

Statement of Asel Roberts
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 5, 2026

Chairman Ricketts, Ranking Member Coons, and distinguished Members of this committee:

I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia. I am truly grateful to President Trump and Secretary Rubio for placing their confidence in me to fulfill the important duties and responsibilities of this position.

I also want to thank everybody who has supported me during the last 20 years of my career at the U.S. Department of State, which has led me to this appointment. This includes first and foremost my family. I want to thank my parents for always believing in me, my in-laws for welcoming me into their extended family in Buffalo, NY, my spouse for supporting me every step of the way, and my daughter who has inspired me every day for the last ten years. I also want to thank my colleagues in the Office of the Chief of Protocol who have worked diligently with me to promote U.S. interests through dozens of multilateral and bilateral meetings as well as at summits, state visits, and UN General Assembly Meetings. Without these people, I would not have the opportunity to be before you today.

I was born in the Soviet Union in what is today the Republic of Kazakhstan at a time of great global change. Yet, I was fortunate enough to spend most of my adult life in the United States, something I could never have done if it had not been for President Ronald Reagan and his efforts to end the Cold War. As a high school student at the age of 15, I was able to take advantage of a U.S. government-funded student exchange program and study at high schools in Arizona and Vermont. This prepared me to gain admittance into and complete university in the United States. I could not have accomplished that journey in any country other than the United States, and it instilled in me a strong belief in the American dream and the critical importance of the U.S. in the world. I have applied this inspiration to my work throughout my career, which has been dedicated to supporting U.S. foreign policy and national interests abroad. Having worked for two decades in the U.S. State Department, my career has uniquely prepared me for the duties for which I have been nominated as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia.

Through my work in the Office of the Chief of Protocol, I have been involved in organizing hundreds of high-level diplomatic meetings for six different presidential administrations and, as a result, have gained a strong understanding of how to communicate both high-level foreign policy priorities and bilateral concerns with our international counterparts. Additionally, I have worked closely throughout my career with Foreign Service officers and locally employed embassy staff in multiple countries to coordinate high-level visits. Having served for a full year as the Acting Chief of Protocol of the United States, I also have strong experience running a complex and large unit within the State Department, including familiarity with budget management, personnel matters, and leadership. Throughout these experiences, the goal of advancing U.S. interests has always been the motivating force behind my work. I am fully confident in my abilities to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of representing the United States abroad and to effectively manage an embassy.

It would also be a great honor to fulfill these duties in the Republic of Slovenia, which is an important friend and ally to the United States.

Slovenia and the United States share a close relationship rooted in our shared interests, democratic values, economic ties, and our longstanding defense cooperation. Slovenia has made impressive contributions in regional and global efforts to bolster stability and peace. It has proven itself to be a friend of the United States and a reliable NATO ally.

I will work to ensure Slovenia's strong commitment to stability and security remains steadfast. This includes efforts to meet NATO defense spending and capability commitments. If confirmed, I will work to ensure Slovenia remains a critical part of the deterrence and defense of the Euro-Atlantic region.

Slovenia's strategic location at the crossroads between Central Europe and the Western Balkans also presents opportunities to deepen Transatlantic trade, one of the pillars of the global economy and American prosperity. Slovenia has a small but dynamic economy, with a skilled labor force and some of the best engineers in the world. Despite its small market size, Slovenia has established itself as a hotspot for cutting-edge industries. Its science and tech sectors show particular promise. There are also critical opportunities to build on our two countries' close cooperation on civilian nuclear energy.

If confirmed, I will prioritize the safety and well-being of U.S. citizens. I will also advocate for American economic security, balanced trade, and fair treatment for U.S. businesses. Additionally, I will continue to push for greater economic cooperation between our countries.

I view this nomination as an opportunity to work diligently to deepen our relationship with Slovenia and to help make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

It would be an honor to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.