

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2026

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bill Hagerty presiding. Present: Senators Hagerty [presiding], Scott, Cornyn, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BILL HAGERTY, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

Senator HAGERTY. I want to welcome everybody here today.

This morning we are going to consider the nominations of several very distinguished candidates. First, Ms. Barbera Thornhill, nominated to be Director of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, with the rank of Ambassador at Large; Mr. Stanley Brown, our nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea; Mr. Keith Noreika, nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania; Mr. Joseph Burkhalter, our nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Moldova; and Hon. John Hurley, nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

I just want to get to some ground rules as we begin the hearing today. I want everybody to know that we have some very important work to do here and very little time to get that accomplished. And as a result we are not going to tolerate any disruptions whatsoever of this committee. If anyone does choose to interrupt these proceedings I want you to know that you will be removed promptly, and you will be barred from attending any committee hearings for the next 12 months. I appreciate your understanding, and I look forward to a successful hearing.

Right now what I would like to do is organize some introductions for today's nominees, and I am going to start with my friend and colleague, Senator Cornyn, who is going to introduce Under Secretary Hurley.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN CORNYN, U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS

Senator CORNYN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Kaine, good to see you.

Thanks for holding this hearing, and it is my pleasure to introduce John Hurley, somebody I have known for a number of years. I actually met John through his father. Al Hurley was an esteemed military historian and professor in academia who became President

of the University of North Texas and eventually Chancellor of the entire UNT system, and was called an “unsung hero of higher education” by the *Dallas Morning News*.

And the apple does not fall far from the tree. From the first time John’s and my paths crossed I knew this was somebody that I had great respect and admiration for and who loved our country and wanted to make it a better place for all.

John graduated with honors from his father’s alma mater, Princeton, and he led the campus newspaper, *The Daily Princetonian*. Following graduation he served in the U.S. Army and was awarded the Bronze Star during the first Gulf War. He later earned his MBA from Stanford before embarking on what would become an exceedingly successful tenure in the private sector.

He was also a participant on several nonprofit boards and focused on national security and economic policy. In 2019 President Trump appointed John to serve on his Intelligence Advisory Board, where he offered the President and some of us in Congress sage counsel on matters of national security.

Most recently, John served as Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence within the Treasury Department. In this role, he was tireless in working to safeguard our nation’s financial systems from malign foreign interference and to counter illicit financing of terrorist networks and criminal groups. Thanks in no small part to his efforts, the United States has imposed sanctions on drug cartels in Mexico and across Latin America, to defund and dismantle narco trafficking operations that have killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Americans.

Suffice it to say, John has worn many hats in service to our country and is uniquely qualified for this new job, to represent America on the world stage through the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The OECD plays an essential role in upholding the principles of a market based economy to unleash prosperity for nearly 40 democracies around the globe.

I have no doubt that John’s skill, sound judgment, and shrewd understanding of free markets and financial systems will serve him well in this new position. So I look forward to supporting his nomination, both here in the committee and on the floor, and I would encourage all of my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator Cornyn.

And Senator Cotton had planned to be here to introduce Mr. Keith Noreika, our candidate for Ambassador to Lithuania. He is unable to do so, so he has asked me if I might read his introduction into the record. So if you will bear with me I will do my very best. I will not have the charm and the appeal of Senator Cotton, but I will do my very best to do him justice.

“In all the years I have known him, Keith has been a man of admirable integrity, character, and professionalism. An accomplished lawyer, Keith currently works as a Senior Advisor at Patomak Global Partners, where he spearheads projects related to the U.S. banking industry. Before working at Patomak, Keith was a partner at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, where he was a lead lawyer in the financial institution’s regulatory practice at the firm.

“During the previous Trump administration Keith served as the Acting Comptroller at the Office of the Comptroller of the Cur-

rency. As Acting Comptroller, Keith led the 4,000 person independent agency toward increasing accountability, efficiency, and the ability to serve community credit and banking needs.

“Keith not only has an impressive professional track record but also has been recognized by Chambers USA as a leader in his field since 2014.

“These are among many reasons I am proud to support Keith Noreika’s nomination to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania. I encourage my colleagues to do so, as well. Thank you.”

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Tom Cotton,
U.S. Senator from Arkansas**

I’m pleased to submit this statement to the Committee on behalf of President Trump’s nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania, my long-time colleague and friend, Keith Noreika.

In all the years I’ve known him, Keith has been a man of admirable integrity, character, and professionalism.

An accomplished lawyer, Keith currently works as a senior advisor at Patomak Global Partners, where he spearheads projects related to the U.S. banking industry. Before working at Patomak, Keith was a partner at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, where he was a lead lawyer in the financial institutions regulatory practice at the firm.

During the previous Trump administration, Keith served as the Acting Comptroller at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. As Acting Comptroller, Keith led the 4,000-person independent agency toward increasing accountability, efficiency, and the ability to serve community credit and banking needs.

Keith not only has an impressive professional track record but has also been recognized by Chambers USA as a leader in his field since 2014.

These are among the many reasons I’m proud to support Keith Noreika’s nomination to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania. I encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

Thank you.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BILL HAGERTY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator HAGERTY. And now I will take the opportunity to make some introductions myself of two long time friends and two wonderful candidates today. First I am going to start with my friend, Barbera Thornhill. Barbera is President Trump’s nominee to serve as Ambassador at Large and Director of the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking.

Barbera, your nomination comes at a critical time in our nation’s efforts to combat human trafficking around the world. Trafficking exploits the vulnerable, it destroys families, and it undermines the rule of law. The United States must continue to lead the fight to hold traffickers accountable, to support survivors, and to work with partners to eradicate modern day slavery. Barbera Thornhill brings the judgment, the compassion, and the leadership necessary to drive this mission.

Barbera has built a successful career as a business executive, as a civic leader, and a philanthropist in Los Angeles. She serves as President of Impact Design, and has been deeply engaged in civic and cultural institutions. Notably, much of Barbera’s philanthropic work is focused on protecting and supporting vulnerable children. As Secretary of the Board of the Children’s Institute of Los Angeles, she helped to lead successful fundraising initiatives to support services for children and families impacted by family and commu-

nity violence. She also served as President of The Colleagues, an organization of women that has raised millions of dollars for more than 25 years to support the work of Children's Institute.

Through these roles, Barbera has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to helping those in need, to strengthening communities, and to supporting children and families facing extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

These are the qualities and experience that we need in the State Department's next Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking. I am confident that Barbera will excel in this role in ways that advance U.S. national security and will protect the vulnerable. I want to urge all of my colleagues to support her nomination.

Now let me turn to my good friend, John Hurley, the nominee to be our Ambassador to the OECD. I have known John for nearly a decade, and in that time I have come to know him and hold him in the highest regard. The OECD plays a critical role in shaping global economic policy among many of the world's most advanced economies. At a time of intensifying economic competition, the United States needs a strong voice at the OECD who understands markets, understands national security, and the importance of advancing policies that strengthen American competitiveness.

John is exactly the type of leader we need in this role. His love of country and sense of duty began early. After graduating with honors from Princeton, John served 5 years in the U.S. Army. His service included a deployment for the first Gulf War in the First Cavalry Division, where he was awarded the Bronze Star.

He also built a highly successful private sector career including as an analyst and portfolio manager at Fidelity Investments, as a managing partner at Bowman Capital, and then as managing partner of Cavalry Asset Management. Most recently, John served as Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. There he helped protect our financial system from abuse by bad actors and advanced U.S. national security interests through economic statecraft.

This is only some of John's deep national security experience. During President Trump's first term, John served on the President's Intelligence Advisory Board. He also served on several non-profit boards focused on national security and economic policy.

Over the years, John has been a great resource and partner for my own thinking across a broad range of policy issues. I have always appreciated his perspective, his judgment, and his deep understanding of both economic and national security challenges.

The United States needs an ambassador to the OECD who will promote our economic interests while defending free and fair competition, and John Hurley is exactly that person. And therefore, I am going to urge this Committee again to move swiftly in support of his nomination.

And before we turn to my colleague, Senator Kaine, and his opening statement, I would like to begin by thanking all of you for your willingness to serve the United States in these important roles. From Washington to posts around the world, your work will be central to advancing America's priorities, strengthening our

partnerships, and ensuring U.S. diplomacy produces results for the American people.

Ms. Thornhill, if you are confirmed as Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, you will lead U.S. efforts to prevent human trafficking, to protect victims, to prosecute traffickers, and work with foreign governments to strengthen the global fight against modern slavery.

Mr. Brown, as U.S. Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea, you would be responsible for advancing American interests, strengthening bilateral ties, promoting good governance and human rights, and supporting regional stability and economic opportunity in Central Africa.

Mr. Noreika, as U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania, you would represent the United States to an ally that has answered President Trump's call for greater burden sharing. With Lithuania committing 5.5 percent of its GDP to defense, your role will be to build on that strong foundation and further strengthen this vital partnership.

Mr. Burkhalter, as U.S. Ambassador to Moldova you would represent the United States in a country facing intense pressure from Russia while securing its energy independence. In deepening the country's ties with the West, your role will be to support Moldova's resilience while advancing strong U.S.-Moldova partnerships.

And Under Secretary Hurley, as Ambassador to the OECD you would represent the United States in a forum central to advancing pro-growth economic policy, strengthening cooperation among market democracies, and ensuring international standards that reflect our interests and our values.

I look forward to a productive hearing this morning.

Senator Kaine, I am going to turn it over to you for your opening remarks.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TIM Kaine,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA**

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Senator Hagerty, and congratulations to the nominees. You all are doubly fortunate. You are fortunate because you have been nominated to represent the United States in really important positions, and I look forward to your testimony and the back and forth dialogue today. You are doubly fortunate because the Senate went on recess last night, and instead of facing withering cross-examination from 21 Senators on this committee, virtually everyone has gone home to begin the July 4th recess. And I want to thank my colleague, Senator Hagerty, also a friend, for saying we should do this hearing because if we wait until the recess is over it just backs up your being able to continue forward to your posts, and they are important posts. So I want to thank Senator Hagerty for taking the chairmanship of this hearing.

I was, as you can tell by my attire, I was planning on attending, but I was not planning on being the Ranking Member. And they pulled me out of the SCIF where I was doing Armed Services work in classified to come over so that we could get started.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, thank you for joining us, Senator Kaine, and thank you for helping us advance this.

Senator KAINE. These are very important posts. I do not have much to add to what Senator Hagerty says. Those of you who know the Senator that he takes this very seriously, not only as a Senator, member of the committee, but as a Senate confirmed Ambassador to Japan, and knows better than anybody in the body how critical it is that we have confirmed public servants in these posts. So we will have a good dialogue today, I am sure, about a number of issues, and I am glad that we could keep this hearing going forward so that we can hopefully move expeditiously once the hearing is done.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator Kaine. And I am going to move on to the opening statements from our panelists. If you would, please try to keep your statements to within 5 minutes.

I am going to start with you, Barbera Thornhill.

**STATEMENT OF BARBERA THORNHILL, OF NORTH CAROLINA,
TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COM-
BAT TRAFFICKING, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR AT
LARGE**

Ms. THORNHILL. Acting Chairman Hagerty and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for considering my nomination to be the U.S. Ambassador at Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. I am honored by President Trump's nomination and grateful for Secretary Rubio's work to lead the Department's anti-trafficking efforts.

If I may, I would like to introduce my family and friends with me here today. My son, Hale Thornhill-Wilson, and his partner, Emma Evans; my cousins Fred and Fabian Thornhill; and my longtime assistant, Evelyn Mangilet.

Let me share a little about my background. I come from a loving family in North Carolina long known for its involvement in healthcare and charitable work. My mother, a pediatrician, was one of the first women to go to Duke Medical School, and my father, an ENT, invented the procedure known as "stapedectomy," an operation that led to the Cochlear implant, a device that has helped millions of people hear again. But more than his skill as a surgeon, it was my father's commitment to treating underserved people and providing them with blessings that we so often take for granted that inspires me even now and motivates me every day.

I had the honor to live and work with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta in 1994, lending an American heart and hands to their important work with children in orphanages, ailing homebound families, and to the destitute and dying in the hospice known as the "Home of the Pure Heart."

In the United States I worked extensively with Scouts BSA, formerly known as the Boy Scouts of America, that has provided leadership and mentored youths to help them climb the ladder of personal achievement and prepare them for life struggles and challenges. This program has changed over 20,000 underprivileged adolescents, many in the foster system.

I also worked with the Children's Institute in Los Angeles to help provide basic needs, early childhood education, counseling, personal encouragement, and love for over 28,000 children who have been abused and have suffered other horrible traumas. I have had the

privilege of working with Lauri Burns, a survivor of child abuse, foster care, and trafficking herself. She is the Founder of the Teen Project which operates residential programs for trafficking victims. She created an app that connects victims with immediate rescue, treatment, and transportation. SafeSite is the only app in America at this moment that operates that way.

My past community involvement have led me to the conviction that human trafficking is among the most brutal and reprehensible crimes where millions worldwide are used for forced labor and sex trafficking. Traffickers operate within and across borders, using everything they can to exploit weak governance, mass migration, and opaque supply chains. Confronting these crimes protects Americans by ensuring their natural rights, preventing their exploitation, and defending communities and businesses from criminal networks and unfair labor practices.

America is, and always will be, the leader in the global fight against human trafficking which desecrates the principles of freedom, justice, and opportunity that are essential to a safe, prosperous, and thriving global economy. Secretary Rubio has set forth the Department's mission to "promote peace abroad, and security and prosperity here at home." Combating human trafficking is vital to that mission.

Ever since the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 established our Federal anti-trafficking framework, the most important tool is our bipartisan commitment.

The fight continues every day as traffickers adapt and exploit new technologies. The rise of online sexual victimization and forced labor schemes tied to online scams are two especially alarming trends, defrauding Americans and trapping victims in coercive schemes at home and abroad. This Administration took the important step of signing the TAKE IT DOWN Act in May 2025 to combat online exploitation. We have sanctioned online scam operators using forced labor to steal billions from American families. If confirmed, I will build on these efforts.

Forced labor distorts markets and allows foreign actors to abuse the global trading system at the expense of American workers and businesses. We must use every tool to combat forced labor in global supply chains and to shed light on forced labor schemes used by our adversaries.

The annual Trafficking in Persons Report is a powerful instrument for demanding accountability and pressuring governments to take meaningful action or face consequences. If confirmed, I will ensure the report continues to drive impact and that it guides U.S. efforts to counter human trafficking, ensuring our resources are directed precisely to where they deliver the greatest results for the U.S. taxpayer.

Ending human trafficking requires partnership. I am committed to engaging survivors of human trafficking as partners. Their expertise shapes effective policies and provides insight into how traffickers operate.

If confirmed, I will also prioritize strong interagency coordination, leading efforts to support President Trump's agenda and bring the weight of the U.S. Government to bear against the traffickers.

As President Trump stated, “We renew our commitment to end the evil of human trafficking and ensure traffickers faces the full force of American justice.” If confirmed, I will work with Congress and our partners to relentlessly bring traffickers to justice, support victims and survivors, and defend American interests.

I will work that we will be measured not by our intentions but by the lives we protect, the voices we elevate, and the futures we help reclaim.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Additional Nominee Questions

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?

Answer: Yes

2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?

Answer: Yes

3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

Answer: Yes

4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?

Answer: Yes

5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?

Answer: Yes



Printed Name: Barbara Thornhill

Date: 6/25/2026

[The prepared statement of Ms. Thornhill follows:]

Prepared Statement of Barbera Thornhill

Chairman Hagerty and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for considering my nomination to be the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. I am honored by President Trump's nomination and grateful for Secretary Rubio's work to lead the Department's anti-trafficking efforts.

If I may, I would like to introduce my family and friends with me here today. My son Hale Thornhill-Wilson and his fiancée Emma Evans, Odera Nwobi, who is like a second son to me and his wife Ally, my cousins Fred and Fabian Thornhill, Elsie and Arthur James, and my longtime colleague Evelyn Mangilet.

Let me share a little about my background. I came from a loving family in North Carolina long known for its involvement in healthcare and charitable work. My mother, a pediatrician, was one of the first women to go to Duke Medical School and my father, an ENT, invented the procedure known as "Stapedectomy", an operation that led to the Cochlear implant—a device that has helped millions of people hear again. But more than his skill as a surgeon, it was my father's commitment to treating underserved people and providing them with blessings that we so often take for granted that inspires me even now and motivates me every day.

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My past community involvements have led me to the conviction that Human Trafficking is among the most brutal and reprehensible crimes where millions worldwide are used for forced labor and sex trafficking. Traffickers operate within and across borders, using everything they can to exploit weak governance, mass migration, and opaque supply chains. Confronting these crimes protects Americans by ensuring their natural rights, preventing their exploitation, and defending communities and businesses from criminal networks and unfair labor practices.

America is, and always will be, the leader in the global fight against human trafficking which desecrates the principles of freedom, justice, and opportunity that are essential to a safe, prosperous, and thriving global economy. Secretary Rubio has set forth the Department's mission to "promote peace abroad, and security and prosperity here at home." Combating human trafficking is vital to that mission. Ever since the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 established our Federal anti-trafficking framework, bipartisan commitment remains our strongest tool.

The fight continues each day as traffickers adapt and exploit new technologies and methods. The rise of online sexual victimization and forced labor schemes tied to online scams are two especially alarming trends, defrauding Americans and trapping victims in coercive schemes at home and abroad. This Administration took important steps, including signing the TAKE IT DOWN Act in May 2025 to combat online exploitation. We have sanctioned online scam operators using forced labor to steal billions from Americans. If confirmed, I will build on these efforts. Forced labor distorts markets and allows foreign actors to abuse the global trading system at the expense of American workers and businesses. We must use every tool to combat forced labor in global supply chains and to shed light on forced labor schemes used by our adversaries.

The annual Trafficking in Persons Report is a powerful instrument for demanding accountability and pressing governments to take meaningful action or face consequences. If confirmed, I will ensure the report continues to drive impact and that it guides U.S. efforts to counter human trafficking, ensuring our resources are directed precisely to where they deliver the greatest results for the U.S. taxpayer.

Ending human trafficking requires partnership. I am committed to engaging survivors of human trafficking as partners. Their expertise shapes effective policies and provides insight into how traffickers operate.

If confirmed, I will also prioritize stronger interagency coordination, leading unified efforts to support President Trump's agenda and bring the weight of the U.S. Government to bear against traffickers.

As President Trump stated, "we renew our commitment to end the evil of human trafficking . . . and ensure that every trafficker faces the full force of American justice." If confirmed, I will work with Congress and our partners to relentlessly bring traffickers to justice, support victims and survivors, and defend American interests.

I will work that we will be measured not by our intentions but by the lives we protect, the voices we elevate and the futures we help reclaim. Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.
Mr. Brown.

STATEMENT OF STANLEY BROWN, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Mr. BROWN. Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to advance our interests in Equatorial Guinea.

I am grateful to my family—my wife who is here today and our children and their families who are watching—for their support and sacrifices including during my time in uniform. I could not be here without their unwavering support as well as the Department of War and State Department family that sits behind me too, that are supporting me today.

I am from a North Carolina family of educators, farmers, first responders, and military members who served from World War II through the Gulf War. I served first in the military and continued that service at the State Department, where I have the privilege to advance U.S. national security priorities. I spent my military career and civil service in challenging environments furthering those priorities, including counterterrorism, commercial diplomacy, and supporting the safety of U.S. citizens.

U.S. energy companies have invested billions in Equatorial Guinea, and if confirmed my priority will be to improve the investment climate and promote further opportunities for U.S. companies. I will work with the government and like minded partners to develop Equatorial Guinea's economic potential, and I will look forward to encouraging investment in the underdeveloped health and education sectors.

If confirmed, I will also work also with the U.S. interagency and the government of Equatorial Guinea to enhance maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Mutual goals include the protection of offshore oil and gas facilities and countering piracy and illegal fishing. I will harness my foreign policy experiences to strengthen our partnership with Equatorial Guinea.

If confirmed I will harness available tools to address corruption and will use U.S. influence to encourage the government to respect inalienable human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Equatoguineans. Combating trafficking in persons also remains a significant U.S. priority.

If confirmed I look forward to working with the talented, hard-working U.S. Mission team in Malabo to achieve our objectives of promoting U.S. trade and investments and strengthening the relationship between our governments. If confirmed as Chief of Mission I will prioritize the safety, health, and resilience of the U.S. Embassy community under the ethos of "One Team, One Mission."

Coordinating and consultations with Congress will be essential to achieving our goals.

Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions**

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?

Answer: Yes

2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?

Answer: Yes

3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

Answer: Yes

4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?

Answer: Yes

5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?

Answer: Yes



Printed Name: Stanley Brown

Date: 6/25/2020

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brown follows:]

Prepared Statement of Stanley Brown

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to advance our interests in Equatorial Guinea. I am grateful to my family—my wife who is here today and our children and their families who are watching—for their support and sacrifices including during my time in uniform. I could not be here without their unwavering support.

I am from a North Carolina family of educators, farmers, first responders, and military members who served from World War II through the Gulf War. I served first in the military and continued that service at the State Department, where I have the privilege to advance U.S. national security priorities. I spent my military career and civil service in challenging environments furthering those priorities, including counterterrorism, commercial diplomacy, and supporting the safety of U.S. citizens.

U.S. energy companies have invested billions in Equatorial Guinea and, if confirmed, my priority will be to improve the investment climate and promote further opportunities for U.S. companies. I will work with the government and like-minded partners to develop Equatorial Guinea's economic potential, and I look forward to encouraging investment in the underdeveloped health and education sectors.

If confirmed, I will also work with the U.S. interagency and the government of Equatorial Guinea to enhance maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Mutual goals include the protection of offshore oil and gas facilities and countering piracy and illegal fishing. I will harness my foreign policy experiences to strengthen our partnership with Equatorial Guinea.

If confirmed, I will harness available tools to address corruption and will use U.S. influence to encourage the government to respect inalienable human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Equatoguineans. Combating Trafficking in Persons also remains a significant U.S. priority.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the talented, hardworking U.S. Mission team in Malabo to achieve our objectives of promoting U.S. trade and investments and strengthening the relationship between our governments. If confirmed, as Chief of Mission I will prioritize the safety, health, and resilience of the U.S. Embassy community under the ethos of "One Team, One Mission." Coordinating and consultations with Congress will be essential to achieving our goals.

Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.
Mr. Keith Noreika.

**STATEMENT OF KEITH NOREIKA, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF
LITHUANIA**

Mr. NOREIKA. Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today. I am honored to be the nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania, and I thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for their confidence in me.

I would like to begin by recognizing those who have made it possible for me to be where I am. My parents, Alex and Gloria, my sisters, Gloriana and Maryellen, and my wife, Cristina, and our three daughters, Alexa, Erika, and Sophie, who have joined us here today.

If confirmed, my first priority will be to ensure the security and welfare of U.S. citizens in Lithuania and the people of our Mission. I will also work to advance U.S. interests, encouraging Lithuania's

engagement as a reliable NATO ally, deepening our bilateral trade and entrepreneurship ties, and combating regional threats and transnational crime.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Lithuania celebrated 104 years of uninterrupted bilateral relations this year. The relationship has been marked by deep cooperation in the areas that matter most. Lithuania exemplifies what it means to be a committed member of NATO. Following the call by President Trump, Lithuania immediately announced commitments to exceed 5 percent of GDP on defense spending. This year it will exceed that mark and lead the Alliance in defense spending as a percentage of GDP.

Lithuania invests in military capabilities—including U.S. systems—that add real capability to our collective security. It hosts U.S. and NATO forces, using national funds to improve facilities and ensure military readiness. Lithuania deploys globally on security and peace missions, even as it polices its own borders.

President Trump has been clear that NATO allies must meet their obligations. The United States will no longer subsidize nations that refuse to pay their fair share for transatlantic security. This is a point that Lithuania understands and has, for years, pressed other European allies on. If confirmed, I will work to ensure Lithuania continues on this path and becomes stronger, more capable, and able to contribute to its own defense. Together, we will strengthen European defense, improve the credibility of the collective security architecture, and dissuade adversaries.

Our two countries cooperate broadly on an array of issues including sharing threat information, participating in joint exercises, and providing law enforcement training. The Pennsylvania National Guard, Lithuania's State partner for more than 30 years, helps provide much of this expertise. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our strong cooperation on these issues.

Lithuania shares U.S. concerns about China's strategic alignment with malign actors and pattern of economic coercion, especially in Europe. It is outspoken in the EU and elsewhere about Western Hemisphere issues, including human rights abuses of Cuba's regime. And Lithuania is a friend of Israel. If confirmed, I will work with the Lithuanian government to develop the peace through strength that President Trump has called for.

If confirmed I will work to deepen U.S. trade and investment ties with Lithuania to benefit the prosperity of both our peoples. Lithuanian companies are creating jobs in the United States, and Lithuania's vibrant economy has long been an attractive destination for investment by U.S. companies. Nowhere is this truer than in the area of energy. More than 75 percent of Lithuanian liquefied natural gas imports now come from the United States, and as Lithuania looks to purchase small modular nuclear reactors, there are abundant opportunities to deepen our energy relationship. Lithuania shares our view on keeping markets open with low regulation and taxes.

Mr. Chairman, the relationship between the United States and Lithuania is strong and helps secure core U.S. interests. Lithuania has played an active role in advancing our shared security and economic priorities. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to deep-

ening our cooperation to confront shared challenges and promote U.S. interests.

Again, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome your questions. Thank you.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions

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Answer: Yes

Printed Name:

Keith Nbreika

Date:

6/25/2026

[The prepared statement of Mr. Noreika follows:]

Prepared Statement of Keith Noreika

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today. I am honored to be the nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania, and I thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for their confidence in me.

I would like to begin by recognizing those who have made it possible for me to be where I am. My parents Alex and Gloria who taught me the virtues of faith and hard work. My older sisters Gloriana and Maryellen, who have always taken care of me, and my wife Cristina and our three daughters, Alexa, Erika and Sophie who have joined us here today.

If confirmed, my first priority will be to ensure the security and welfare of U.S. citizens in Lithuania and the people of our Mission. I will also work to advance U.S. interests, encouraging Lithuania's engagement as a reliable NATO ally, deepening our bilateral trade and entrepreneurship ties, and combating regional threats and transnational crime.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Lithuania celebrated 104 years of uninterrupted bilateral relations this year. The relationship has been marked by deep cooperation in the areas that matter most. Lithuania exemplifies what it means to be a committed member of NATO. Following the call by President Trump, Lithuania immediately announced commitments to exceed 5 percent of GDP on defense spending. This year it will exceed that mark and lead the Alliance in defense spending as a percentage of GDP. Lithuania invests in military capabilities—including U.S. systems—that add real capability to our collective security. It hosts U.S. and NATO forces, using national funds to improve facilities and ensure military readiness. Lithuania deploys globally on security and peace missions, even as it polices its own borders.

President Trump has been clear that NATO Allies must meet their obligations. The United States will no longer subsidize nations that refuse to pay their fair share for transatlantic security. This is a point that Lithuania understands and has, for years, pressed other European Allies on. If confirmed, I will work to ensure Lithuania continues this path, and becomes stronger, more capable, and able to contribute to its own defense. Together, we will strengthen European defense, improve the credibility of the collective security architecture, and dissuade adversaries.

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Again, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today and I welcome your questions. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.
Mr. Joseph Burkhalter.

**STATEMENT OF JOSEPH BURKHALTER, OF GEORGIA, TO BE
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF
MOLDOVA**

Mr. BURKHALTER. Good morning.

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Kaine, and Senator Cornyn, I am honored here today to appear as the nominee as Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I am grateful to President Trump for the trust he has placed in me with this nomination, and I am committed to serving the American people in this important role.

Before I continue, I want to introduce the most important people in my life. My loving wife of 40 years, Gina, who I met here in Washington when we were both Hill staffers working for different Members of Congress, so we understand everything about CODELS and STAFFDELS, and all that comes with it. Our three amazing and accomplished children, daughter Natalie, who is with me today, our soon to be son in law, Tom is here, our son, Sam and daughter in law Lauren, our daughter Olivia and our son in law Robbie. Last and certainly not least our newest blessing in our life, our grandchildren, Isabella, Roman and Luca.

And of course a special thanks to my father who passed not many years ago but I know is watching today from a better place and the sweetest mom anyone could ever have who unfortunately could not be here today due to some health challenges.

Only with the support of my loving family was I able to build a successful real estate development company, get elected as Speaker of the House in the Georgia House of Representatives, and then later work overseas for the last 16 years with two law firms. But on the note of public service I want to sincerely thank every member of this committee for your service and the sacrifice your families have made. As you know, public service is a calling, and it is a noble cause.

One other note. I am going to go off script here a minute to Senator Kaine. A mutual friend of ours sends his regards to you. I spoke to him yesterday, former Governor Roy Barnes. So I wanted to make sure I snuck that in there anyway.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Moldova, my top priorities will be the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Moldova and to advance American interests.

The United States and Moldova enjoy a close partnership built on years of sustained U.S. engagement and support for Moldova's democracy. U.S. sponsored exchange programs have engaged nearly 7,000 Moldovans, creating enduring relationships that help us advance shared goals. While Chisinau's top objective is EU accession, the Moldovan government values its partnership with the United States and is committed to deepening the bilateral relationship. Recent hallmarks of our bilateral cooperation include Moldova's April 2026 decision to eliminate tariffs on almost all U.S. goods and our decision to build a \$130 million high voltage transmission line to strengthen Moldova's ties to Western energy.

Energy security is a key tenet of the bilateral relationship. Over the past few years, Moldova has diversified energy imports and improved regional interconnectivity. If confirmed, I will work to expand opportunities for U.S. energy sector exports to Moldova. Like-

wise, I will support continued cooperation on cybersecurity to help secure the United States and unlock new commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses.

If confirmed, I will work to support Presidential peace initiatives, including the work of Special Presidential Envoys and others who are tirelessly working to resolve the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on Moldova's border. I will also support any future presidential efforts to help resolve the long frozen conflict in Transnistria should that assistance become necessary.

In conclusion, I would be honored to serve as Ambassador to Moldova. If confirmed, I will work to advance U.S. priorities, protect American citizens, and strengthen our bilateral relationship. I look forward to working with the committee and our partners to deliver on these objectives.

Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome any and all questions.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Additional Nominee Questions

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Answer: Yes

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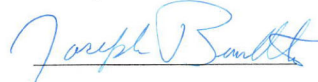
Answer: Yes

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Answer: Yes

5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?

Answer: Yes



Printed Name: Joseph Burkhalter

Date: 6/25/2026

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burkhalter follows:]

Prepared Statement of Joseph Burkhalter

Chairman Hagerty and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear today as the nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I am grateful to President Trump for the trust he has placed in me with this nomination, and I am committed to serving the American people in this important role.

Before I continue, I want to introduce the most important people in my life. My loving wife of 40 years Gina who I meet here in Washington when we were both Hill staffers working for different Members of Congress. Our three amazing and accomplished children, Natalie, (and her fiancé Tom), our son Sam and our daughter in law Lauren, our daughter Olivia and our Son in law Robbie. Last and certainly not least our newest blessings, grandchildren Isabella, Roman and Luca. And of course a special thanks to my father who passed many years ago but I know is watching today from a better place and the sweetest Mom anyone could ever have who unfortunately could not be here today due to some health challenges.

Only with the support of my loving family was I able to build a successful Real Estate Development business, get elected as Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives and then later work overseas for the last 16 years with two law firms. But on the note of public service I want to sincerely thank every member of this committee and their families for your public service. As you uniquely know, it's calling and a noble cause.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Moldova, my top priorities will be the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Moldova and to advance American interests.

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Energy security is a key tenet of the bilateral relationship. Over the past few years, Moldova has diversified energy imports and improved regional interconnectivity. If confirmed, I will work to expand opportunities for U.S. energy sector exports to Moldova. Likewise, I will support continued cooperation on cybersecurity to help secure the United States and unlock new commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses.

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In conclusion, I would be honored to serve as Ambassador to Moldova. If confirmed, I will work to advance U.S. priorities, protect American citizens, and strengthen our bilateral relationship. I look forward to working with the Committee and our partners to deliver on these objectives.

Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Under Secretary John Hurley.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN HURLEY, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

Mr. HURLEY. Thank you very much, Senator Hagerty, Senator Cornyn, and Senator Kaine.

It is a great honor to appear as the nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. I am very grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence in me.

I am also very grateful for and humbled by the tremendous support I have received from my family and friends throughout this process. My three sons very much wanted to be here today, but work obligations in New York and at the captain's career course at Fort Benning disrupted those plans. Also not with us today, but very much in my thoughts, are my late wife, Kamilla and her family, my late father, Brigadier General Alfred Hurley, my 96 year old mother, Johanna Hurley, and my three brothers and sister. Kindly standing in for them are some close friends seated behind me.

Under President Trump's leadership, America is building, investing, and growing again. The President has put American jobs, American manufacturing, and American prosperity first and has required our partners and allies to accept more equitable terms of trade and burden sharing.

The OECD can and should be integral to this process. Its 38 member economies all share a common commitment to market principles, democratic values, and the rule of law, making the OECD one of very few international venues to develop standards free from the interference of non-market economies like the People's Republic of China and Russia.

Using massive industrial subsidies, intellectual property theft, and malign political influence, authoritarian regimes have gained economic advantage and pitted our nations' businesses and governments against each another. Under President Trump's leadership, we have finally begun to confront these threats, including early steps to address dangerous supply chain dependencies that threaten our prosperity and our national security.

When functioning at its best, the OECD provides the objective, data driven research and the forum to develop and coordinate economic policies with our like minded friends that maximize common prosperity and resist these dire threats. It should guide its member economies toward intelligent pro-growth tax, regulatory, and energy policies and anticipate and help rectify economic vulnerabilities long before we are forced to react to them.

I come to this role and before this committee with a mix of private sector, government, and academic experience that I believe prepares me well to advocate for the United States and our principles and priorities at the OECD. I spent over 30 years investing in technology companies and building an investment firm and have served in the Army, on the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, and on the boards of a long list of institutions dedicated to freedom, prosperity, and national security.

In my most recent role as Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, I have collaborated closely with our allies to protect the global financial system and counter our adversaries. In those discussions, I have shared with our foreign partners that I am the son and nephew of career U.S. Air Force officers, the brother and father of two Army officers, and a former Army officer myself. Since the inception of the cold war, my family and I have served side by side with our allies in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East and are deeply committed to these alliances and partnerships.

But in those discussions, I have also been very frank about the failure of many of our partners to heed President Trump's warnings about underfunded militaries, economic dependence on adversaries, and malign foreign influence.

I firmly believe that cooperation with like minded allies and partners can be a force multiplier and make both our friends and ourselves safer and more prosperous. Like President Trump and Secretary Rubio, I also believe that to be sustainable, these alliances and trade relationships must be fair, balanced, and serve the interests of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, our fellow Americans need us to engage with our partners to protect peace, freedom, and prosperity and provide our businesses with open and reliable markets. If confirmed by this committee, the needs and security of those citizens will always be my primary concern.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading the talented and dedicated State Department professionals on our OECD team and to working closely with you, Mr. Chairman, this committee, and its staff, and my interagency partners.

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

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Answer: Yes

Printed Name:

John H. ...
John H. ...
Date: 6/25/2026

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hurley follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. John Hurley

Thank you, Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee. It is a great honor to appear as the nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. I am very grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence in me.

I am also very grateful for and humbled by the tremendous support I have received from my family and friends throughout this process. My three sons very much wanted to be here today but work obligations in New York and at the captain's career course at Fort Benning disrupted those plans. Also, not with us today, but very much in my thoughts, are my late wife Kamilla and her family, my late father, Brigadier General Alfred Hurley, my ninety-six-year-old mother, Johanna Hurley, and my three brothers and sister. Kindly standing in for them are the several close friends seated behind me.

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Thank you and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator HAGERTY. [Off microphone.]—thanks, Tim, and the many family members and support networks that are here today. And the fact that your loved one has been nominated to be an ambassador is certainly an honor for your family. But it is also an obligation that I know that you appreciate, and you will come to appreciate even more, because they are going to need your support, they are going to appreciate your support, and frankly, those of you that are going to foreign countries are going to be looked upon as representatives of America yourself. So my compliments and my appreciation to all of the families and friends that are here to support the nominees today.

Mr. Hurley, I would like to start with you. The United States has long used our role at the OECD to advance market based principles and international rules in a way that support not only our own economic and strategic interests but also those of our trading partners. In the past few years, though, it seems that the OECD has somehow lost its focus on its core issues and been sidetracked by a variety of things, such as ESG related initiatives that actually stifle competition and hurt our economic security. This includes projects like the, quote, “Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches,” and the “Business Due Diligence Guidelines” that advocated practices that, in many cases, are anti-business.

And my question for you, Secretary Hurley, if confirmed, is how will you use America’s presence at the OECD to keep the organization focused on pro-competition and pro-growth policies?

Mr. HURLEY. Thank you very much, Senator.

Over the last few months, as I have been getting ready for this role, I have had a chance to go and read a lot about the history of the OECD, you know, founded in 1961 coming after the Marshall Plan and the OEEC, which it succeeded. And in my view the OECD, the best version of itself focuses on prosperity and security by providing accurate, data driven information on which to base good decisions and the forum for like minded friends to get together and develop strategies to enhance that prosperity and security. And that should be exclusively the focus of the OECD.

And I think where there are these other issues that they have gotten distracted by here in recent years, I think it needs to refocus itself on the core mission.

Senator HAGERTY. The core mission reminds me of the fact that post-World War II we put in place very favorable terms of trade for our partners, countries that have become our partners, whose economies were devastated after the war. I am thinking about places like Japan, but importantly Europe, where you will be serving.

And the result of that, over time, because we did not put a time limit on it, we did not put a GDP per capita limit on it, is that we are often imbalanced relationships. And I think you will find yourself partnering with our U.S. Trade Representative, members of the Department of Commerce and Treasury. You know these organizations well. But I think it is going to be a real challenge to continue to advocate for policies that are not only good for members of the OECD who are our allies but also that are fair for America. Do you have any comments on that position?

Mr. HURLEY. Well, sir, you and I are both market guys, and I think we understand, in our bones, that if you make markets more efficient it can be a win-win for everyone, and there is more for everyone.

And a line that I have used at my firm for many years is that the truth is remarkably persuasive. And I so firmly believe that core truth, that hopefully we will be able to make that point to our allies and explain to them that these imbalances, while in the short term they can benefit one of our partners, in the long term it is destructive to our relationship.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate that perspective.

Ms. Thornhill, I would like to turn to you. As I think about what transpired between 2021 and 2024, our southern border was opened. It invited cartel activity, human trafficking activity at levels that are unprecedented. If I think about what the cartels have done with respect to human trafficking through Latin America and across our southern border it is deeply concerning, and I would like to get your perspective on how you would utilize this office, if confirmed, to address those concerns.

Ms. THORNHILL. Thank you for the question. Criminal cartels basically depend on drug trafficking, smuggling, and human trafficking to finance their horrendous activities. President Trump, under his brilliant leadership, has secured our borders and cut trafficking routes. If I am confirmed I will continue to support the efforts.

Senator HAGERTY. One final point I would like to make about your charge, and that has to do with the actual Trafficking in Persons Report itself. As a former ambassador I dealt with input to that and dealt with the ramifications of the report. And there are growing concerns that the country rankings that come out in the TIP report may not actually reflect considerations that were established by Congress in law. They may actually go beyond that. And I would like to get your commitment to focus on ensuring the integrity of that report and that it sticks to the congressional mandate that was laid out for it.

Ms. THORNHILL. Thank you for the question.

One of the strengths of the TIP report is it holds U.S. to the same standard as other countries. Last year, the dedicated people in the TIP office issued a very strong TIP report. Secretary Rubio issued a statement that this report is so important because it pressures governments to do something about human trafficking, or if not, to face serious consequences. If I am confirmed I will continue to work on this policy. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Ms. Thornhill.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I have questions for each of these witnesses so it may go longer than 5, but maybe I will do 5 and hand it back to you, and we can go back and forth.

Ms. Thornhill, I want to start with you on the TIP Report. I think it is so important not only for the United States but as sort of global gold standard.

The Trump administration, through staff reductions at State, has reduced the staff in this unit by about 70 percent, and that led the TIP Report last year, which is supposed to be done by June 30, to

be a couple of months late. Now, obviously, you are not there now, and June 30 is just in a very few days, so we cannot hold you to that. But I am troubled, and I do not really need you to answer this, but I am just troubled about our ability to have the TIP Report be that gold standard with a significant staff reduction. And I hope, should you get there, your commitment to the TIP Report being that gold standard, will lead you to ask for additional resources to comply and continue the TIP Report as a gold standard that can be done on a timely basis. I hope you will do that.

Here is what I want to ask about. You said, in response to a question from my colleague that one of the positive things about the TIP Report is that it holds the United States to the same standard as other nations. Here is a concern that I have that I have expressed in this committee before, and it deals with Operation Southern Spear, which is the operation to strike boats in the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean, near and around Ecuador and Venezuela.

We had Secretary Rubio here within the last couple of weeks, and I asked him these questions. Much of the operation, what I know about it, is classified, so I really can't describe it. And one of the things I am not allowed to describe is the targeting criteria used to decide which boats to strike. But I can talk about things that are not targeting criteria, and as an Armed Services Committee member I have been very disturbed to find that the presence of drugs on a craft is not one of the targeting criteria. It could easily have been one of the targeting criteria, but it is not one of the targeting criteria.

There has been public reporting about certain—of the strikes that have led Pentagon officials to say that it is at least likely that some of the victims killed in these strikes are human trafficking victims. The organizations that are designated as designated terrorist organizations on the secret list by the President include some organizations that don't only do narcotrafficking but do human trafficking. And when a boat is struck that does not have any evidence of drugs aboard, but there are a lot of people on it, there is some suggestion, and public reporting would suggest that some of those killed by the U.S. military strikes are, in fact, human trafficking victims.

I would like your commitment that should you be confirmed to this position that you would work with my office to ensure, to the best of our ability—these strikes are being carried out by the DoD, not by the Department of State—but I would like your commitment that you would work with my office to make sure that reporting, for example, the TIP Report, does hold all nations to an equal standard, and if there are U.S. activities that are leading to casualties among human trafficking victims, that is something we should get to the bottom of and be transparent about with the American public. Could you make that commitment to me?

Ms. THORNHILL. Thank you for the question and the statement.

I make the commitment that I would, without delay, work with your office and learn from your office. And also restructuring really has nothing to do with the Administration's commitment to human trafficking. I feel that the boat—I am sorry, I am not aware of your

facts on the boats. I would have to speak with you and get back to the committee.

Senator Kaine. And I am not expecting that you are aware. This is public reporting, and it has been discussed in this committee often, but you are not there now, so this is not in your current portfolio. But the Chair has heard me raise this issue before, and we do need to have a uniform standard apply to all, and I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. Hurley, in your position at Treasury have you been involved in sanctions policy and tariff policy?

Mr. Hurley. Yes, sir.

Senator Kaine. Were you involved in decisions with respect to the sanctioning of Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes on July 30, 2025?

Mr. Hurley. Yes I was, sir.

Senator Kaine. Were you involved in the discussions by the Administration about the imposition of tariffs against Brazil that were imposed on that same day, July 30, 2025?

Mr. Hurley. I was not involved in the tariff discussion, sir, but was involved in Judge Moraes' designation.

Senator Kaine. On the same day, July 30, 2025, the Trump administration imposed IEEPA emergency tariffs against Brazil—there had been some preexisting tariffs, but this was an additional 40 percent tariff—declaring it to be an economic emergency for the United States that Brazil was prosecuting former President Jair Bolsonaro. And the President said that was an economic emergency for the United States and imposed a 40 percent additional tariff on Brazil. Mr. Hurley was not involved in that decision. But on the same day he was involved in a decision to sanction the Supreme Court Justice of Brazil, who, my understanding of that legal system, was involved in that prosecution.

Mr. Hurley, tell the committee why a Brazilian Supreme Court justice involved in a local prosecution on a political corruption case warranted the United States sanctions against him?

Mr. Hurley. Well, the view from the White House and at Treasury and my personal view are all in sync, that Judge Moraes' behavior was reprehensible, an abuse of power against a political opponent, rose to the standard required to sanction him.

Senator Kaine. Tell me other judges around the world that you sanctioned because you did not like what they were doing within their country's domestic legal system.

Mr. Hurley. It is a good question, sir. I would have to go look at precedents. I think in the judgment on this particular case they say with every sanction we impose, and there are a whole variety of tests we have to go through for sanctions. But this one, if I remember correctly, it is under the State Department's Magnitsky Act, human rights abuses as rules. And we had great confidence from my entire legal team, across all of Treasury and White House counsel, that this more than met the standard.

Senator Kaine. This was widely reported at the time, both the sanction and the tariff against all products from Brazil as occurring because President Bolsonaro is a friend of President Trump's. The tariffs led to a Senate resolution that I led, that was a bipartisan resolution, to reject the President's declaration that this prosecu-

tion was an economic emergency for the United States. And the Supreme Court later, at the end of February 2026, struck down the tariffs imposed under IEEPA on the theory that the President cannot use IEEPA to impose tariffs.

But the kind of selective use of powers like sanctions or tariffs, because wow, this figure in another country is a friend of the President's, and we do not like somebody going after him, was almost unprecedented. And I do not call myself the sanctions expert, like I know every use of sanctions that we have imposed. But I have been here for 13 years, and I view it as almost unprecedented.

To your knowledge, have the sanctions against the justice been lifted?

Mr. HURLEY. Well, sir, I would say a couple of things. First, thanks very much for the question.

We spent a great deal of time examining the history of sanctions and then trying to reform our approach to them. And one of the things that I am very proud of, and I know Secretary Bessent is very proud of, is the total number of gross sanctions that we issued in the last year is a fraction of the sanctions issued by the Biden administration in the previous year. If you look on a net basis, the number of sanctions that we imposed and the sanctions that we removed, dramatically below our predecessors.

Like you, I think these are very important tools that we need to use sparingly, to use then as precision weapons, not as carpet bombs. Our predecessors did not do as good a job of it as they should have, and I would love to talk to you at some point about some of the statistics we had on the impact we had in Iran, the impact we have had in the cartels, to use the sanctions for the highest best use.

In this particular case, sir, you are right. Not long after we had imposed the sanctions on the judge the decision was made to remove them.

Senator KAINE. And that was welcome. That was welcome. And the issue of sanctions and how you should use them and how frequently is a really important one. If you are going to be super-searching with them, sanctioning terrorists, sanctioning terrorist organizations, that is one thing. I think that was kind of the core of what sanctions were designed to do. Sanctioning a Supreme Court justice in another country who is engaged in a prosecution about a matter within the domestic politics of that country is quite unusual. But that would be something I would look forward to—

Mr. HURLEY. Sir, one thing I would mention, I think there are 19,000 SDNs out there right now, and one of the big initiatives that Secretary Bessent had me and Brad Smith, who runs OFAC, focus on was going back to look at those 19,000 designated individuals and evaluate those designations for exactly what you have described, to make sure that there is no one who, on further review or with better judgment, we would not do today, especially given the previous 4 years, with significant overviews.

Senator KAINE. Yes. But again, the point I am making is if they were overused and the goal is to narrow them, then why use them in a case such as this? But I will just leave that question out there.

Let me ask now, Mr. Burkhalter, about Moldova. Very, very important country and a really important part of the world right now.

Do you share the assessment of Moldovan leaders that a Russian victory in Ukraine could expose their own country to intensified Russian aggression in the future?

Mr. BURKHALTER. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I believe it would, and it already has. As you know, almost a million refugees from Ukraine came in through Moldova. There are still about 100,000 of them there now, which of course the United States, through U.N. agencies, are contributing to help out that situation. Imagine a million people coming across your border in a country of 2.5 million people. Certainly, in a smaller country, it has a profound impact.

Senator Kaine. And a country like that, Moldova, has really done a good thing by being able to be open in that way to this crisis on its border.

You are not there yet, but talk a little bit about the approach that you would take in interacting with the Moldovan government, should you be confirmed, to help them ward off negative effects of Russian aggression.

Mr. BURKHALTER. Well, the border, I am talking about border and energy interdependence. As you know, Moldova has been reliant upon Russia for energy for some time, and they have now turned their connectivity toward the West. And still gas and oil is expensive, and inflation is high.

But I would certainly, with the border, I think the work the United States is doing assisting them is going a long way in this regard to help that problem. And yes, if confirmed I would certainly encourage our continued efforts to train and supply their Border Patrol with necessary tools to make sure that human trafficking is not coming through the border, arms are not coming through the border, drugs are not coming through the border, and bad actors are not coming through the border.

Senator Kaine. Great. And I am glad you mentioned the energy independence issue, too, because I think that is an area where the U.S. can also be really helpful as they continue to turn their focus on maintaining their energy portfolio away from Russia energy, so thanks for mentioning that.

Mr. Noreika, I am really glad that you brought up Lithuania's super dedication to the NATO investment. One of the positive aspects of both President Trump's encouragement of NATO allies, and I would say it is also a positive of the negative influence of Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, has been NATO allies dramatically increasing their investment levels. We were at a fraction of the NATO allies meeting their Wales commitment, and now all do. And we still have a long way to go because we have realized we need to increase the commitment. But Lithuania has been a real star, and I guess they have probably been a star because they realized, more than most, how dangerous Russia is on their borders. I have a picture I cherish of my son being promoted to captain on a snowy field in Lithuania in December 2016, in the middle of a deployment with the European Reassurance Initiative. But they are very aware of the threat, and they are really strong in investment.

Do you see opportunities for the U.S. and Lithuania to do co-production or do other work in the kind of defense cooperation space that can enable them to be even stronger?

Mr. NOREIKA. Thank you for the question, Senator.

Yes. I mean, it is a very close relationship as I understand it, just being briefed on it from here. But yes, I think one of my goals is to deepen that relationship as much as possible, and I look forward to working with the committee to do that.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

And Mr. Brown, I am not going to leave you out. I did not want you to feel disappointed, so I am going to ask a question of you too, and then I will yield it back to the Chair. And I thank the Chair for giving me some grace on timing.

In March, just a couple of months back, I guess, that is 3 months ago now, the Associated Press reported that Equatorial Guinea, and this is a quote from the article, "An authoritarian petrostate signed a secretive deal with the Trump administration and has become a transit hub for deported migrants." Now, this is part of a broader policy, where the Trump administration is deciding to deport individuals not to their countries of origin but to strike deals with countries that will allow us to send folks to them, and they will imprison or incarcerate them for some period of time, usually later to help them go back to their countries of origin.

I am nervous about this, and I am nervous about this because we have had a hard time getting information from the Administration about these deals, about the conditions in which people are incarcerated in these third countries, about whether there is any due process there so that somebody could show, "Hey, you have got the wrong person. I should not have been deported. My name may be the same as a name of somebody you were looking for, but it's not me."

And we have utilized, in the Senate, a tool called the 502B resolution to try to get information about what are we paying the nations, how many third party detainees are they accepting, what are the conditions in the jails or prisons where they are holding people, how long are they there. And thus far it has been virtually impossible for us to get information about this.

So I guess you are the career person here. Have you had any, in your work up to this point, had any participation or been in engaged in discussions about these third party transfers and the agreements under which these countries are holding deportees from the United States?

Mr. BROWN. Senator, thank you for your question.

I am aware that Equatorial Guinea, I guess early on, volunteered to take third country nationals to their country, and a number have been transferred there. I think it is in the 30s or something like that. It is a relatively small number.

I was not involved in the discussion of the agreements. I know that fell under another bureau, or falls under another bureau. But I am happy to work with this committee as we go forward in those discussions. And I know that in that regard we want to make sure that they respect the human rights of all people.

Senator KAINE. Well, and I appreciate that, and I would expect that, based on your long record of service to the United States.

Should you be confirmed, we would like to have a follow up discussion about it, because as the oversight committee I think we should have some window into these agreements, the conditions under which people are held, whether they have the ability to demonstrate that maybe they are not justifiably held. All of those conversations are important. Should you be confirmed we would like to follow up with you on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator Kaine, and again, thank you for joining me to host this important hearing, to move the candidates along.

I am going to take just one more point before I adjourn the hearing, and that is with you, Mr. Noreika. You have talked about the outstanding performance of Lithuania as a partner for us, particularly on foreign military sales. My staff and I have spent a great deal of time on this effort. When I was serving in a role that many of you aspire to it was a top priority for me to address a broken foreign military sales process. And when I say “broken” I mean just overly cumbersome, lots of bureaucracy, and frankly leading to far more time than anybody would want to deliver our commitments.

I would just encourage you to take a very hard look, when you get to post, if you are confirmed, and to the extent—and I am just stating the obvious—the role that each of you are taking is vital, and you have a lot of sway with the Administration. You are representing our nation in a foreign government. You are representing our nation in an important mission.

But utilize that. Utilize that clout that you have, to try to move forward. And I think Lithuania is probably a top prospect for becoming an example of how the foreign military sales process can be improved. It is a small enough country where I think you could really focus on it, and you have got a very willing partner. So I just wanted to make that encouraging statement to you.

And I want to thank everybody for their time today, for being here. It has been an impressive hearing, and I think it is clear why the President has chosen each of you to be our nominees.

Before closing, any letters of support that this committee has received for any of you will be added to the record. And for the information of the members of the committee, the record will remain open until the close of business Monday, June 29, for members to submit questions for the record.

With that this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:11 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO BARBERA THORNHILL BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. China is ranked a Tier 3 country in the Trafficking in Persons Report due in part to the extensive evidence of forced labor and labor trafficking of minority populations in China, including Uyghurs. In your view, how can the United States best counter these practices?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work within the Department and with foreign governments, interagency partners, the private sector, and civil society to continue holding

China accountable for its state-sponsored forced labor. I will also work closely with other Federal agencies to fully implement the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

Question. What will you do, if confirmed, to enforce statutory requirements related to Chinese forced labor practices?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use the wide range of statutory tools to combat forced labor in global supply chains, including continuing to report on forced labor in China and call on foreign governments to address forced labor in all its forms in the Trafficking in Persons Report and through follow-on diplomatic engagement.

Question. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking was subject to deep cuts as part of the State Department's reorganization. If confirmed, will you advocate for additional personnel and resources if it appears that the cuts have hampered the office's ability to meet statutory requirements for reporting and working against trafficking in persons?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continually assess personnel and other resources to ensure that the TIP Office can efficiently and effectively work to meet its statutory requirements and core functions to collectively strengthen U.S. anti-trafficking efforts.

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. I have devoted much of my career to serving vulnerable children and families at heightened risk of exploitation, including human trafficking. I worked with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta, serving children in orphanages. I have also served in leadership roles with Children's Institute in Los Angeles, supporting children and families affected by trauma and abuse, and worked with Lori Burns, a survivor of child abuse, foster care, and human trafficking. We worked on Safe Site—a restricted access platform built on the same proven technology as RehabApp, designed exclusively for verified victims. Access is controlled by The Teen Project to protect victims' privacy and security. The platform incorporates Multi-Factor Authentication, Secure API Authentication, HIPAA Compliant, Secure Closed Infrastructure, Client Consent Management, Incident Response Procedures and Encrypted Backups.

RehabApp is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play to view, provides public access to treatment providers and available beds and demonstrates the underlying technology powering Safe Site.

Through my work with the Scouts BSA, I mentored youth, including many in the foster care system, a population that traffickers have been known to target.

I have worked all over the world on commercial projects and hotel initiatives, designing and managing turnkey developments for Walt Disney in China and Florida, for the Narita in Japan, and for the Royal Family in Saudi Arabia among others.

Working in countries where women are often viewed through a profoundly different and challenging cultural lens taught me invaluable lesson about navigating government policies, social norms, and institutional attitudes that can be entirely unfamiliar to the Western World.

These experiences have prepared me to lead U.S. efforts to prevent trafficking, support victims and survivors, and advance American interests.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. From my perspective, America First Foreign Policy means:

- a) Protecting American sovereignty toward international organizations.
- b) Strengthening border security and immigration enforcement as a matter of national security.
- c) Promoting fair trade by renegotiating trade agreements.
- d) Encouraging allies to contribute more to their own defense.
- e) Maintaining a strong military to deter adversaries while generally avoiding prolonged military interventions.
- f) Using diplomacy and economic leverage such as negotiations, sanctions when U.S. interest is at stake.
- g) Using diplomacy and economic leverage such as sanctions, trade negotiations and bilateral agreements to advance U.S. objectives.

This keeps government focused on protecting American citizens, jobs and security, and avoid unnecessary foreign entanglements.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the TIP Office advances President Trump's commitment to combating human trafficking as a priority of his Amer-

ica First agenda. As the President reaffirmed in his Presidential Message for National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, this Administration is dedicated to ending the evil of human trafficking and ensuring that traffickers face the full force of American justice. I share that commitment and will work to advance those priorities through the TIP Office's mission.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. Combating human trafficking is a goal we all share to protect our citizens and communities. I am committed to building on that shared foundation. If confirmed, I will ensure the TIP Office fulfills its statutory obligations in alignment with the Secretary's policy priorities. I look forward to working on areas of shared concern to strengthen our efforts to combat human trafficking.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Office fulfills all statutory requirements, including those concerning foreign assistance, in a way that advances American interests in combating human trafficking while delivering results and ensuring responsible stewardship of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. If confirmed, I will respond as quickly as possible, with the understanding that such responses would be coordinated through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and conducted in accordance with longstanding Department and executive branch practice.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. The TIP Office does not handle humanitarian assistance. TIP Office foreign assistance programming is security assistance (INCLE) implemented by entities, including international organizations and non-governmental organizations, qualified to combat human trafficking. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to ensure anti-trafficking programs complement broader U.S. foreign assistance objectives.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. The TIP Office does not handle humanitarian assistance. TIP Office foreign assistance programming is security assistance (INCLE) implemented by NGOs, international organizations, and other entities qualified to combat human trafficking. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to ensure anti-trafficking programs complement broader U.S. foreign assistance objectives.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit?

Answer. The TIP Office does not deliver humanitarian aid. I believe anti-trafficking foreign assistance should be programmed according to the Administration's America First foreign policy objectives and trends and recommendations identified in the Trafficking in Persons Report in alignment with the "3P" paradigm of prosecuting traffickers, protecting trafficking victims, and preventing trafficking in persons.

Question. Who makes that decision?

Answer. From my understanding, the TIP Office Ambassador at Large is mandated to coordinate anti-trafficking programming across the Department. If confirmed, my programming decisions will be strategic, results-driven, and consistent with the Administration's America First objectives, while supporting efforts to prosecute traffickers, protect and support victims, and prevent this heinous crime.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than "political purity" tests?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BARBERA THORNHILL BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. The US Trafficking Victims Protection Act requires the State Department to submit the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report by June 30 each year. In 2025, the TIP Report was 3 months late, the first time that the report had been late in the history of the office. If confirmed, how you will ensure that the TIP Office remains accountable to Congress and to the American people by delivering the report as required by law?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to fulfilling the responsibilities of the office, and to following the law. I am grateful for the Secretary's longstanding support of the TIP Report to combat trafficking globally, and, if confirmed, I will do my best to ensure the work of the TIP Office aligns with the Department's vision, while maintaining the integrity of the TIP Report and adhering to statutory requirements of the TVPA.

Question. The 2025 TIP Report eliminated a section about LGBT+ victims of sexual violence and trafficking. If confirmed, how would you ensure the TIP office accurately reports on all trafficking and abuse victims, including LGBT+ individuals?

Answer. The TIP Report remains a key tool to strengthen global efforts to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and prevent trafficking for every victim. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the TIP Report continues to reflect credible information on all forms of human trafficking and the experiences of trafficking victims accurately.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO BARBERA THORNHILL BY SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH

Question. During your testimony, you failed to provide any specific examples of experience you directly possess with human trafficking work. Instead, you invoked the name of a shelter application, Safe Site, which does not seem to be currently active.

Please outline which qualifications you possess in anti-trafficking work that demonstrate your ability to execute the role of the United States Government's top diplomat on human trafficking.

Answer. I have devoted much of my career to serving vulnerable children and families at heightened risk of exploitation, including human trafficking. I worked with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta, serving children in orphanages. I have also served in leadership roles with Children's Institute in Los Angeles, supporting children and families affected by trauma and abuse, and worked with Lori Burns, a survivor of child abuse, foster care, and human trafficking. We worked on Safe Site—a restricted access platform built on the same proven technology as RehabApp, designed exclusively for verified victims. Access is controlled by The Teen Project to protect victims' privacy and security. The platform incorporates Multi-Factor Authentication, Secure API Authentication, HIPAA Compliant, Secure Closed Infrastructure, Client Consent Management, Incident Response Procedures and Encrypted Backups.

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These experiences have prepared me to lead U.S. efforts to prevent trafficking, support victims and survivors, and advance American interests.

Question. The Trump administration's actions, including Reduction in Forces (RIFs) and the Deferred Resignation Program, directly led to gutting the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Office by 70 percent, including severe cuts to the Reports team responsible for the analysis and production of the annual Trafficking in Persons Report, which you yourself acknowledged as the gold standard. The 2026 TIP Report, the first report to be produced since these actions, is due June 30, and reportedly likely to be late due to insufficient staffing.

How do you intend to meet your congressional mandates under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), including the TIP Report, when you demonstrably do not have the current staff to execute this work?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the TIP Office continues to lead the State Department's global efforts to combat human trafficking and fulfill its statutory responsibilities, including the TIP Report, using the resources and authorities available as efficiently and effectively as possible. I will work closely with our embassies, regional bureaus, and other U.S. Federal agencies, foreign governments, civil society, and trafficking survivors to strengthen and advance U.S. anti-trafficking efforts.

Question. How do you plan to make up for the loss of critical expertise in future reporting and analysis when under RIF rules, you are not lawfully allowed to rehire for lost TIP Reports positions?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring the TIP Report remains a key tool that strengthens global efforts to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and prevent this crime. I will continue to leverage the expertise of the TIP Office staff, our embassies, regional bureaus, and interagency partners to maintain the integrity of the TIP Report and ensure the TIP Office continues to fulfill its statutory responsibilities under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Question. With approximately 70 percent of staff gone and decades of related expertise lost, how will you meet the TIP Office's other statutory obligations under the TVPA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will leverage the expertise of the TIP Office staff, our embassies, regional bureaus, and interagency partners to maintain the integrity of the TIP Report and ensure the TIP Office continues to fulfill its statutory responsibilities under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Question. How will you sustain U.S. leadership of the interagency Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG) with a fraction of prior staff and the loss of critical expertise?

Answer. If confirmed, I will bring together Federal agencies through my role as chair of the SPOG to address all aspects of human trafficking, leverage resources, and demonstrate results.

Question. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded tens of millions of dollars in programming that funded prevention efforts and provided services to human trafficking survivors, the majority of which were ended in 2025 and none of which cut programs have been replaced. Will you push to restore USAID's counter-trafficking portfolio at the State Department?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support anti-trafficking programs that deliver measurable results for the safety, security, and prosperity of the United States, and I will prioritize outcomes that deliver for the American people.

Question. If yes to Question 6, how will you rebuild that lost shelter, reintegration and training capacity?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the TIP Office continues to fund anti-trafficking programs around the world, including programs that tangibly and durably strengthen governmental responses to human trafficking, including through victim protection.

Question. If confirmed, how will you ensure all survivor populations—including LGBTQ and migrant survivors—are identified and served?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to do everything in my power to ensure all trafficking victims receive the protection and services they need and to use the tools available to push all governments to do the same.

Question. If confirmed, how will you respond if the administration pursues further staffing, programming, or trafficking-related issue cuts?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continually assess personnel and other resources to ensure the TIP Office continues to meet its statutory requirements and core functions efficiently and effectively to strengthen U.S. anti-trafficking efforts. I will

prioritize doing everything I can to ensure the TIP Office continues to lead the State Department's global efforts to combat human trafficking.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to advocating against further cuts to the TIP Office?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize doing everything I can to ensure the TIP Office continues to effectively lead the State Department's global efforts to combat human trafficking. I will always advocate for measures that I believe works for and best serves the American people and our national security in an efficient and effective way.

Question. If confirmed, how will you use TIP's diplomatic tools to pressure governments and industries that tolerate forced labor in fishing and other supply chains?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use bilateral and multilateral diplomacy to promote the TIP Report's recommendations; develop foreign assistance programs that tangibly combat forced labor in global supply chains, and work with the interagency, businesses, industry associations, and civil society to strengthen coordination and share promising practices to address human trafficking in key industries, including fishing.

Question. Do you support regulating AI and emerging tech to protect children online?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to combat every human trafficking-related crime against children.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and foreign governments on AI's growing role in scaling child trafficking and exploitation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with all relevant actors on this issue, including foreign governments and important organizations like the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, to quickly develop adaptive responses that address the modern realities of youth facing exploitation online.

Question. Fewer than 1 percent of victims are identified globally each year. What specific steps will you take to improve identification with reduced staffing and expertise capacity?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to improve victim identification, which is central to the Protection pillar and at the core of the office's global diplomatic engagement and international programming. I know that encouraging governments to prioritize efforts to identify victims is a foundational first step in addressing and combating trafficking.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit that tier rankings will reflect evidence and TVPA standards, not political pressure?

Answer. If confirmed, my recommendations to the Secretary regarding tier rankings will be objective, accurate, and guided by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's requirements.

Question. If confirmed, how will you push foreign governments to treat trafficking victims as victims and not criminals for crimes traffickers force them to commit?

Answer. If confirmed, I will press governments to improve victim identification efforts and will share best practices on ensuring victims of trafficking not be inappropriately penalized in cases of forced criminality.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO STANLEY BROWN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Equatorial Guinea has a third country national agreement with the United States. If confirmed, do you commit to keeping the Committee informed of the operations of this agreement?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to keeping the Committee and its staff informed about the operations of the U.S. Mission to Equatorial Guinea as appropriate.

Question. According to Transparency International, Equatorial Guinea ranks 172 out of 180 in the Corruption Perception Index, making the country one of the most corrupt places in the world. If confirmed, how do you intend to ensure there is necessary anti-corruption programming to address the high level of corruption in Equatorial Guinea?

Answer. We encourage every nation to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all. We also want to see continued commitment from Equatorial Guinea to fight the corruption that is holding back the great potential of its people. If confirmed, I will lead Embassy Malabo's engagement to promote respect for human rights, including religious freedom, and address the harmful issue of wide-spread corruption.

Question. How will you ease the concerns of U.S. companies that are looking to invest in Equatorial Guinea but hesitate due to high levels of corruption?

Answer. I understand U.S. companies have legitimate concerns about Equatorial Guinea's investment climate, including institutional corruption. If confirmed, I will consistently advocate on behalf of U.S. companies to ensure a transparent operating environment. I will encourage Equatorial Guinea to advance anti-corruption reforms and honor all financial commitments to U.S. firms.

Question. What is your understanding of the People's Republic of China's presence in Equatorial Guinea and what steps would you take, if confirmed, to address strategic competition in Equatorial Guinea?

Answer. I understand Equatorial Guinea has engaged with China over the years on infrastructure development projects, such as ports. China holds over 80 percent of Equatorial Guinea debt and has built much of its infrastructure. If confirmed, I will highlight to my Equatoguinean counterparts the benefits of partnering with the United States.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO STANLEY BROWN BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. Do you support the administration's decision to send third country nationals to Equatorial Guinea, where they are held in detention or are forced to return to countries where they face personal risk?

Answer. Protecting America's borders is a top Administration priority. As Secretary Rubio has said, we remain unwavering in our commitment to end illegal and mass migration and bolster America's border security.

Question. If confirmed, will you work with the government of Equatorial Guinea to protect the human rights of these individuals?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that any arrangements with Equatorial Guinea are implemented in a manner consistent with U.S. law and our international obligations.

Question. Will you urge the government to work with the International Organization for Migration to provide assistance to these individuals?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage the government of Equatorial Guinea to work with the International Organization for Migration as appropriate.

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. My 40 years of experience at the State Department and in the United States Air Force, both in senior leadership positions working on security cooperation priorities and focused on national security, inform my perspective on international diplomacy and guide me in leading with integrity, service to the country, and excellence.

Question. In your view, what are the most pressing issues or challenges in our bilateral relationship with Equatorial Guinea?

Answer. The top U.S. priorities in Equatorial Guinea are promoting U.S. trade and investments and deterring illegal and mass migration. I look forward to focusing on these areas if confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests in Equatorial Guinea?

Answer. If confirmed, I will focus on commercial development to advance U.S. strategic interests and mitigate competing foreign influence.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. The America First foreign policy prioritizes the interests and security of the United States and its citizens and looks at decisions from the lens of whether

an action will make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. America first is not America alone.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail in Equatorial Guinea?

Answer. America First foreign policy champions core American interests and always puts America and U.S. citizens first. In Equatorial Guinea, our top priorities are promoting U.S. trade and investments and deterring illegal and mass migration.

Question. In Equatorial Guinea, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. Expanding U.S. commercial engagement is the most effective long-term counter to Russian and Chinese influence in Equatorial Guinea. For example, the United States is deepening its economic partnership with Equatorial Guinea through multi-billion-dollar energy investments with U.S. companies.

Question. Are there opportunities where the U.S. can present alternatives to PRC and Russian influence operations or infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. Yes. I understand Equatorial Guinea's energy sector presents substantial near- and long-term opportunities, including new gas exploration blocks, LNG infrastructure, and other projects where U.S. companies can compete directly with Chinese or Russian alternatives.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. I believe that Congress and the executive branch share the fundamental goal of advancing U.S. national security and foreign policy interests. If confirmed, I will faithfully implement the policies of the Administration while ensuring full compliance with all applicable law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under my management, in full accordance with the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. I understand the Department seeks to provide a timely reply to all congressional inquiries. I will coordinate through the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs to respond as quickly as possible in accordance with longstanding Department and executive branch practice.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in Equatorial Guinea?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead Embassy Malabo's engagement with partner diplomatic missions and the full range of Equatoguinean officials and citizens to promote respect for human rights, including religious freedom, and address the harmful issue of wide-spread corruption.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Under President Trump's leadership, the United States continues to be the world's most generous donor of life-saving assistance, but we cannot do it alone. Within the America First Foreign Assistance framework, we are committed to providing assistance that is hyper-prioritized to those most in need, efficient, time-bound, and accountable to the U.S. taxpayer. We must also continue to use diplomatic channels to reform the U.N. system to deliver better results and to encourage other donors to increase their contributions to humanitarian responses.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. The United States' use of bilateral mechanisms for the rapid deployment of time-bound, life-saving assistance is evidenced by the Department's historic memorandum of understanding and \$3.8 billion in assistance provided through the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This approach reduces bureaucratic grant management burdens on staff and reinforces our work to make humanitarian assistance faster, more efficient, and more accountable to U.S. taxpayers.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit?

Answer. The Department provides humanitarian assistance when the following criteria are met: 1) there is evidence of significant unmet need; 2) U.S. disaster assistance will save the lives of disaster-affected people; 3) the affected country requests or will accept international assistance; and 4) responding supports explicit U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Question. Who makes that decision?

Answer. Declarations of Humanitarian Need are issued by the Chief of Mission. Additional assistance may be provided at the discretion of Department leadership in response to humanitarian need and/or foreign policy priorities, in coordination with the Under Secretary for Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs, and Religious Freedom.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than "political purity" tests?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO STANLEY BROWN BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. The Department provided the government of Equatorial Guinea with \$7.5 million as part of the third country deportation agreement. In prior questions for the record, the Department told Congress that such grants include terms to safeguard against corruption and human trafficking and address other requirements and that the Department may suspend or terminate funding if misuse is identified.

What specific safeguards are including in the terms of the U.S. grant agreement with Equatorial Guinea, and how is the Department monitoring compliance with those terms?

Answer. I am not aware of the specific terms of any U.S. grant agreements with Equatorial Guinea. As a general matter, I understand the Department regularly engages in grant monitoring and evaluation activities to ensure compliance with applicable law.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KEITH NOREIKA BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. What role should the Department of State play in discussions on force posture along NATO's eastern flank, including Lithuania, and how would you feed into those discussions if confirmed?

Answer. As Secretary Rubio stated in his testimony before the Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, the issue of troop deployments and numbers around the world is a function of the Department of War.

Question. As Lithuania, together with NATO allies, take on Russian shadow fleet activity in the Baltic Sea region, what additional, specific steps should the United States take to disrupt the shadow fleet?

Answer. The President has been clear that this war must end. Our sanctions remain in place while peace negotiations continue. We expect countries, companies, and individuals to comply with U.S. sanctions. The United States supports Lithuania and NATO allies in their efforts to address Russian shadow fleet activity in the Baltic Sea. If confirmed, I will work closely with Lithuanian counterparts, NATO allies, and the relevant U.S. interagency to assess what additional steps the United States can take to disrupt shadow fleet operations.

Question. As Lithuania provides the third largest amount of military assistance as a percentage of GDP to Ukraine, should the United States support the approval of transfers of U.S. origin security assistance from Lithuania to Ukraine if Lithuania requests permission for such transfers?

Answer. Lithuania's extraordinary commitment to Ukraine's defense—providing military assistance at a level that ranks among the highest in the world as a percentage of GDP—reflects exactly the kind of allied leadership the United States values and encourages. If confirmed and presented with a Lithuanian request to transfer U.S.-origin security assistance to Ukraine, I would work closely with the Department of War and the relevant interagency to determine the best way forward, consistent with U.S. law and policy.

Question. If confirmed, would you commit not to put pressure on the Lithuanian government regarding the potential relaxation of European sanctions on Belarus, Belarusian access to the port of Klaipeda, and other measures that facilitate Belarusian economic activity via Lithuanian territory and infrastructure?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work closely with our Special Presidential Envoy to Belarus John Coale, the team on the ground in Vilnius, the relevant interagency, and Lithuanian partners to fully understand the equities at stake and determine the best way forward. Lithuania has been an indispensable partner on Belarus policy, and any approach to these issues must reflect that partnership and the broader strategic interests of the United States.

Question. If confirmed, how would you see your role in engaging and supporting local Belarusian and Russian populations, respectively, in exile, including democracy activists who are targeted by transnational repression?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work closely with the Embassy team, the Lithuanian government, allies and partners, and local organizations supporting Belarusian and Russian exile communities to understand the landscape and determine how the United States can best support democracy activists and others targeted by transnational repression. Lithuania has been a generous host to these communities and a strong advocate for their protection, and I would look to our Lithuanian partners as key allies in this effort.

Question. Considering the People's Republic of China's past economic coercion against Lithuania and the continued tension between the two countries, what specific measures should the United States take to support Lithuania, including potential efforts to attract investment to Lithuania and to the broader Baltic region?

Answer. If confirmed, I would pursue several lines of effort to support Lithuania and the broader Baltic region. First, I would work to deepen our bilateral economic relationship and actively promote American trade and investment in Lithuania, including in the energy sector—where U.S. LNG and small modular nuclear reactors offer a powerful alternative to dependence on adversarial suppliers. Second, I would support Lithuania's participation in the Three Seas Initiative as a vehicle for driving American investment into the region and building economic resilience and connectivity across Central and Eastern Europe. Third, I would work with Lithuanian counterparts and the interagency to strengthen investment screening mechanisms that keep Chinese capital out of critical infrastructure, telecommunications, and other sensitive sectors.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO KEITH NOREIKA BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. The Trump administration threatened on multiple occasions to leave NATO and is slowly reducing the U.S. military footprint in Europe. How will you assure Lithuanians that American security commitments to NATO Allies will be honored?

Answer. President Trump has been clear since his first term: NATO must be an Alliance of capable partners, not a one-way security guarantee. Europe must take greater responsibility for its own conventional security. This is about Europe stepping up to defend itself, not America stepping back. Lithuania has been a model ally leading Europe in defense spending alongside Poland and the other Baltic states.

Question. Do you believe the President has the unilateral authority to withdraw the United States from NATO?

Answer. In the event the President decided it is in the best interest to withdraw from an international organization or body, I believe the President would follow the Constitution and all applicable laws.

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. In 2017, I served as President Trump's head of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC). The OCC is a member of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision representing the United States on this international standard-setting body. My negotiation of various aspects of the current Basel Committee capital framework, during my tenure as head of the OCC, will help me to fulfill my duties as Ambassador.

Question. In your view, what are the most pressing issues or challenges in our bilateral relationship with Lithuania?

Answer. The U.S.-Lithuania relationship is exceptionally strong, but several pressing challenges demand continued attention. Regional security is the most urgent—the Russia-Ukraine war and Moscow's persistent efforts to destabilize the Baltic region require that we maintain robust deterrence on NATO's eastern flank. We appreciate Lithuania's willingness to lead by example in Europe by already increasing defense spending to over 5 percent of GDP and developing new defense capabilities. Energy security is a second critical challenge—Lithuania's historic desynchronization from the Russian-controlled BRELL grid is a major milestone, and I will work to ensure American LNG and small modular nuclear reactors help cement Lithuania's long-term energy independence. Finally, deepening defense industrial cooperation remains an area of significant potential—as Lithuania develops new defense capabilities, I will work to ensure American companies are well-positioned to partner with Lithuania and strengthen both our defense industrial bases.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests in Lithuania?

Answer. If confirmed, I will address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests in Lithuania on two fronts. On security, the Russia-Ukraine war and Moscow's efforts to destabilize the Baltic region remain the most immediate threat. I will work with Lithuania to deepen our defense cooperation, to continue to press NATO allies to meet their defense spending obligations, and to strengthen our defense industrial base cooperation so that American companies and Lithuanian partners are building the capabilities we both need.

On the economic front, I will work to expand American energy solutions—including LNG and small modular nuclear reactors—to ensure Lithuania's long-term energy security, deepen U.S.-Lithuanian business ties, and strengthen investment screening to keep Chinese capital out of critical infrastructure and sensitive sectors. A more secure and energy-independent Lithuania is a stronger partner—and a stronger partner advances American interests across the region.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. I believe that America First foreign policy means making the interests and well-being of the United States of America paramount in our foreign policy and not subordinating U.S. interests to multinational processes when they act to the detriment of the prosperity and security of U.S. citizens.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail in Lithuania?

Answer. If confirmed, an America First foreign policy in Lithuania will deliver results on prosperity, burden sharing, and influence. Lithuania's tech-driven economy and NATO-leading defense spending create real opportunities for American businesses, and I will work to expand trade and open doors for American companies—making both countries more prosperous in the process. Lithuania is exactly the kind of ally President Trump has called for—one that pays its fair share—and I will use our strong relationship to encourage others to follow Lithuania's lead. Finally, Lithuania is a powerful voice in both NATO and the EU, and I will leverage that relationship to advance U.S. priorities, including the President's peace agenda and a fairer transatlantic partnership.

Question. In Lithuania, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. The United States and Lithuania share a deep commitment to resisting authoritarian influence, and our cooperation spans defense, energy, technology, and economic security. Lithuania is a trusted partner and loyal ally whose strong stance

against foreign influence from China and Russia reflects our shared values and priorities. In 2025, Lithuania's desynchronization from the Russian-controlled BRELL energy grid was a landmark step in reducing Moscow's leverage in the Baltic region. The United States supplied experts and technical assistance to help make this happen. Regarding China, the U.S.-Lithuania economic relationship continues to grow, with rising trade and investment that provides a strong alternative to economic dependence on China. Prosperity and security go hand in hand, and we will continue to deepen this economic partnership. If confirmed, I will build on these efforts and work closely with Lithuanian counterparts to ensure our bilateral relationship remains a model for resisting authoritarian influence across the Euro-Atlantic region.

Question. Are there opportunities where the U.S. can present alternatives to PRC or Russian influence operations or infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work in close coordination with my local team, the interagency, U.S. businesses, and the Government of Lithuania to identify alternatives to PRC and Russian influence and investment. I will ensure American companies are well-positioned to compete and win in Lithuania, delivering economic benefits for both countries while advancing our shared strategic interests.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to following all statutory requirements, in full accordance with the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to following all statutory requirements, in full accordance with the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. The timeframe needed to provide a substantive response may vary depending on the issue and circumstance. However, if confirmed, I am committed to being as responsive as possible and will make every effort to respond promptly. If confirmed, I will ensure my team prioritizes timely and thorough responses to all congressional inquiries through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in Lithuania?

Answer. Lithuania is a trusted partner and model ally whose commitment to democratic self-determination, national sovereignty, and responsible governance closely mirrors our own values. Lithuania has demonstrated its commitment to these values in concrete ways—including its key role in securing the release of political prisoners from Belarus. If confirmed, I will work with the Lithuanian government and our Special Presidential Envoy John Coale to continue our efforts in pressing for the release of political prisoners from Belarus. I will also champion a free and independent press, and I will support Lithuania's continued efforts to uphold transparent and accountable governance. A strong rule-of-law environment in Lithuania strengthens our bilateral relationship.

Lithuania's leadership reflects exactly the kind of partnership the United States seeks to deepen. If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for these shared values every day I serve.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Humanitarian assistance should focus on promoting national interest and delivering life-saving aid at a reasonable cost, with the goal that eventually countries will no longer require aid.

In countries where humanitarian crises threaten national security, foreign policy interests, and risk destabilizing allies, life-saving humanitarian assistance is key to advancing the United States' interests. More broadly, foreign assistance is a tool

that can promote good relations, promote U.S. business, and stabilize emergencies that would be more costly later.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. For the Department, the advantage of working through multilateral processes (such as pooled funding or global awards to implementing organizations) is the ability to drive reforms to overhaul multilateral foreign assistance, advocate with donor states to increase their contributions, and to streamline and rapidly scale up a common humanitarian assistance package across several humanitarian crises. This reduces the potential for duplication, helps minimize administrative costs, and requires fewer U.S. management resources and staff. More tailored bilateral assistance can complement and fill gaps for a more specialized, or context-specific humanitarian assistance need, and allow us to act quickly when a new disaster occurs in a country where a multilateral mechanism has not been stood up.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit?

Answer. Secretary Rubio has stated that the United States will no longer bear the cost of global humanitarian aid in perpetuity and is demanding stricter oversight of programs and greater burden shifting to other international donors. The United States is providing humanitarian assistance in circumstances where the needs and U.S. foreign policy priorities overlap, exceeding the response capacity of the host nation.

Question. Who makes that decision?

Answer. Humanitarian funding and programmatic decisions are made by leadership with advice from technical subject matter experts in the relevant bureau in coordination with other stakeholders like F and the new Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than “political purity” tests?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to following applicable law and regulations regarding the promotion of State Department employees.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JOSEPH BURKHALTER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. As Moldova has been the target of Russian destabilization efforts, including the continued presence of Russian troops on Moldovan territory, energy weaponization, disinformation, and illicit financing, do you think there is value in supporting Moldova’s desired accession into the European Union?

Answer. Moldova enshrined its EU hopes in a 2024 constitutional referendum. We support Moldova and its constitutional order; whether to join the EU is a decision for Moldova and the EU states to determine. The United States welcomes reforms Moldova will make related to EU accession that will improve the business climate, protect human rights, enshrine property rights legislation needed for Holocaust era compensation, and ensure regional stability.

Question. What do you see as the most effective uses of the \$36.5 million in fiscal year 2026 NSIP funds earmarked by Congress for Moldova assistance, to achieve U.S. objectives of combatting Russian malign influence and creating a more attractive environment for U.S. investment?

Answer. The \$36.5 million in fiscal year 2026 NSIP funds for Moldova will help Moldova to focus on cybersecurity to address Russian hybrid and influence operations and anti-American propaganda, and market access reforms—including audit capacity improvements and reduced reliance on Chinese-dominated supply chains. These investments build Moldova’s institutional resilience against Russian and Chinese interference while advancing U.S. interests. Law enforcement capacity-building on border security, narcotics, and terror financing will reinforce these gains.

Question. What steps should the United States take to help Moldova mitigate impacts of Russia’s war, including drones and missiles crossing Moldovan airspace, and economic pressures resulting from the war?

Answer. Few countries have paid as high a price for Russia’s 2022 further invasion of Ukraine as Moldova. With U.S. assistance, the current government took

swift and decisive action to finally break free of its near total dependence on Russian energy. In 2022 the United States provided over \$30 million of direct budget support to ease the transition away from free Russian natural gas and mitigate the resulting inflation that at one point reached as high as 35 percent. In just 3 years Moldova ended over 30 years of dependence on Russian energy. U.S. support for Moldova's independence from Russian influence continues with the 2025 approval of the \$130 million Liberty Line to connect Moldova's grid to the EU and with robust cybersecurity assistance. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Moldova to help limit the economic impact of the war and advocate for U.S. businesses in potential Ukraine reconstruction.

Since fiscal year 2020, the United States has provided \$109 million in Foreign Military Financing and \$6 million in International Military Education and Training to advance Moldova's defense modernization, counter hybrid threats, and reinforce its sovereignty. Key efforts include improving airspace awareness and early warning capabilities against repeated Russian drone and missile violations, enhancing cybersecurity, countering adversarial propaganda, and strengthening border security. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts while working with NATO allies, the European Union, and others to ensure security assistance is complementary, costs are shared, and duplication is avoided.

Question. As Moldova works to solidify its Western oriented energy security, what energy projects should the United States support in Moldova?

Answer. The United States should prioritize projects that strengthen Moldova's energy independence and integration with European energy markets, while expanding opportunities for U.S. companies. Continued support of the Liberty Line transmission project will connect Moldova's power grid to Romania, enhance energy security, reduce dependence on Russian energy, and create opportunities for U.S. firms in grid infrastructure.

The United States should also support infrastructure that advances gas and electricity generation capacity, including the Vertical Gas Corridor and the Trans-Balkan Pipeline to enable greater access to U.S. LNG, and to support legislative and regulatory efforts to establish a civilian nuclear power program with the long-term goal of deploying U.S. Small Modular Reactor (SMR) technology to ensure Moldova's long-term energy independence.

Question. As the United States enforces its sanctions on corrupt Moldovan oligarchs Ilan Shor and Vladimir Plahotniuc, and builds on the Trump Administration's sanctioning of the Ilan Shor controlled cryptocurrency exchange A7, what specific additional steps should the United States take to combat illicit financing in Moldova?

Answer. U.S.-sanctioned fugitive oligarch Ilan Shor and his associates have inflicted serious harm on Moldova. The Moldovan government has sentenced Shor in absentia to 15 years in prison for his role in the 2014 "theft of the century" banking scandal and is pursuing additional charges against him and other criminal actors. I commend Moldova's efforts to deliver justice for its citizens.

During national elections in 2024 and 2025 Russia-linked actors, including Shor, waged an intense foreign interference campaign involving vote-buying, illicit financing, and cyber-attacks. With support from the United States and other partners, Moldova withstood these attacks, though similar threats will persist.

If confirmed, I will work with Moldovan officials to strengthen electoral integrity in a transparent manner, making sure the government is able to withstand illicit foreign attacks while ensuring legitimate political actors can participate and Moldovan citizens can express their views freely.

Question. Following Moldova's decision to abolish customs duties on almost all U.S. imports, should the United States reciprocate?

Answer. Moldova's decision to eliminate tariffs on most U.S. goods was a strong signal of support for balanced bilateral trade. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for American commercial interests in Moldova.

Question. As the economic pressure builds on the separatist Transnistria region, how can the United States best ensure Moldovan agency in the reintegration process?

Answer. The United States is an observer to, and supports, the OSCE-facilitated 5+2 process, which includes both Russia and Ukraine with the U.S. and EU as observers. The 5+2 has not formally met since the outbreak of COVID-19. In the absence of formal 5+2 sessions, we communicate with all sides and push for progress, including by supporting direct discussions between Chisinau and Tiraspol. Those meetings have been facilitated by the OSCE Mission in Moldova. The United States

has nominated a candidate for the OSCE Moldova head of mission position. If confirmed, I would support meaningful efforts to resolve the Transnistrian conflict peacefully and uphold Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Question. As the United States and Moldova implement the bilateral third country removal agreement do you commit to open communication with the Committee regarding the operations of this arrangement in Moldova?

Answer. As a private citizen, I was not briefed on any bilateral negotiations or agreements. If confirmed, I will work with the committee and the Department of State on all inquiries.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO JOSEPH BURKHALTER BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. In your view, what would a just and equitable peace look like in Ukraine?

Answer. Ukraine would be a stable, sovereign country increasingly able to provide for its own security.

Question. If confirmed, how will you use your position to counter Russian disinformation campaigns in Moldova about the war in Ukraine?

Answer. The Moldovan government concluded that Russia engaged in extensive interference efforts in the lead up to and during Moldova's 2024 Presidential election and constitutional referendum, and in the lead up to and during the 2025 parliamentary elections. The Moldovan government also assessed that the Russian government messaged via coordinated information campaigns that Moldova's cooperation with NATO and the EU would draw the country into war alongside Ukraine. The United States affirms its support for Moldova's sovereignty and the best way to counter false narratives is free speech. And if confirmed, I will use every appropriate diplomatic tool to support Moldova's sovereign right to chart its own course free from outside coercion, counter anti-American propaganda, and champion the open flow of accurate information over government-directed censorship.

Question. After the Brexit vote, you spoke against the European Union's regulatory framework as a "burden" for Britain. As Moldova begins membership discussions with the European Union, do you believe the United States should support their efforts?

Answer. Moldova enshrined its EU hopes in a 2024 constitutional referendum. We support Moldova and its constitutional order; whether to join the EU is a decision for Moldova and the EU states to determine.

Question. Why or why not?

Answer. The United States welcomes reforms Moldova will make related to EU accession that will improve the business climate, enshrine property rights legislation needed for Holocaust era compensation, and ensure regional stability.

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. While never serving in a formal government diplomatic role, I have studied, lived and worked abroad. My work abroad (for the last 16 years) has been with two law firms exclusively representing U.S. companies helping them grow their footprints overseas in business development. I believe this makes me uniquely qualified to understand the opportunities and challenges facing Americans abroad.

Furthermore, I did serve as a Presidential appointment to the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) which is the official private-sector arm of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). As a non-governmental entity, it presents actionable policy recommendations to the APEC Economic leaders promoting economic growth between the U.S. and the Asian Pacific region.

Question. In your view, what are the most pressing issues or challenges in our bilateral relationship with Moldova?

Answer. I understand that the United States and Moldova are strong partners. But just like in any partnership, there are areas for improvement. As Moldova addresses economic and demographic challenges, as well as increasing political pressures from Brussels to comply with EU migration practices as an aspirant state, it will need to refine its approach to migration.

The United States should not be paying the bills in areas where European states might better carry the burden.

Question. If confirmed, how will you address the primary security and economic threats to U.S. interests in Moldova?

Answer. The United States supports Moldova's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence and ability to pursue its constitutionally enshrined democratic, European path. We support meaningful efforts to find a peaceful comprehensive settlement to the Transnistria conflict that respects Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Moldovan government to promote a mutually beneficial economic relationship.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. American First Foreign Policy first and foremost is about promoting the safety and security of United States Citizens and Businesses abroad. Maintaining this focus results in making the U.S. stronger and more prosperous around the world. American First Foreign Policy is also about building on years of U.S. engagements and healthy bi-lateral relationships with our shared values partners.

Focusing on business between the U.S. and our trading partners worldwide is a key tenet of AF Foreign Policy and Commercial Diplomacy. Thru this pragmatic approach prioritizing U.S. National interests allows us to support our allies on strategic nexus projects and simultaneously grow U.S. business opportunities.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail in Moldova?

Answer. If confirmed, my first priority will be the protection of U.S. citizens. The second will be the expansion of opportunities for U.S. investors, especially in the energy, cyber, health, and technology sectors. The third will be to promote regional stability, including a resolution to the Transnistria conflict on a timeline and in alignment with the President's peace initiatives.

Question. In Moldova, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence?

Answer. The United States affirms its support for Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States is ready to work with partners under the auspices of the OSCE, or in any other manner in coordination with Moldova, to advance withdrawal of Russian forces and munitions from the Transnistria region. On China, if confirmed, I will work with the Moldovan government and regional allies, including Sweden, to decouple Moldova from Chinese influence and accelerate its adoption of preferred Western vendors over Chinese technologies.

Question. Are there opportunities where the U.S. can present alternatives to PRC or Russian influence operations or infrastructure investments that align with our strategic interests?

Answer. Several American companies operate in or maintain commercial partnerships with Moldova. Most U.S. commercial activity is concentrated in consumer goods, information technology, agriculture, consulting, and finance. Several U.S. engineering, consulting, and development firms are also active in Moldova through energy and infrastructure projects supported by the U.S. Government and international donors. For example, Black and Veatch completed the preliminary engineering analysis of the \$130 million high-voltage transmission line, known as the Liberty Line. If confirmed, I will work to promote investments that align with our strategic interests, and act as alternatives to PRC or Russian initiatives.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch's policy priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the U.S. Department of State and this Committee when inquiries for oversight and hearings are passed to me.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under my management, in full accordance with the law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. If confirmed, I agree to appear before this Committee when invited and agree to work with the U.S. Department of State to answer any inquiries from the Committee.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with our Bureau of Legislative Affairs at the U.S. Department of State to provide timely and appropriate responses to this Committee.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts in Moldova?

Answer. The United States welcomes the commitment from President Sandu to advance human rights as a policy priority. We commend the Moldovan government for generally taking credible steps to identify and punish officials who commit human rights abuses. These issues are detailed in the Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Conditions. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Moldovan government on human rights.

Antisemitism incidents in Moldova are rare but do occur, primarily in anonymous online forums. Chisinau has made public commitments to combat antisemitism. Moldova endorsed the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism, but in terms of support for the Jewish community, has more to do on Holocaust era property issues. If confirmed, this is a priority for me to engage the Moldovan government on.

Press freedom is essential to an informed citizenry and indispensable to democracy. Journalists and media workers must be able to do their jobs without censorship, intimidation, or fear of retaliation, and if confirmed I will make clear that the United States stands with those who report freely and hold power to account.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. Humanitarian assistance should focus on promoting our national interest in being a global leader and delivering life-saving aid at a reasonable cost, with the goal that eventually countries will no longer require aid.

In countries where humanitarian crises threaten national security, foreign policy interests, and risk destabilizing allies, humanitarian assistance is key to advancing the United States' interests. More broadly, foreign assistance is a tool that can promote good relations, promote U.S. business, and stabilize emergencies that would be more costly later.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. For the Department, the advantage of working through multilateral processes (such as pooled funding or global awards to implementing organizations) is the ability to also drive reforms to overhaul multilateral foreign assistance, advocate with donor states to increase their contributions, and to streamline and rapidly scale up a common humanitarian assistance package across several humanitarian crises. This reduces the potential for duplication, helps minimize administrative costs, and requires fewer U.S. management resources and staff. More tailored bilateral assistance can complement and fill gaps for a more specialized, or context-specific humanitarian assistance need, and allow us to act quickly when a new disaster occurs in a country where a multilateral mechanism has not been stood up.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit?

Answer. Secretary Rubio has stated that the United States will no longer bear the cost of global humanitarian aid in perpetuity and is demanding stricter oversight of programs and greater burden shifting to other international donors. The United States is providing substantial life-saving humanitarian assistance in circumstances where the needs and U.S. foreign policy priorities overlap, exceeding the response capacity of the host nation.

Question. Who makes that decision?

Answer. Humanitarian funding and programmatic decisions are made by leadership with advice from technical subject matter experts in the relevant bureau in coordination with other stakeholders like F and the new Bureau for Disaster and Humanitarian Response.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than "political purity" tests?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOHN HURLEY BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. If confirmed, will you support OECD membership for all countries that meet the necessary requirements?

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate and consider together with the interagency OECD membership for all countries that meet the necessary requirements.

Question. If confirmed, will you seek to advocate for Romania's accession to the OECD and work within the interagency to seek the Administration's support to secure the country's membership?

Answer. Romania's partnership is important to the United States, and it has made significant reforms to improve its investment and trade climate. If confirmed, I will engage the interagency to assess the merits of Romania's reform progress in line with our broader U.S. economic and security objectives.

Question. If confirmed and in light of the Administration's efforts to deepen U.S.-Ukraine economic ties, will you commit to supporting a decision by the OECD Council to open Ukraine's accession process?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to providing my best advice and counsel to the Department of State and the interagency on Ukraine's preparedness and candidacy for accession.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOHN HURLEY BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. OECD has begun accession discussions with a number of new countries. When considering new members, should the OECD equally prioritize its democracy and open market pillars, or prioritize one over the other?

Answer. The OECD accession process is rigorous. It demands that candidate countries sometimes make serious reforms to their laws and policies to join an organization that promotes market-based economies. The 25 OECD committees that examine a candidate country's preparedness to join cover a broad array of issues, including trade, investment, tax, and governance, to name a few. All of these areas are critical to ensure that accession candidates will uphold the high standards of OECD membership.

Question. How will you use your position to uphold "the preservation of individual liberty, the values of democracy, and the rule of law and protection of human rights" in countries currently seeking OECD membership, such as Thailand and Indonesia?

Answer. I will ensure that all candidate countries proceed through the rigorous OECD accession process, which includes elements pertaining to anti-bribery and responsible business conduct, among other governance issues, and will offer my best advice and counsel to the Department of State on these countries' readiness to join.

Question. Describe your previous work in international diplomacy and how that experience will help you fulfill your duties as Ambassador.

Answer. For the past 20 years, as part of my role as a board member of the EastWest Institute and the Stimson Center, I have participated in dozens of track two diplomacy missions throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia, working closely with the Department of State, Department of War and several Administrations. As Under Secretary of the Treasury for TFI, I have led negotiations with numerous partners throughout the world to coordinate sanctions and financial regulatory policies.

Question. In your view, what are the most pressing issues or challenges in our engagements with OECD?

Answer. Our most pressing challenge is reforming OECD governance and processes to re-focus the organization on its founding mandate—to help member economies grow. The OECD functions best when it focuses on research and policy recommendations that benefit the citizens and business communities of member states, not on bespoke issues of concern to one or a handful of members, or even non-members.

Question. In your own words, what is an America First foreign policy?

Answer. An “America First” foreign policy recognizes that 100 percent of the legal authority to conduct foreign policy for the United States derives from the electoral mandate given by our citizens to the President and Members of Congress who confirm our appointments and fund those policies. The long-term security, freedom and prosperity of those citizens must always be our primary concern.

Question. What will implementing an America First foreign policy entail within OECD?

Answer. Implementing an America First foreign and trade policy entails driving reform at the OECD to return the organization to focus on its founding mandate which is to help member economies grow. It also entails ensuring decisions are firmly placed in the hands of member economies.

Question. Within OECD, how is the United States working to push back against Russian and Chinese influence around the globe?

Answer. China and Russia are not OECD members, which gives the United States leverage to join with like-minded market economies to set global standards for trade and investment. In the last 18 months the United States has worked with other OECD members to restrict China’s participation in fora where they had previously been invited. In addition, OECD work on industrial subsidies has exposed China’s and Russia’s massive support to their own industries, which attempt to tilt the trade and investment playing fields in their favor. OECD members and non-members and their business communities have used this data to go after China’s and Russia’s unfair trade practices.

Question. Congress and the executive branch at times have opposing views on how to achieve our national security goals abroad. How will you approach situations where the statutory requirements and oversight actions by Congress diverge from the executive branch’s policy priorities?

Answer. I will always offer my best advice and counsel to the Secretary of State and the executive branch when it comes to making policy decisions. I will also commit to Congress, working with the State Department’s Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to be open and transparent on our work at the OECD.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to obligating all appropriated funds for programs and statutory requirements under your management?

Answer. The Department implements enacted appropriations consistent with applicable law.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to providing timely briefings and responses to congressional inquiries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, working with the Department’s Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I do.

Question. What do you consider a reasonable timeframe for response?

Answer. I commit to working with the Department of State’s Bureau of Legislative Affairs to meet all congressionally mandated deadlines for responses.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to promote human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption efforts within OECD?

Answer. I will work closely with U.S. delegates to OECD committees that cover these issues and will advocate for U.S. priorities with member-state delegations and the OECD Secretariat.

Question. Describe your philosophy on humanitarian aid. What are the responsibilities and opportunities for the United States in providing humanitarian aid and assistance around the globe?

Answer. The OECD does not manage humanitarian assistance, but does research aid flows and impacts. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to ensure our OECD engagement complements broader U.S. foreign assistance objectives.

Question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working through bilateral and multilateral processes on humanitarian aid?

Answer. As a multilateral organization, the OECD provides a forum for members to discuss research and policies that serve to grow our economies. Some of these discussions may include humanitarian aid. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to ensure our OECD engagement complements broader U.S. foreign assistance objectives.

Question. What should be the determining factors on whether to use humanitarian aid as a tool in our national security toolkit?

Answer. The OECD does not manage humanitarian assistance, but does research aid flows and impacts. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to ensure our OECD engagement complements broader U.S. foreign assistance objectives.

Question. Who makes that decision?

Answer. The President, with advice from his national security staff and cabinet, makes this decision. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues across the Department to ensure our OECD engagement complements broader U.S. foreign assistance objectives.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to promoting State Department employees based on merit rather than “political purity” tests?

Answer. Yes.

BARRY LOUDERMILK
11TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA
COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON
HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-1011

2133 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
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(202) 225-2931
8888 Hwy 92, Suite 100
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(770) 429-1776
135 CHICKADEE AVENUE, SUITE 122
CARTERSVILLE, GA 30120
(770) 429-1776

June 9, 2026

The Honorable Mike Lee
United States Senate
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lee,

I am writing you as a Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to support President Donald J. Trump's nomination of my friend and former state legislative colleague, Mark Burkhalter, as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

Mark was not only an effective legislator for eighteen years in the state of Georgia, but he played a key role in helping Republicans win the majority in our state for the first time since Reconstruction, in 2004.

Like President Trump, Burkhalter has been a successful real estate developer. He served as the Georgia Speaker of the House before turning to international business. He traveled the globe the last sixteen years representing numerous Fortune 500 companies and growing their American presence abroad.

I believe Mark's experience and skills as a coalition builder makes him an excellent choice to represent our country in Eastern Europe. Thank you for your consideration of this nomination and your continued service to our great country.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress

RICH MCCORMICK, MD, MBA
7th District, Georgia

1719 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1006
(202) 225-4272

115 W. COURT HOUSE SQUARE
CUMMING, GA 30040
(770) 222-3095

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1006

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
Tactical Air & Land Forces,
Cyber, Innovative Technologies,
& Information Systems

SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE
Investigation & Oversight, Chair
Space & Aeronautics

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE
SOPHOMORE CLASS POLICY, CHAIR

June 10, 2026

Senator Ted Cruz
167 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cruz,

I write in support of President Trump's nomination of my friend, Mr. Mark Burkhalter of Georgia, to the position of U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. On June 8, 2026, the Department of State transmitted Mark's certificate of demonstrated competence to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, where you will have the opportunity to review his nomination for this ambassadorship. I respectfully request your support for his nomination.

Mark served honorably in the Georgia House of Representatives for 18 years with stints as the Speaker of the House and Speaker Pro Tempore. In his time in the legislature, Mark contributed significantly to legislation that helped get Georgia consistently rated as one of the best states to do business in. Outside his public service, Mark is a successful real estate developer, current owner of business development consultancy Burkhalter International LLC, and senior advisor in the Public Policy and Regulation practice at Dentons U.S. LLP. Mark is a member of many civic organizations and remains deeply involved with his alma mater, the University of Georgia.

Given Mark's successful careers both in public service and in the private sector, I am confident that he would make an effective ambassador and an outstanding representative of our nation abroad. Given that Moldova sits on Ukraine's border and has its own Russian-backed separatist movement, having a Senate-confirmed ambassador to Moldova is crucial for American interests in Eastern Europe. I believe firmly that Mark Burkhalter is the right choice for this role.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination, and please let me know if I can be of assistance or answer any questions about Mark's fitness for the ambassadorship to Moldova.

Sincerely,



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress

RICH MCCORMICK, MD, MBA
7TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA
1719 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1006
(202) 225-4272
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1006

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
TACTICAL AIR & LAND FORCES
CYBER, INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES,
& INFORMATION SYSTEMS
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE
INVESTIGATIONS & OVERSIGHT, CHAIR
SPACE & AERONAUTICS
REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE
SOPHOMORE CLASS POLICY, CHAIR

June 10, 2026

Senator Dave McCormick
SH-702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCormick,

I write in support of President Trump's nomination of my friend, Mr. Mark Burkhalter of Georgia, to the position of U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. On June 8, 2026, the Department of State transmitted Mark's certificate of demonstrated competence to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, where you will have the opportunity to review his nomination for this ambassadorship. I respectfully request your support for his nomination.

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Thank you for your consideration of this nomination, and please let me know if I can be of assistance or answer any questions about Mark's fitness for the ambassadorship to Moldova.

Sincerely,



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress

AUSTIN SCOTT
EIGHTH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

WARNER ROBINS OFFICE
130 5TH WAY, SUITE 100
WARNER ROBINS, GA 31088
478.971.1776 MAIN
478.971.1778 FAX

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127 B NORTH CENTRAL AVENUE
TIFTON, GA 31784
229.396.6176 MAIN
229.396.6179 FAX



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES
AND RISK MANAGEMENT
HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ENTERPRISE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES

June 3, 2026

The Honorable Steve Daines
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Daines,

I am writing you as a Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to support President Donald J. Trump's nomination of my friend and former state legislative colleague Mark Burkhalter as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

Mark was not only an effective Legislator for 18 years in the state of Georgia, but he played a key role in helping Republicans win the Majority in our state for the first time since Reconstruction.

Like President Trump, Burkhalter has been a successful real estate developer. He served as the Georgia Speaker of the House before turning to international business. He traveled the globe the last 16 years representing numerous Fortune 500 companies and growing their American presence abroad.

I believe his experience and skills as an effective coalition builder make him an excellent choice to represent our country in Eastern Europe.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination and continued service to our great country. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Austin Scott
Member of Congress

AUSTIN SCOTT
EIGHTH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

WARNER ROBINS OFFICE
120 BYRD WAY, SUITE 100
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229.398.5179 FAX



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES
AND FISH MANAGEMENT
HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ENTERPRISE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES

June 3, 2026

The Honorable Mike Lee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Lee,

I am writing you as a Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to support President Donald J. Trump's nomination of my friend and former state legislative colleague Mark Burkhalter as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

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Thank you for your consideration of this nomination and continued service to our great country. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Austin Scott
Member of Congress



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Chairman Risch:

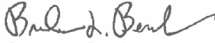
It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of Mr. Joseph Mark Burkhalter's nomination to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Burkhalter is a dedicated public servant with whom I had the privilege of serving in the Georgia General Assembly. During his 18 years as a state legislator, he delivered meaningful results for his constituents in North Fulton County and the Atlanta suburbs. He played an instrumental role in developing and advancing legislation that promoted job creation and helped strengthen the local economy, particularly in the Alpharetta area.

His distinguished career at the State Capitol included service in some of the legislature's highest leadership positions, including Speaker Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House. His bipartisan support and legislative accomplishments are a testament to his collaborative leadership style and ability to bring people together to achieve results. It was a privilege to serve alongside Mr. Burkhalter as a colleague.

In the private sector, Mr. Burkhalter built a successful career in real estate development. His business expertise proved invaluable during his service on the boards of the North Fulton Chamber of Commerce and the North Fulton Community Improvement District. Deeply invested in the future of his community, he also served on the Development Board for the University of Georgia at Oxford, helping afford hundreds of students the opportunity to study across the pond.

As a former state legislator and now U.S. Treasurer, I am confident that Mr. Burkhalter possesses the experience, judgment, and leadership necessary to successfully represent the United States in Chisinau. I strongly support his nomination and believe he will serve our nation with distinction.


Brandon L. Beach

46th Treasurer of the United States



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

Cc: The Honorable Pete Ricketts
The Honorable Dave McCormick
The Honorable Steve Daines
The Honorable Bill Hagerty
The Honorable John Barrasso
The Honorable Mike Lee
The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Ted Cruz
The Honorable John Curtis
The Honorable John Cornyn



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable John Barrasso
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

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The Honorable Dave McCormick
The Honorable Steve Daines
The Honorable Bill Hagerty
The Honorable James E. Risch
The Honorable Mike Lee
The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Ted Cruz
The Honorable John Curtis
The Honorable John Cornyn



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable John Cornyn
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Senator Cornyn:

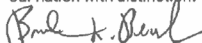
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46th Treasurer of the United States



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

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The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Ted Cruz
The Honorable John Curtis
The Honorable James E. Risch



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Senator Cruz:

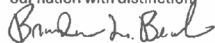
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

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The Honorable Dave McCormick
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The Honorable John Curtis
The Honorable John Cornyn



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable John Curtis
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Senator Curtis:

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Brandon L. Beach
46th Treasurer of the United States



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

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Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon L. Beach".

Brandon L. Beach
46th Treasurer of the United States



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

Cc: The Honorable Pete Ricketts
The Honorable Dave McCormick
The Honorable James E. Risch
The Honorable Bill Hagerty
The Honorable John Barrasso
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The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Ted Cruz
The Honorable John Curtis
The Honorable John Cornyn



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Bill Hagerty
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Senator Hagerty:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of Mr. Joseph Mark Burkhalter's nomination to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Burkhalter is a dedicated public servant with whom I had the privilege of serving in the Georgia General Assembly. During his 18 years as a state legislator, he delivered meaningful results for his constituents in North Fulton County and the Atlanta suburbs. He played an instrumental role in developing and advancing legislation that promoted job creation and helped strengthen the local economy, particularly in the Alpharetta area.

His distinguished career at the State Capitol included service in some of the legislature's highest leadership positions, including Speaker Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House. His bipartisan support and legislative accomplishments are a testament to his collaborative leadership style and ability to bring people together to achieve results. It was a privilege to serve alongside Mr. Burkhalter as a colleague.

In the private sector, Mr. Burkhalter built a successful career in real estate development. His business expertise proved invaluable during his service on the boards of the North Fulton Chamber of Commerce and the North Fulton Community Improvement District. Deeply invested in the future of his community, he also served on the Development Board for the University of Georgia at Oxford, helping afford hundreds of students the opportunity to study across the pond.

As a former state legislator and now U.S. Treasurer, I am confident that Mr. Burkhalter possesses the experience, judgment, and leadership necessary to successfully represent the United States in Chisinau. I strongly support his nomination and believe he will serve our nation with distinction.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brandon L. Beach".

Brandon L. Beach
46th Treasurer of the United States



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

Cc: The Honorable Pete Ricketts
The Honorable Dave McCormick
The Honorable Steve Daines
The Honorable James E. Risch
The Honorable John Barrasso
The Honorable Mike Lee
The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Ted Cruz
The Honorable John Curtis
The Honorable John Cornyn



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Mike Lee
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Senator Lee:

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Dave McCormick
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Rand Paul
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Senator Paul:

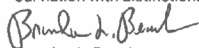
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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Pete Ricketts
Senator
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

June 11th, 2026

Dear Senator Ricketts:

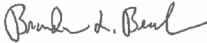
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CONGRESSWOMAN MARÍA E. SALAZAR
27TH DISTRICT OF FLORIDA



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

June 12, 2026

Dear Senator Scott,

I am writing to you, as a Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to express my strong support for President Donald J. Trump's nomination of Mark Burkhalter to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

Mark Burkhalter is a proven leader, accomplished businessman, and dedicated public servant whose experience makes him exceptionally qualified to represent the United States in Eastern Europe. Throughout his distinguished career, he has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing American interests, strengthening communities, and building meaningful partnerships.

For eighteen years, Mark faithfully served the people of Georgia in the state legislature, ultimately rising to become Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives. During his tenure, he played an instrumental role in helping Republicans secure a governing majority for the first time since Reconstruction.

Like President Trump, Mark is a successful real estate developer, and following his service in government, Mark also built an impressive career in international business. For sixteen years, he traveled the globe representing Fortune 500 companies, helping expand American economic engagement, develop strategic relationships, and grow American presence abroad.

At a time when American leadership is more important than ever, Mark's unique combination of legislative experience, business expertise, and coalition-building skills will serve our country well. I am confident he will be a strong advocate for U.S. interests and an effective representative of our shared commitment to freedom, democracy, and opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination and for your continued service to our great nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Elvira Salazar".

Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress