaster General is to be held responsible for the efficient conduct of the postal service, he should be given full authority to appoint postmasters and other postal employees subject only to the provisions of the Civil Service and Classification Act. Legislation should be enacted which will give such authority to the Postmaster General.

Moreover, proposals of this character have been made by the various commissions established to study improvements in the Federal Government, including the First Hoover Commission, the Second Hoover Commission and the Kappel Commission on Postal Organization.

Indeed this subcommittee, only a little over a year ago, as you pointed out, after considering numerous bills having the purpose of removing political considerations from postmaster appointment procedures, reported favorably H.R. 16524 and the full committee reported the bill with amendments.

H.R. 16524 would have vested postmaster appointments in the Postmaster General. However, in lieu of prohibiting political considerations in appointments, it would have required competitive examination of eligible employees whenever a postmaster vacancy is to be filled by promotion from within.

Moreover, the Senate in the last Congress passed S. 355 which included provision for the Postmaster General to appoint postmasters, as

well as elaborate provisions prohibiting political considerations in postal appointments and promotions.

Why the concern over the existence of patronage appointments? The evils were well summed up last year by the president of the National Civil Service League, a nonpartisan organization, in hearings on H.R. 8516 before this subcommittee.

He stated that the present system provides no assurance that the best or near-best man is chosen for the job; that it depresses employee morale by thwarting merited advancement; that it discourages "bright young men" from seeking postal employment; and that it fosters a political climate that erodes the prestige of the postal service. I commend his testimony to your close attention.

The report on H.R. 16524 points out the result of the statutory requirement for Senate confirmation is delay in filling postmaster appointments to the detriment of operation of the post offices involved.

Since the administration has abolished the adviser system and has taken steps in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission to assure nonpolitical appointment, why then is legislation necessary?

Two basic but overlapping reasons call for the enactment of the legislation.

First, for our efforts to eliminate political appointments to be successful, it is essential that a clear congressional mandate be enacted. This is the purpose of section 3 of H.R. 8518.

Second, the current requirements for Presidential and Senate confirmation appointment not only label the postmaster positions as positions which involve political considerations, but provides a means by which political considerations eventually could be reintroduced into the appointment system.

The requirement of Senate confirmation would be eliminated by the first section of the bill. The task force on personnel for the Second Hoover Commission stated: "Appointment by the President and confirmation by the Senate is the foundation for the system." Indeed the report on H.R. 16524 in discussing Senate confirmation of postmasters also refers to "the political clearance system based on it."

In today's world, Senate confirmation is an anachronism in the case of the nearly 25,000 Presidential postmasters. Postmaster positions are not policy-determining positions, but managerial positions.

Generally, Senate confirmation is reserved for those positions in the executive schedule which are concerned with national policies and for which salaries are fixed at substantially higher levels than postmaster salaries.

Postmaster positions run from PFS levels 6 through 20. The current salary for a PFS level 20 approximates that of GS-16 under the Classification Act.

Yet appointments to the Classification Act positions do not generally require Senate confirmation, much less the appointment of a secretary at GS-6 whose salary range is as high as a postmaster at a small third-class post office.

In other Government agencies employees who meet and provide services to the public are selected without Senate confirmation. No special reason exists for requiring Senate confirmation of postmaster appointments.

It is also interesting to note that in 1869, a hundred years ago, post offices with presidentially appointed postmasters accounted for only about 3 percent of all post offices, 980 of 27,106. Today the percentage is startlingly different. As of June 30, 1968, over 90 percent of the post offices have presidentially appointed postmasters, 29,974 of 32,260.

In conjunction with the President, we have done what we can to eliminate political considerations in postmaster appointments. We have ended the political adviser system which had traditionally been used by Democratic and Republican administrations to select postmasters and rural carriers.

Moreover, we are establishing machinery not only to assure that appointments to these positions are made solely on fitness and without regard to political considerations, but to demonstrate affirmatively that this is the case.

As the committee knows, we are establishing a National Selection Board to advise me on the appointment of postmasters at PFS level 14 and above, and 15 regional selection boards to advise me on all other postmaster appointments.

The National Selection Board will include the Assistant Postmaster General for Personnel and Operations, the Executive Director of the Civil Service Commission, and individuals recommended by the dean of a nationally known graduate school of business administration and by the American Arbitration Association.

Each of the regional boards will include an outstanding postmaster, an official selected by the Civil Service Commission, and individuals recommended by a nationally known management consulting firm, by the dean of an outstanding school of business administration in the region, and by the American Arbitration Association.

These boards will function in the manner prescribed in Executive Order 11007, issued by President John F. Kennedy in February of 1962, and will be charged with responsibility for advising me on the selection of postmasters on the basis of merit and fitness, without regard to political considerations of any kind.

It may be of interest to the committee to know how the names of prospective candidates for appointment as postmasters will be brought to the attention of the selection boards. There are basically three ways in which this will be done.

The first is by recommendation of an incumbent postmaster who expects to resign or retire. When he knows that he will be leaving, a postmaster will notify his regional director.

The postmaster will then evaluate the qualifications of personnel in his office. If the postmaster's position is level 9 or below, this will include all career employees. At other offices, the evaluation will include the higher ranking supervisors.

The postmaster will also receive evaluations of potential candidates from the Inspection Service and from supervisors in the regional organization.

After considering the Inspection Service and regional evaluations, the postmaster will himself make an evaluation and will submit to the regional review committee the names of the best qualified candidates in his office. The postmaster will not rank the candidates, and may not submit more than three names.

If the regional review committee believes the postmaster overlooked better qualified employees, the regional review committee will then submit to the regional management selection board, through the regional director, the names of persons they believe to be better qualified.

As a result of this action, no more than three additional names may be added to the list of names which will be submitted to the board.

The selection board will then evaluate the qualifications of the persons whose names have been submitted by the postmaster and the supplemental names, if any, submitted by the regional director, and will advise me which of these individuals they believe to be best qualified for the job.

Where the postmaster vacancy results from the previous postmaster's death or removal for cause, the process of filling the vacancy will be initiated by the regional director.

He will cause an investigation to be made to determine the best qualified employees in the post office in question. The qualifications of such employees will then be evaluated by a regional review committee established by the regional director. Thereafter, the regional director will submit the names of not more than three persons to the selection board, which in turn will recommend for appointment the person it believes best qualified.

Under either of the two procedures that I have described, the board may decide that none of the candidates named by the postmaster or the regional director is qualified. In that event the regional director will request the Civil Service Commission to hold an open competitive examination.

As a result of the examination, a maximum of three names will be submitted to the board. The board will then recommend the person it deems best qualified, subject, however, to the requirements of the Veterans' Preference Act.

It may prove to be necessary to modify some of the details of the selection process that I have outlined, but I wish to assure the committee that as long as I continue to hold the office of Postmaster General, the Department will adhere firmly to the principle that, as announced by President Nixon last February, postmaster appointments "are going to be made on the basis of merit and fitness for the job, and not on the basis of political affiliations or political influence."

Mr. Nix. Thank you, Mr. Postmaster General.

As far as I am concerned, I have no questions. The issue is clearly defined.

Mr. Derwinski?

Mr. DERWINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Postmaster General, you have been before our full committee with a large audience on a number of occasions. I hope this small select group doesn't depress you. [Laughter.]

First of all, I commend the chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Nix, for holding this hearing and helping move this bill along. I am sorry there are not more of our committee members present.

For the record, I would like to emphasize that the Postmaster General has in effect ended the political advisory system, so he is moving ahead.

There are a couple of points that for the record I would like to have you expand upon.

One is this emphasis on promoting the qualified employees, and in effect drawing all of new postmasters from employee ranks.

Would you elaborate why this is so important to you?

Mr. BLOUNT. Mr. Derwinski, in any organization it is extremely important that you enable the people in the organization to receive promotions to better jobs.

This has a tremendous effect on morale. It has a tremendous effect on the operations of the organization, productivity, if you will, dedication to the job.

This is the American principle of being able to improve yourself by hard work and diligence in the duties assigned to you.

In the past, through the operations of the adviser system, more than two-thirds of the postmasters have been appointed from outside the service. Many deserving postal employees, who are very capable, have long ago given up any effort to get a postmaster job, because they didn't have the proper political influence.

Many of them have moved out, because they thought they didn't have any chance to get a promotion.

This has a depressing effect throughout the whole organization. On the other hand, if these positions are opened up, by promotion from within to the postmaster's job, a chain reaction occurs resulting in a number of promotions down the line.

Obviously, if you bring a man in from outside to fill a postmaster vacancy, there are no other promotions in the service itself. This chain of promotions is a very vital thing that should not be overlooked as far as the supervisors and other employees are concerned.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I think I would agree with you in principle, although I would hope that in this legislation, or in practice that you allow for a little flexibility and leave the door open to a noncareer appointment, because I would think that an occasional injection of a brand new face brings some life and some imagination into an organization.

I realize my district may be a little unique, and not necessarily reflect the national pattern.—

Mr. BLOUNT. They certainly have a unique and unusual Congressman representing them.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I have to question that.

Mr. NIX. If the gentleman will yield to me.

Unquestionably the gentleman from Illinois is unique, for his contribution in this field, which should be noted in the record, and I have made that statement.

Mr. DERWINSKI. That almost sounds like an endorsement. [Laughter.]

The three best postmasters, in my estimation, in my district all were selected from outside the department, all originally political. Two of them were Democratic Party leaders.

This is unusual, but I would like to feel that the door wouldn't be completely closed to noncareer appointments.

Mr. BLOUNT. Congressman Derwinski, it certainly is not. I agree with what you say. We do have fine postmasters by and large in this country, and they have come from this system.

Bringing someone in from the outside often brings creativity and a new approach. Our procedures do not preclude this.

If the selection board does not deem persons from inside qualified, then it will so report and then the civil service examination will be held in order to bring someone in from the outside. The door is open and I am certain that it will be exercised on numerous occasions.

I am sure the result will be a larger percentage of internal promotions, but I don't think the door will be closed on outside appointments.

Mr. DERWINSKI. This subject of internal promotions, subject to this bill or other practices, presents this situation where there is a postmaster retiring. None of the clerks in the office wish to accept the promotion. But there may be an employee of the department living in that community, but working in another postal location.

Do you envision that you would then be able to readily transfer people to move them into an office in which they could be promoted?

Mr. BLOUNT. The bill that we are testifying on today does not comment on the residence requirement. However, the Postal Reform Act, which we have submitted to the Congress and have been testifying on before the full committee, does remove the residency requirement.

That would allow us the freedom to utilize people that are qualified that are not in an individual post office.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I was thinking not so much of bringing a man in to be a postmaster, but taking a clerk in town A who resides in town B, transferring him to town B once he is established there as an employee, and he could then be promoted to be postmaster.

Mr. BLOUNT. Congressman Derwinski, I think your point is well taken.

There is nothing in the present bill that would prohibit that. We do not provide for that in our present procedures, but as we pointed out in my statement, as we work at this thing, we are obviously going to find ways to improve it, and hopefully through the actions of this committee and others, we will receive suggestions to improve our procedures.

We plan to be flexible and adopt the improvements that will develop.

Of course, you know the postmaster's job is a key management job that is no different from many other management positions in the Post Office Department.

We have the superintendent of mails, the foreman of mails, we have the superintendent of carriers, et cetera, and we have regional managers that a postmaster reports to, so this is just another step in the promotional ladder. We are dealing so elaborately with this problem because of the manner in which it has been dealt with in the course of the past decades.

But hopefully we will move to the point from which we can view the postmaster position as one of the steps in the promotional ladder available to our employees. It is a key one, for many reasons.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I introduced a bill, H.R. 9640, which called for, among other things, for the removal of the residency requirements for postmaster.

As I understand the theory of sound management, if you have an outstanding postmaster in, let us say, El Paso, Tex., he cannot move higher than El Paso, unless you move him up to a region or bring him here to Washington, D.C.

Supposing you had an opening in San Francisco. You may want to tap him and say, "You have done such a great job in El Paso, we want

to make you postmaster general in San Francisco." General Motors can do this. That is what you want to achieve?

Mr. BLOUNT. Yes, we do.

The reason we do not include repeal of the residence requirements in this legislation is that we have a very strong desire to see this bill move through Congress as fast as it can be moved.

In the case of postmasters we are asking the Senate to confirm appointment to positions that are in levels which it is unfair to ask the Senate to be involved with. We have 25,000 postmaster jobs subject to Senate confirmation. There is no comparable operation in the Government that requires Senate confirmation for promotions.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Even allowing for the great statesmanship of the Members of the Senate.

Mr. BLOUNT. Yes. I feel their time is so valuable that they should not have to deal with things like this.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Have you detected, sir, any improved morale in the Department because of the possibility of promotions and freedom from political influence? Have you detected that many of the employees now see a ray of light down the road?

Mr. BLOUNT. Congressman Derwinski, obviously this is a thing it is difficult to put your finger on, but it is just inconceivable that this is not a tremendous morale booster.

People are waiting to see whether Congress will in fact remove the Senate confirmation. If the Congress doesn't do this, it means that under a new administration appointments could go back to the old system. I suppose people are looking skeptically at our program, but it is bound to be one they will favor if it works properly.

Mr. DERWINSKI. What about the American Arbitration Association. I realize some of my colleagues quizzed you on this extensively, but this brings in a new element that causes questions out of legitimate curiosity.

Do you envision this working as well as the plans call for?

Mr. BLOUNT. Again, Congressman Derwinski, if it doesn't we will change it and improve our procedures.

The American Arbitration Association is widely recognized as an impartial organization. There is nothing magic about it, and there could be other groups that would fill the same bill, but I just don't happen to be aware of them. I don't want to overplay the importance of this association, but I do say it is widely recognized and highly regarded as being impartial and fair, and I think it is a good vehicle to use.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I would like to comment for the record that in January, just before Mr. Blount took over and announced this new ballgame, I was averaging as much mail from people wishing promotions or appointments in the Post Office as I was any other subject.

That has dwindled off to nothing. I think the facts of life are that at least the Post Office employees have accepted the new rules, and if they are not happy with them, at least they have adjusted, which is a form of progress.

I would hope that having set the stage for the removal of politics that we can now do by legislation what you have in effect done by executive authority. I recognize that there is a certain amount of politics—I don't think we can remove it completely, human nature

being what it is—but I think you have made a major step, and I am very pleased that our chairman is giving this bill his expeditious attention this morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. NIX. Thank you. I want to express our appreciation to the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Dulski, for his attendance.

Mr. DULSKI. I have some questions regarding H.R. 6959 which I also sponsored.

Is it fair to say that this bill eliminates Senate confirmation by changing the postmaster appointments from Presidential appointments to appointments of the Postmaster General?

Mr. BLOUNT. Mr. Chairman, are you talking about H.R. 8518?

Mr. DULSKI. H.R. 6959, which is similar to your recommendations which are included in H.R. 8518.

Mr. BLOUNT. Mr. Chairman, I am sorry. I was testifying on 8518.

If I could take a look at 6959—

Mr. DULSKI. H.R. 6959 gives first preference to the career people.

Mr. BLOUNT. As I understand it, Mr. Chairman, the essential difference between H.R. 8518 and H.R. 6959 is that H.R. 6959 treats in greater detail the matter of political recommendations. The other thing I believe H.R. 6959 does is to require promotion from within unless qualified career employees are not available. While that general principle is certainly sound, we don't think that the principle should be embedded in the statute. As was just brought out in testimony, it may even prohibit bringing in the occasional outside viewpoint which often is good for an organization. We would feel that it would have some detriment in that regard.

Mr. DULSKI. You brought a man in from outside for Chief Postal Inspector, that is your privilege. Have you filled any of the postmasters vacancies, and if so, have you put people in who have no postal experience?

I know from my personal experience that a man who had only a year and a half experience, came into the Buffalo post office to make a survey and after 2 days was telling the postmaster who had 40 years' experience with a good record, how to run the office.

I am very proud of the postmaster, he is a Republican, and he was confirmed by the Democratic Senate at my request.

You have a man coming in, and he only has a year and a half experience, and he has to learn from this man who has 40 years of experience.

Maybe he has a different viewpoint. Everybody considers we are still delivering mail by horse and buggy. There are complaints, and we receive them, and I think you do.

The news media says, "Post office, post office, post office," and they have misrepresented the whole situation.

I don't think this is fair. As chairman of the committee, I don't feel that our post office is in such bad shape.

Many members of the committee have complimented you on having taken the initiative to make corrections.

Mr. BLOUNT. Mr. Chairman, of course, the point of the testimony here today is to remove the Senate confirmation. We agree with you on that.

We have not made any appointments to the acting postmasters and officers in charge of persons who were not career people. All of them have been career people.

The matter of appointment of the chief inspector from the outside, to which you referred, is, again, some evidence of what we are concerned with. It demonstrates why the provisions in H.R. 6959 should not be written into the statute.

Here is a fine organization, but it never had, in all the years of its existence, an appointment from outside the Postal Inspection Service.

With all due respect to the Postal Inspection Service, and it is a great service it has a tremendous reputation—any organization that becomes that inbred is bound to suffer. It is necessary to have the freedom to bring in from time to time someone from the outside to bring in an outside viewpoint. To have the flexibility of taking a look at this thing from a different point of view is something I think that is vital.

On the other hand, the vast majority of postmaster appointments in our opinion will be made from within the career service. If the restriction is written in the statute, it would almost prohibit us from bringing in someone with an outside point of view. This would lock us into a position in which we are likely to eliminate our ability to get the kind of talent and creativity that could be brought in from time to time.

Every organization needs an infusion of some outside blood from time to time. On the other hand, I think we need to be dedicated to the principle of promotion from within, which we are. The provisions of this bill would allow us to follow this principle but would also leave us the flexibility to bring in outsiders to help us.

Mr. DULSKI. I appreciate that.

This may not be the exact statement you made, but in substance I think it is correct. I believe you said that any complaints or any change of policy will not be considered by the regional office, it will come into the Washington Office.

Mr. BLOUNT. Mr. Chairman, first, let me assure you that we are dedicated to the principle of decentralization, and we are going to put authority along with responsibility out into the regions and, actually, down into the post offices, from which it had been removed.

You may be referring to the congressional liaison, which we do feel should be centralized. Centralization here should give us an opportunity to be more responsive to the Members of Congress than if the activity were scattered all over the country.

So we do have centralized congressional liaison here in Washington. If a Congressman from California wants to know something out of the San Francisco region, our congressional liaison is responsible for getting that information and getting it back to the Member of Congress.

But as to the matter of decentralization of management, we lean strongly to that.

Mr. DULSKI. You mean the region would still have the authority to make decisions?

Mr. BLOUNT. The regional offices are going to have authority they have never had before. I have with me today, for instance—this doesn't have anything to do with this hearing, but I was reading it on the way up—I have a directive by Mr. Nunlist, our Assistant Postmaster General for Operations, to the regional offices delegating authority to the region which has been centralized before.

Mr. DULSKI. Could the penalty provisions of H.R. 8518 be applied against high-ranking postal officials, as well as low-ranking supervisors or employees.

Mr. BLOUNT. We provide in the bill that any employee or officer of the Department who violates that section is subject to removal or other appropriate discipline.

Of course, the Postmaster General, the Deputy and Assistant Postmasters General, as well as the General Counsel, are subject to removal by the President. All other employees would be subject to removal by the Postmaster General under this bill.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Would you yield?

Mr. DULSKI. I will yield to my colleague.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I know that there has been some skepticism by members as to whether or not the Postmaster General and his staff are as nonpolitical as they say they are. I would just like to point out my own district.

There are two postmasters who were appointed by the previous administration that weren't confirmed by the Senate, who are still functioning and, as far as I know, will eventually be confirmed because they are doing a good enough job and as a result, despite their political background, they are retained.

I think this, to me, is obvious proof of the new nonpolitical approach.

I mentioned just before you came in, Mr. Chairman, I think most members, at least on my side, have readjusted themselves to the facts of life. Some have done so grudgingly, but they have done it.

It takes the people on the other side of the aisle longer to realize the great facts of life.

We had anticipated some of the spoils that you fellows were used to so many years, but we are adjusted to the fact that we have so noble an administration that things are different. Mr. Chairman, may I touch on one other point?

Mr. NIX. Just before you do that, I might say this: You said you expect they would be confirmed. I have known you a long time. I have never said this, but I want to say this. I compliment you on your optimism.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I am really not an optimist. I am a Kiwanian. [Laughter.]

Mr. Blount, you have made references here and before our full committee to the problem of getting qualified personnel. This obviously relates in some way to wages and monetary inducements.

The three of us here all represent major metropolitan areas—Buffalo, Philadelphia, and Chicago.

The clerk and carrier who works in Buffalo, or Philadelphia, drawing the same pay as the carrier or clerk in Timbaktu, Ark., is really at a disadvantage.

You could draw people easily in some of the remote rural areas, but you can't get the equivalent personnel for the greater skill needed in the metropolitan areas.

In the bill I mentioned earlier, H.R. 9640, I provided for Presidential authority to set higher minimum rates in order to balance pay scales with private enterprise.

I don't want to pin you down, but as a matter of principle would this be something that you could utilize from the management standpoint?

Mr. BLOUNT. Congressman Derwinski, as you know, the matter of pay is one that we would subject to the principles of collective bar-

gaining in our postal reform bill. We would anticipate that pay would be a major matter between the parties in the bargaining procedure. Therefore, I really think it would be inappropriate for me to make a commitment, or to make comments at this time that might be taken as one way or the other on this issue.

But let me say this. In general, I think you have to be comparable wherever you are working. This is a matter that would be discussed between the parties in the collective bargaining process, and it would be a major matter to be determined.

We just simply believe that we should have collective bargaining with our employees, and that matters of this kind should be determined between the parties involved.

Mr. DERWINSKI. It would seem to me, too, that if you were to achieve as much in a legislative sense as you hope—it is obvious that if you have effective collective bargaining, the political influence would have to be gone from the scene.

So even though we are moving this ahead of schedule, so to speak, we are also setting the stage whereby your reform bill would just make more sense within the overall process.

Mr. BLOUNT. Mr. Derwinski, at the very beginning, elimination of political influence in appointments and promotions was a principal thing which had to be done. We came to the conclusion that to be credible in this we had to start at the very beginning. We recognized that to do this was unfair to the Republican Party, because for decades both parties had used this Department for patronage.

As difficult as it was for the Republican Party, we felt in order to be believable in the entire program we were talking about, we needed to institute that policy at the very beginning of the administration and, I say, again, that I think the Republican Party deserves a good deal of credit for standing behind this matter.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. NIX. I want to again express the thanks of the subcommittee and the chairman of the full committee for your appearance.

Mr. BLOUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. NIX. Our next witness is Mr. James Rademacher, president, National Association of Letter Carriers.

STATEMENT OF JAMES RADEMACHER, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

Mr. RADEMACHER. I would like to interpret what I am about to say as remarks rather than a prepared statement to cover the subject.

I think I might preface the remarks by saying that nobody in his right mind would claim the present system of selecting postmasters is perfect.

The present system, however, is far worse in theory than it is in practice. In my opinion, there is a surprisingly large number of good, able, and dedicated postmasters who are a credit to the service, and that statement should be underscored, coming from a union leader.

We feel there has been an unfair attack in recent months on the quality of the Nation's postmasters. A postmaster, to be a success, must have a talent for human relations. He must know how to get

along with his patrons. He must be dedicated to the job of giving his patrons the best possible service. He must be able to get along with his employees. He must be dedicated. Also, the job calls for creating and maintaining high morale, which in turn produces superior service.

I only cite this information, Mr. Chairman, to get into the record just who this postmaster is, and who is the person we are talking about here today. That is the only purpose of prefacing my concern about the legislation before the subcommittee.

The postmaster is the living embodiment of the Federal Government in his community. It is very important that he remain so. I am certain the American people don't want him to be superseded by a faceless executive, an anonymous nonentity, no matter how efficient that nonentity might be.

The American people could care less who is head of their local telephone company, but they do care very much who their postmaster is.

They look to him for leadership in community affairs. They feel that as Government more and more becomes an impersonal monster, the postmaster is about the last remaining touch of humanity the Government has to offer its citizens.

The Post Office, Mr. Chairman, is the most human of all agencies of the Government. It touches every man, woman, and child in the Nation every working day of the year. It has serious faults. We know that.

It is sometimes exasperating. It is often less than efficient. It must be improved, but improvement must not be achieved at the expense of the warm and human quality which the Post Office through its personnel shares with the people of the United States.

There are 21 bills on the selection of postmaster, including H.R. 4. There are another dozen cosponsors of such legislation. I want to refer to the provisions of H.R. 4. This title provides a sweeping reform, in that it prohibits any oral or written recommendation for the appointment of a postmaster, and the bill further prohibits recommendations by organization.

We would propose an amendment to H.R. 4, title 2. The reason for our urging the amendment is because H.R. 6959 is even stronger than that contained in H.R. 4. It is more meaningful, and it will serve the purpose.

We want to compliment Postmaster General Blount for his keen desire and prompt initiation of the action to remove politics from all aspects of postal appointments, despite the criticisms that he has received, perhaps, on both sides of the aisle. It took courage to undo, or try to undo what has been done all through these years. Although it came as a shock to members of the administration party, it nevertheless was a long overdue accomplishment.

Our only concern in supporting the proposition that postal appointments should not be made on the basis of politics, nor should there be any outside influence whatsoever in the appointments, is to ascertain that the system which replaces political motivation is one which will benefit the postal worker, the postal service, and the American people.

Congress should tread cautiously, and make absolutely certain the action being substituted is one which will accomplish this objective.

Much has been said about continuity in office, and it is quite evident that in the past the direct relationship of the Postmaster General between the White House and the Department has contributed to the ills of the service.

Not enough attention has been paid by several of the Postmasters General, since they were either politicking on Capitol Hill, attending White House conferences, or making speeches across the country.

Therefore, the removal of the political influence must begin with the No. 1 appointment.

Those with appointing power should seek out—through the Civil Service Commission, and this committee and the Labor Department—suitable persons.

The appointee must be aware of the fact that Congress supervises and authorizes the needs of the Postal Establishment.

We look with concern on the actions that have been taken. We can appreciate the fact that a new administration might want to appoint a new type of manager, and we certainly want to give such appointees every opportunity to do well on their job.

However, when one speaks of continuity, and has the opportunity to observe continuity, certainly there is no evidence of good faith when those with considerable postal service are urged to vacate their jobs.

In our opinion, continuity is not as important in the role of Postmaster General as it is in subordinate positions.

For example, it matters not who is named Postmaster General so long as his Deputy Postmasters General are productive and have authority to act.

There were persons in the Post Office Department who had experience but were asked to leave to make room for the new team. If we really and truly require continuity, longtime career workers should not be asked to apply for retirement.

I hope the whistle is not being blown on me by the White House. It is our firm belief that competitive examinations and promotions from within the postal service should be used.

Every employee with limited experience should be eligible for such competitive examination. All of the talent, all of the ability, all of the capable employees do not happen to be just representatives of management. There are many letter carriers and postal clerks who are as qualified in some offices as are superintendents and other postal officials.

There are many employees on the lower levels who have imagination, initiative, and ability to get along with the public and their fellow employees more so than the senior employees who in many instances have never exercised initiative, have never been permitted to use their imagination, and have had no authority to act.

Therefore, it is the opinion of the National Association of Letter Carriers that the proper approach is actually contained in title 2 of H.R. 4 with the strong amendment of H.R. 6959.

It is further our belief that a report on the application of the new policy be made periodically to the Congress so that the elected representatives of the people who are served by the postmaster may have an opportunity to review the appointments that have been made, and to then determine whether the intent of Congress has been complied with.

In exchange for relinquishing the present type of political structure

relative to the appointment of postmaster, Congress should play an important part in the promulgation of regulations governing appointments in a nonpolitical manner.

It becomes a matter of faith, confidence, and trust in the appointing official, and there should be no question whatsoever so long as there is agreement on the methods to be used in the appointments of those who perform the duties of postmaster.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to close by reminding the committee and the Congress what is at stake is the political patronage of the postal service to mean that one person in authority could control 40,000 employment positions, and that is the only reservation that we have today is that whatever is done to remove politics, which we favor be done in the manner in which the Congress will still play a part by first of all being in on the promulgation of the policies which shall prevail and, secondly, to be entitled to a periodic report on what has been accomplished to prove that the intent of the Congress has been complied with.

Mr. Nix. Thank you, Mr. Rademacher. We appreciate your excellent presentation.

Mr. Dulski?

Mr. DULSKI. Thank you for your statement. I concur with the chairman that it is a fine statement and presentation. Let us go down to the little details of what H.R. 6959 does.

When a postmaster is being appointed and there are three men eligible for the job, whatever the decision is, in my opinion it should be made out of the first three career eligibles.

Does a man have to serve 5 years to earn a career status?

Mr. RADEMACHER. You are correct, Mr. Dulski.

Mr. DULSKI. We would be naive to believe that a man who is well qualified should be disqualified because he receives and sends letters of recommendations.

Somebody out of the kindness of their heart writes a letter, and a few others write a letter. Would you say that this man should be disqualified?

Mr. RADEMACHER. No, I would not, Mr. Chairman, and that is why I would urge that Congress insist in promulgating regulations, because I know that if the candidate of my choice were being considered, I wouldn't be concerned about the laws, I would be concerned about my recommendation of that candidate, and I wouldn't hesitate to write to every place I could be heard, recommending his appointment, and I wouldn't want to go to jail for doing it, or for him to be barred because I expressed my opinion.

Mr. DULSKI. That is my concern. I think the bill is so written that if anyone promotes any canvassing, the man is supposed to be disqualified. I feel that isn't fair.

Mr. RADEMACHER. Mr. Chairman, I am merely making an observation. I am not questioning the chairman. Can we really say there is no politics, and can we say there is no violation of the new law, as being proposed, if an outgoing postmaster recommends some employee? Can we honestly say there is no political influence being exercised? I present that question. I am not anticipating any answer.

Also, if a union would like to endorse a fellow employee for a job, would this be violating the law, and would, then, the candidate be barred from consideration?

I just present that again, not as a question to be answered, but as a question of concern, and so that is why we would urge that Congress be involved.

They are giving up something, and in return there ought to be a congressional concern about the regulations governing the new policy, and I have particular reference to a citizen, a relative of a man being considered.

He writes to his Congressman. I want to see the day when the Congressman writes back and says, "I can't get letters like this. I am sorry, I can't represent you."

So we have to consider all of these things. I am absolutely opposed to a man who is qualified under examination, ends up at the top of the list, and then be barred because some Congressman or some Senator says he prefers somebody else. That is what I am talking about, Mr. Chairman. I think you share in that conviction, because you have introduced a number of bills pointing right to that problem.

So I think as we discuss this, before we suddenly turn over the patronage of 40,000 jobs to an individual—today, it is the present incumbent, who is doing a fine job. He is certainly expressing courage in every move that he makes, and he is a determined man.

But he won't be in office forever, and we have got to, whenever the Congress enacts legislation, they have got to look to the future. Who will the next administrator be with 40,000 jobs in his possession?

So I only leave these thoughts, because it ought to be as great a concern as the total postal reform package which you have sponsored in H.R. 4, which is so important to the people of this country.

Mr. DULSKI. A last question, Mr. Rademacher.

I served on the city civil service committee. The rule for the police and fire registers was that the one who received the highest mark was at the top, and they go 1, 2, 3. They have got to take the first man, regardless. They can't take the first three as they do here.

Maybe it isn't the best policy. I am not sure. Wouldn't it be preferable, if No. 1 was passed over, that some explanation must be given why he was rejected? Wouldn't that be helpful?

Mr. RADEMACHER. Yes. If a senior letter carrier who passed the examination with a higher grade is bypassed, he can demand to know in writing why he was not considered.

Now, there are arguments on both sides of the fact of appointments. I think the very fact that the Commission has the right to appoint one of the top three is political in nature itself. This is where politics started. It started back that you can appoint one out of three.

So the arguments for such a program are understandable. I, as a representative of 210,000 letter carriers, I do not want the No. 1 man who may be the most intelligent on paper, he may be one of these exceptional students who can answer every question given him the way they want the questions answered.

He may be the most brilliant employee in the Post Office Department. That doesn't mean, Mr. Chairman, that he can get along with people, and that is what is going to give you a good postal service, a postmaster who can get along with the public and his employees. That doesn't mean that the No. 1 brilliant candidate is the man you want in the job.

So there are arguments on both sides, and I agree with you that in the past there have been attempts to circumvent the policies by urging one of the top three candidates to forget it, and then you have to give another examination, so here, too, is politics that will be eliminated by the enactment of your legislation.

I am pleased that Congressman Nix, despite the heavy pressure on this committee, has seen fit to hold these hearings, and Mr. Chairman, despite all the demands made on your time, that you have consented to such hearings as an indication of your desire to do something about it.

Mr. DULSKI. Thank you.

Mr. NIX. Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am trying to understand this bill. As I understand your complaint, it is primarily that this bill does not authorize the postmaster or exclude the postmaster from appointment except from the postal service itself. Is that correct?

Mr. RADEMACHER. No, Congressman White. I am sorry I did not have a prepared statement. We do support the principles in the 21 bills that have been introduced. We support the removal of alleged politics that exist in postmaster appointments. We prefer the language of H.R. 6959, because it is the strongest language in conformity with our policy and our concern.

This bill is stronger than title 2 of H.R. 4, because it defines who can take the examination and who will get first preference, the people within the postal establishment, and that is all I am talking about here today, is that every person in the postal establishment, and I mean to be reasonable, a man with at least 2 or 3 years of service, and that is to be determined, everybody should feel that they are qualified to be postmaster.

They are not all going to be. But they should feel that some day they can be postmaster, and they take an examination and they don't pass and are ruled out. But at least they had the opportunity.

Then in the rare instance, and it would be rare, that you wouldn't find someone capable who meets the standards promulgated by the Congress and the Department—somebody certainly, in that office, will meet those standards.

If there just isn't anybody, or nobody desires it, or nobody with the right kind of background is available, then you go outside.

Mr. WHITE. Then the bill just says that the Postmaster General could appoint postmasters in competitive service. They could go outside, then.

Mr. RADEMACHER. Yes, it is weak. We are in favor of H.R. 4 with the suggested amendment of H.R. 6959.

Mr. WHITE. Do you interpret this bill to mean that the Postmaster General himself could be removed from office if he should use any political thinking in appointments?

Mr. RADEMACHER. I did not interpret it that way.

Mr. WHITE. It says that if any officer or employee "of the department," and so forth, "shall be removed from office." Wouldn't that pretty well include the Postmaster General?

Mr. RADEMACHER. The man making the appointment couldn't be charged with using undue influence, in my opinion.

It is a point, and it has been brought up prior to your arriving here this morning. Somebody did mention it. I think if he was found to be guilty of such a thing that he is no better than anybody else, and that he should be removed, too.

Mr. WHITE. Then you go back to the other section and it says that the Postmaster General should take appropriate disciplinary action. Would he be taking disciplinary action against himself?

Mr. RADEMACHER. He certainly would. I guess the courts would have to determine whether he was guilty, and appropriate action be taken.

Mr. WHITE. Where would the machinery be for that?

Mr. RADEMACHER. I am not certain. I wasn't as concerned about that section of the bill as I was about the merits of the bill itself.

Mr. WHITE. That is the merit of the bill, when you talk about political influence, and the Postmaster General makes the appointments and you would have him sitting in judgment of himself. That is the heart of the problem involved.

Mr. RADEMACHER. Then I hope that whatever bill that comes from this subcommittee will endorse what you are saying, and would make it possible for the Postmaster General to include himself in those who would be guilty.

I see no reason for him to be exempt. As I stated, once you turn this over to him, he has the power of appointing 40,000 postmasters in this country, the greatest political patronage that any man ever had. That is why I urge caution in what you do.

Mr. WHITE. Wouldn't it be safer if you are going to remove political considerations to filter it through some other body or group that would sit in judgment of the actions of the Postmaster himself?

Mr. RADEMACHER. If the post office remains in the present status, and I hope that it will, then the Civil Service Commission would still have control over the appointments; and regulations governing the appointment of employees would still be in the hands of the Civil Service Commission indirectly.

Mr. WHITE. Not under this bill, though.

Mr. RADEMACHER. They would have to conduct the examination.

Mr. WHITE. I presume that he could take his pick of several people who are qualified. Civil Service wouldn't say who would be the man who would get the job.

Mr. RADEMACHER. The Civil Service Commission conducts the examination, and they supply to the Postmaster General the top three names, or the top name or the top five names. That would have to be worked out in the regulations, and that is why it is more important that the regulations be prepared as cautiously as the enactment of this legislation.

When you give up rights you have, that is more important, I think, than the actual enactment of the bill.

Mr. WHITE. I am for removing politics, but I think we are building in another form of politics unless you give safeguards in this bill. Thank you very much. No further questions.

Mr. NIX. Thank you very much, Mr. Rademacher.

Our next witness is Mr. Thomas Horner, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Director, National League of Postmasters of the United States. You may proceed, sir.

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS HORNOR, JR., SECRETARY-TREASURER
AND LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POST-
MASTERS OF THE UNITED STATES**

Mr. HORNOR. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am Thomas Hornor, Jr., secretary-treasurer and legislative director of the National League of Postmasters of the United States; and I am the postmaster at Juliustown, N.J.

The League is indeed grateful for the opportunity to present our views on proposed legislation concerning the selection and appointment of postmasters.

Our basic policy was established by the passage of a resolution at our 1968 convention in support of the appointment of postmasters on a nonpolitical, merit basis.

On February 5, 1969, the following letter was sent to Postmaster General Winton M. Blount stating our basic position and I quote:

"On behalf of President Henry M. Heyl, the officers and members of the National League of Postmasters of the United States I tender to you our congratulations on your historic announcement concerning postmaster and rural carrier appointments.

"Please be assured that this organization favors any action that will strengthen the merit system of appointments.

"We pledge to President Richard M. Nixon and to you the wholehearted support of this organization in such endeavor.

"We look forward to an early opportunity to meet with you on this matter. We would hope that you might see fit to confer with us concerning the criteria for the implementation of this endeavor."

However, Mr. Chairman, the National League of Postmasters wishes to make it perfectly clear that this policy in no way condemns the caliber of people who have previously been appointed to this high position of responsibility.

We are indeed proud to be members of this profession. This pride is evidenced by the high degree of dedication to duty and devotion to service of the more than 32,000 postmasters of this Nation. A look at some of the facts will help to convince us as to the quality of postmasters of this land.

The average length of service of postmasters has been approximately 20 years. The rate of dismissal from the service through adverse action during the past 16 years has been well below 1 percent for any 4-year period.

During the past 10 years the appointment of postmasters from the career service has averaged 36.5 percent. The many hours of service, above and beyond that which is required, which postmasters perform in the interest of providing better and more efficient service should be noted.

These are but a few of the facts in the record which illustrate the type of men and women who serve this country as postmasters.

It is tragic indeed that damaging publicity by some of our news media has given the impression that the previous system of appointing postmasters has greatly contributed to gross inefficiency or poor postal service to the public. We do not believe that such adjectives, or even worse, can be justifiably attributed to our postal service.

We firmly believe, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, that one of the primary intents and basic purposes for legislation

which would eliminate political consideration, is to help to eliminate those delays which result when confirmation, of a highly qualified and competent person, is unduly delayed due to lack of, or insufficient political endorsement.

Throughout the years there have been many who have served as acting postmaster for long periods of time—2, 3, yes, even 8 to 10 years or more without being confirmed. We feel that this situation which exists in many instances justifies the need for such legislation.

We believe that in the interest of maintaining, or increasing, the high caliber of people needed to become professional postmasters, that it is necessary to specify by law that an appointee must have passed a postmaster examination or its equivalent.

We also believe that the law should provide for some suitable certificate of appointment to be presented to the appointee in the absence of a Presidential Commission.

Mr. Chairman, as the representative of the National League of Postmasters, I would like to reiterate that we support the purpose of legislation that intends to expedite, and if possible improve the appointment of postmasters on the basis of merit and qualification. We have always been a firm believer in such a policy of merit.

We could further expound on the quality and virtues of the postmaster profession but we do not believe that this is the substance of the problem at hand.

Mr. Chairman and members of this subcommittee, I wish to thank you for allowing us to present our thoughts.

Mr. NIX. Mr. Hornor, thank you very much for presenting your views to the subcommittee.

Our next witness is Mr. Dan Jaspan of the Postal Supervisors Union.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL JASPAN, LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS

Mr. JASPAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope you will bear with me. I didn't know until a short time ago that I would be testifying today.

Mr. NIX. It is a pleasure to have you under any circumstances.

Mr. JASPAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your interest in the good postal service has been shown over the years. We believe one of the ways it can be done is by taking politics out of the post office completely.

We have never stated, and won't state now, that postmasters have necessarily been bad because they were appointed through political influence.

There have been some outstanding postmasters in the United States. There have also been many who have become or have been considered good postmasters who know very little about running their offices, but they depend on their supervisors for such necessary daily services.

One of the things that has bothered us over the years as an organization is the fact that there are very few opportunities for promotion in the postal service, by having the top job outside the reach of the postal people. That necessarily reduces the number of positions.

At the present time, there are approximately 35,000 supervisory positions in the post office, and possibly 32,000 postmasters.

However, if we eliminate the fourth class postmasters, that reduces the number considerably, so that there are actually very few opportunities for promotion once a person reaches the supervisory ranks.

One of the reasons that we are very anxious to have the postmaster position open is that there will be some place for supervisors to go in a higher position. We feel the supervisors have the necessary training and experience and qualifications to become postmaster in any post office in the United States. There are people within that office who can qualify.

There is one thing in the present law, Mr. Chairman, that disqualifies many of our people, and that is the strict residency requirement. Under the present law, they must reside within the delivery limits of a post office.

As we all know, in recent years there has been a trend toward suburban living. Many people working in a post office felt they had no opportunity of becoming postmaster, and they moved to the suburbs. They are not going to move back now, because the opportunity is still very small, but we would ask this subcommittee to recommend a change so that if an employee works within a certain post office where there is a vacancy for postmaster, the residence requirement be waived. That is only in case there is a vacancy in the post office where he works.

We would also ask that the change be made that he would have to have at least 5 years in the post office before he could apply for a postmaster position. We feel that amount of training is the minimum necessary.

Now, it has often been mentioned that about 40 percent, or a number near that, of promotions to postmaster have been made from within the service. Actually, none of these would have been made without the necessary political endorsement, so that is one of the reasons we are strongly in favor of bills such as H.R. 8518 and other bills that were introduced that would take politics out of postmaster appointments.

We feel that the language of H.R. 8518 would have to be strengthened. In line 6 it says, "The Postmaster General shall appoint postmasters in the competitive service."

We feel there should be some guidelines for such appointments, instead of throwing it wide open and leaving implications or opportunities for politics. We think that there should be some necessary guidance for the postmaster.

We also would like to see, as indicated by the Postmaster General, the opportunities for promotion to postmaster be limited, at least at first, to those in the supervisory levels who are nearest the postmaster level.

These people have come up from the ranks. They are former clerks and carriers who have successfully passed the examination to become supervisors. That in itself separated them from the rank and file employees.

Since they became supervisors, they had opportunity for experience that is necessary for becoming postmaster. Many of them have been acting postmasters in the absence of the postmaster.

They have that necessary qualifying experience, but under the present setup, before this administration, if they did not have a political endorsement, there was no opportunity of their ever becoming postmaster.

We are also interested in page 2 of the bill, and the way I read it, this means that all promotions and appointments, even in the supervisory ranks, would be strictly nonpolitical. We strongly support that concept, since we are interested in a good career postal service, and we would like to see all positions nonpolitical.

One of the things that seems to escape notice is the fact that there are positions in the general schedule of much higher salaries than supervisors or postmasters in the postal service. They do not require any confirmation, or political endorsement, and there are really no controls except the internal controls.

There are many supervisors that could be promoted under the Class Act, just in the normal course of events, without any outside controls or any outside interference. We would like to see this applied throughout the whole postal service.

Mr. Chairman, we are very grateful to you for your concern in this whole problem. We are hopeful that the Congress will act very fast in taking out all phases of political endorsement throughout the postal service.

Mr. Nix. Mr. JASPER, I want to thank you again for your appearance here, and particularly for the positive suggestions you have just made. I think they are reasonable, and I do think they meet a definite problem existing at this time, particularly the residence requirement to which you object.

Certainly it would seem that a man who is employed in the office which he seeks to head should not be required to be a resident of the city in which the office is located.

Mr. JASPER. Just as an example, Mr. Chairman, I understand in Cleveland, Ohio, there is a vacancy in the postmaster position. They have screened the top supervisors, and they found that seven out of the top 10 live outside the city limits, so that narrows down the number of people to be considered.

I don't know which one is the best, but I am sure that one of those seven who are automatically eliminated could be a good postmaster, and that is what we are running into, because there is a tremendous suburban trend all over the United States.

Mr. Nix. I have never been reconciled to the philosophy of the selection of one in three. If I had the appointive power of three men with presumably equal qualifications, and I had reserved unto myself the right to appoint one. I don't see, first of all, how I could possibly appoint one without either being prejudiced against the other two, or being unfair to them, because they come with equal qualifications, and the election would depend upon an appeal that one had to standards that are peculiarly mine, and that is most unjust, under any circumstances.

Now that has always been my objection. I prefer always to have chosen the most qualified.

Mr. JASPER. That is our position, Mr. Chairman. The No. 1 man should be selected for the position.

Mr. Nix. Some mention has been made on the applicant's qualities of leadership. Again, that is a personal judgment as to the qualities of leadership, and there, again, I have said of the other two that they are not possessed of this peculiar quality that I think necessary for leadership. You can't possibly be fair under any circumstances.

Mr. JASPAN. Mr. Chairman, that is almost like selecting the valedictorian in high school or college from the top three.

Mr. NIX. Yes. Again, I thank you. I thank everyone for being here.

The Subcommittee on Postal Operations will stand adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.)

(The following statements were received by the subcommittee for inclusion in the record.)

STATEMENT OF THOMAS P. COSTIN, JR., POSTMASTER AT LYNN, MASS., AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTMASTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, my name is Thomas P. Costin, Jr., and I am postmaster at Lynn, Mass. I am also president of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States, representing 90 percent of all postmasters on active duty.

On behalf of our members, I want to thank you for this opportunity to give testimony on H.R. 9755.

Basically, this bill changes section 3311 of title 39 of the United States Code in the method of appointing postmasters in certain size offices. It takes the appointing power from the President, with advice and consent of the Senate, and now reposes it in the Office of the Postmaster General. It now invests the sole appointment authority in the executive branch of the Government whereas under the present method it rests with both the executive and legislative branches.

This is not a new idea. As far back as the 52d Congress, the Honorable Sherman Hoar of Massachusetts introduced a bill that all postmasters should be elected. The then First Assistant Postmaster General Clarkson strongly favored this when he said, and I quote:

"There is no reason why every postmaster should not be elected by the people whom he is to serve. The post offices have been largely the element of discord in national politics. They lead very often to party divisions and party weakness. They have killed off more good Congressmen and more good Senators than all other causes combined."

Gentlemen, if the express purpose of H.R. 9755 is to take politics and political consideration out of postmaster appointments, then this certainly will be accomplished, and perhaps we will be able to save "more good Congressmen and more good Senators."

We are all aware the Post Office Department has been and is today severely criticized for what is commonly termed "politics." There are those who would have us believe that if the so-called patronage system were removed from the Post Office Department, all the ills and mismanagement of this great service would be eliminated. This is just not true. This is an oversimplification of the problem.

Let us look at the facts as they stand as of this moment. Of the 32,118 postmasters now on active duty, 6,920 are postmasters at offices of the fourth class who do not supervise any employees and who are now appointed by the Postmaster General. They are from small rural communities and have an average pay of less than \$5,000 per year.

Of the 25,198 postmasters remaining, 12,898 run post offices of the third class and receive an average pay of less than \$7,500 per year.

Of the 12,300 remaining, 7,351 are postmasters at second class offices and receive under \$9,000 per year.

The remaining 4,949 postmasters are in offices of the first class. Of this total, 75 offices generate over 65 percent of the mail volume in the United States and use 65 percent of the total man-hours needed to process the over 82 billion pieces of mail each year.

I use these facts and figures to point out that since the vast majority of postmasters, some of whom do not even supervise employees, are involved with such a small percentage of the major problems confronting the mail service today, it can be readily seen that the inefficiency as reported by the news media does not exist because of the present method of appointing postmasters.

For the record, it should be shown that all postmasters since 1938 have passed the appropriate civil service examinations and have received their actual appointment through civil service procedures that have been set up not only for the Post Office Department but for all branches of Government.

Now I want to go on record as saying the postmasters of the United States have done and still continue to do an outstanding job in providing the best mail service to the American people with the present management tools they have to work with. In addition, they provide leadership in many communities where they are the only Federal Government official.

In the book, "The Story of Our Post Office," by Marshall Cushing, published in 1892, the political patronage system as it applies to the Post Office Department was then referred to as the referee system, and in describing the workings of this method of appointment, I quote:

"It is impossible, of course, for the appointing officer to have personal knowledge of the merits of the various (postmaster) candidates; he must secure advice. The best advice almost always is that of the local leader. He has his own personal interest and his own personal success at heart, as well as that of the Department and the public service. Hence he may be depended upon almost always. The process of giving advice in the matter of (postmaster) appointments is a privilege and not the right of a referee; for under the constitution, of course, the appointing power is alone responsible for the appointments—except where the confirmation of the Senate in the case of certain offices is required.

"But the custom of having referees has been necessary and experienced politicians say that the trouble in making recommendations for office is not so much in the fact that recommendations have to be made, but that sufficient courage, promptness, and discretion are not used in recommending. Fights for post offices are allowed to go on and drag along for months and months when they might be settled to much advantage, on the merits of the case, almost offhand."

I would like to restate a very salient point made in the above quotation. That point is, and again I quote, "that the trouble in making recommendations for office is not so much in the fact that recommendations have to be made, but that sufficient courage, promptness, and discretion are not used in recommending."

We feel that this system of advisors has brought many outstanding employees to the Post Office Department as well as provided an avenue for career employees to receive promotion from within. Again, for the record I want to state that over the past few years approximately 40 percent of the postmasters appointed have come from within the career postal service.

In my travels across the country as President of the National Association of Postmasters, I have found that it is not the method of appointment that makes an individual an effective public servant, but rather it is the individual who has been selected.

If the purpose of H.R. 9755 is to bring about a more efficient postal service, we are for it. But we want to point out that this is only the first step. Once a postmaster has been appointed, it is necessary to give him the necessary tools to work with—tools in the way of appropriations, tools in the way of training, tools in the way of facilities, and tools in the way of modern management methods.

It is only then that postal managers can carry out more effectively the mission that they have, that is, to move the U.S. mail as efficiently as possible. If this is the intent of the bill, then the postmasters I represent wholeheartedly endorse it.

(Enclosure.)

TELL FULL STORY, CHAPTER RESOLUTION ASKS

In a resolution passed unanimously by the membership present at the chapter meeting held on March 12 in Bordentown, N.J., the New Jersey Chapter of NAPUS called upon the national organization to take action on a nationwide scale, through the medium of the press to tell the complete story of postmaster qualification, selections, and fulfillment of duties after appointment.

Pointing out in the resolution that persons outside the postal service being considered for the position of postmaster must compete in an open competitive civil service examination, and have their qualifications thoroughly investigated by the Civil Service Commission and the Inspection Service of the Department; the resolution further went on to state that career employees approximating 40 percent of the appointments, must also qualify on a noncompetitive civil service exam, and be thoroughly investigated.

The resolution pointed out that a great deal of criticism has been presented concerning the selection of postmasters, but little if anything has been heard about how the overwhelming majority fulfill their office after appointment.

Copies of the resolution were sent to President Thomas Costin, Jr., and to all chapter presidents.

The resolution as passed in its entirety follows:

RESOLUTION

Whereas persons outside the postal service being considered for the position of postmaster must compete in an open competitive civil service exam, and their qualifications thoroughly investigated by the Civil Service Commission and postal inspectors; and

Whereas career employees promoted to postmaster positions, approximately 40 percent of appointments, also must qualify on a noncompetitive civil service exam and have their qualifications thoroughly investigated; and

Whereas an abundance of criticism has been presented on methods of selecting postmasters, but little has ever been heard about how the overwhelming majority fulfill their office after appointment; and

Whereas the postmaster's position as it is being aired editorially in news media across the Nation is giving the public the impression that each individual postmaster is solely responsible for all alleged shortcomings of the Post Office Department: Therefore be it

Resolved, That the members of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Postmasters meeting in Willingboro, N.J. this 12th day of March 1969, hereby recommend and request that the national officers of the association take action, on a nationwide scale, through a syndicated columnist or press release to tell the complete story of postmasters, qualifications, selections, and fulfillment of duties after appointment: Be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to President Thomas Costin, and to all chapter presidents.

HOWARD F. HAAS,
Chairman, Resolution Committee.
GEORGE W. SCHUYLER,

President, New Jersey Chapter, National Association of Postmasters.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES,
June 16, 1969.

Hon. ROBERT N. C. NIX,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Postal Operations, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chamber of Commerce of the United States urges enactment of H.R. 9755, the objective of which is to further remove from politics the selection, appointment, and promotion of postmasters and other employees in the postal service.

One of the most important prerequisites of managing is the right of the manager to select his own assistants according to his own standards. For many years, this has not been the right of managers of the postal system, at least as far as postmasters are concerned.

Under the present practice, as you are aware, the selection of postmasters is subject to political test through Members of Congress and through local party mechanisms. As a result, there is the ever-present risk that a postmaster may be hired more for his political ability than for his administrative ability. The postal service is too important to the Nation for us to tolerate that risk any longer.

We support the selection process already announced by the Postmaster General to eliminate patronage. The modification of sections 3311 and the addition of section 3109, as contained in H.R. 9755 and H.R. 8518, are necessary to put the process into effect.

I would appreciate your making this letter a part of the record of committee hearings.

Cordially,

DON A. GOODALL,
General Manager.

