

**Statement of Catherine Dillon**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the**  
**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs,**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**March 26, 2026**

Thank you, Dr. Foxx, for your kind introduction. I am incredibly grateful for your mentorship.

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Merkley, distinguished Members of the Committee, it is truly an honor to appear before you today as President Donald J. Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary Rubio for entrusting me with leading this vital component of our country's foreign policy. I would like to thank my parents, John and Diane, and my boyfriend, Andrew who are seated behind me. I would also like to thank my sister, Alexandra, and many friends watching from the audience and at home. Without your unconditional love and support, I would not be here today.

My professional experience has focused on ensuring complex organizations deliver on their promises. From Chief Clerk and Finance Director in the House of Representatives to a Director for the 2024 Republican National Convention, I have led in environments where success is not theoretical. It is measured in disciplined execution and meaningful strategic outcomes. During my time at the Department of State, I have applied that discipline to ensure State's vast personnel and resources serve the President's agenda and the American people.

If confirmed, I will bring that same rigor and clarity of purpose to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by leading with four core priorities.

First, Strategic Alignment: Every ECA program and initiative must clearly advance America First priorities and our strategic national interests. In this period of great power competition, our exchange programs cannot be treated as legacy institutions running on autopilot. They are strategic assets, they are instruments of

national power, and they are critical tools for advancing the interests of the American people. They must be administered as such.

Second, Fiscal Stewardship: I am experienced at managing high-stakes budgets. I will continue to apply fiscal scrutiny out of respect for the American taxpayer in my leadership of ECA to ensure efficiency and impact of every dollar spent. If a program is not delivering an adequate return on investment for the American people, we will reform it—in accordance with all applicable laws.

Third, Championing American Excellence: As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary and other major milestones like the FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympic Games, ECA is uniquely positioned to tell the American story. We will capitalize on these historic opportunities to showcase American excellence in innovation, education, and culture.

Finally, if confirmed, I commit to prioritizing the safety and welfare of our American exchange participants abroad, and to working at every level from our U.S. embassies to our interagency partners to guarantee that our foreign exchange participants are selected with intention and merit, vetted for our security, and are as respectful of our country as guests, as we are as hosts.

Mr. Chairman, I also remain committed to ensuring the bureau is cooperative with this body and responsive to your inquiries.

I am honored by this opportunity and humbled by the trust that President Trump and Secretary Rubio have put in me to ensure our exchange programs are at the core of advancing our national interests. I stand ready to begin achieving that vision on day one.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.