

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH M. TORSELLA  
NOMINEE FOR REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
FOR U.N. MANAGEMENT AND REFORM AND  
ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS.

SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
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Thank you Madam Chair, and distinguished Members. I am truly honored to come before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform. And I am deeply grateful to President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and Ambassador Rice for their confidence.

The United Nations was born, in part, in this Committee: your predecessors were among its earliest architects and advocates, because they believed that an effective United Nations – with vigorous American leadership – was in America's national security interest.

Those very principles, that in 1945 guided the Senate in its decision to approve the UN charter, continue to ring true today. At its best, the UN can be a powerful tool and force multiplier for advancing our interests and values. When UN peacekeepers are on the ground helping to protect civilians and advancing peace globally, they do so at a fraction of the cost and risk of the U.S. acting alone. When the UN builds the civic muscles of fragile states, American citizens are made safer from the threats that can grow in failed states. We protect the health of Americans here at home when the UN, through the World Health Organization and other UN agencies, works to prevent a deadly pandemic from spreading across the globe.

But neither the UN nor all its member states are always at their best; too often, we have seen them at their worst. As Ambassador Rice has said, a serious gap still separates the vision of the UN's founders from the institution of today. Both the investments we've made and challenges we face are too great to tolerate waste, inefficiency, or abuse; the global stakes are too high to allow the distractions of political theater.

In recent years, U.S.-led comprehensive reform efforts have gathered steam and achieved some meaningful results. But there is much more work to be done to help the United Nations nurture a culture of economy, effectiveness, ethics, and excellence.

Oversight, auditing, and evaluation must be strengthened to better ensure that U.S. funds are spent wisely and cleanly. Management and procurement systems must be upgraded and updated for accountability and transparency throughout the UN's activities worldwide. Critical human resource reforms are essential to equipping the UN with a workforce that is held accountable for delivering results. Business processes need to be streamlined, aligned with best practices, and brought into the 21st century. And important progress achieved in the areas of whistleblower protection, financial disclosure, and budgetary discipline must be protected and fully implemented.

I have spent much of my career bringing reform and accountability to public organizations in challenging contexts. As Chairman of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, I oversee a system with 500 school districts, 14 universities, and billions in public funds. Under my leadership we made the Board's workings more transparent and open to the public, and passed a landmark accountability measure – in the face of determined opposition – which implemented rigorous new high school graduation requirements, the first such change in a generation.

As a Deputy Mayor of Philadelphia at a time when that city was on the verge of bankruptcy and decades of poor management practices had made it, in the words of *City and State Magazine*, “the city that...set the standard for municipal distress in the 1990s,” my portfolio was management and reform. I helped negotiate groundbreaking contracts with Philadelphia's 25,000-person workforce of which *The Wall Street Journal* said “taxpayers can only applaud.” I spearheaded reforms – from competitive contracting out of city services to civil service reform, from overhauling a bloated disability benefits system that encouraged abuse to innovative investments in productivity– that closed a \$1.4 billion cumulative deficit without raising taxes. The *New York Times* called it “the most stunning turnaround in recent urban history.”

And I came to the National Constitution Center when that \$185 million project was in public and financial turmoil. I'm proud to say that I steered it to an on-time, on-budget, and bipartisan success, and led it to a thriving program of public diplomacy.

The Constitution Center has introduced tens of thousands of everyday international visitors to American ideas and ideals, worked in Afghanistan on democracy education efforts, and hosted hundreds of international leaders, from heads of state and government to grassroots democracy activists, from countries ranging from Australia, Brazil, and Cameroon to Serbia, Tunisia, and the UK.

So I come here today with a deep commitment to America's engagement with the world and at the United Nations, a demonstrated history of managing taxpayer dollars carefully, a willingness to listen to good ideas from all quarters, and a lifetime of experience as a strong voice for reform in public institutions and a builder of coalitions to achieve it.

It would be a privilege, if confirmed, to use that experience – working with others in the administration, in Congress, and especially in this Committee – to help the UN live up to both its ideals and potential, to renew and strengthen the UN for our century, just as your predecessors in 1945 did for theirs.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.