Statement of the Honorable Bill Goodling

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
June 16, 1998

Mr. Chairman,

It's important to note prior to the start of this week's hearing that behind the scenes, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters continues to block access to key information while publicly appearing to cooperate with this investigation.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, counsel for the Teamsters prevented the two witnesses scheduled to appear today from participating in pre-hearing interviews. Such interviews are standard and would have been conducted by a bipartisan group of committee staff. These interviews maximize time at a public hearing by narrowing the scope of questioning by Members. The interviews also make it possible to delve more deeply into specific topics at the public hearing.

Once again, the Teamsters union has done a disservice to its members and to the American public by trying to limit the amount of information revealed about legitimate topics of concern.

This is particularly troubling in light of the testimony given before this subcommittee in May by Tom Sever, Acting President of the IBT. Mr. Sever said then that he would cooperate fully with all outside investigations. If this is cooperation, Mr. Chairman, there must be a new, creative definition of which I am unaware.

I would remind today's witnesses that while they have a responsibility to their clients, the officials of the Teamsters Union, the witnesses have a greater responsibility to the union's 1.4

million members. We will focus on the membership's hard-earned dollars and learn how they were used by the union's officials.

I look forward to reading today's testimony, which will also serve as a basis for further discussion tomorrow, when the hearing continues with officials from the Department of Labor.