

**Opening Statement of William Bryan White
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Belgium
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
July 22, 2025**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Donald J. Trump's nominee for The United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium.

It is truly an honor to be selected by President Trump, a leader I've known for over 30 years—from our days in New York when he helped us to save The Veterans Day Parade. I am grateful to President Trump and our great First Lady Melania Trump.

I want to thank God and ask for blessings over President Trump, our Country, and all of you.

As a businessman, philanthropist, and a nationally respected advocate for our nation's fallen, catastrophically wounded, and severely burned servicemembers and their families, I've led efforts like the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund & raised over \$1.5 billion since 2003 to support them. I served as the president of the Intrepid Museum in New York City for 20 years, taking one of the country's top tourist attractions out of bankruptcy from 100,000 to over 1 million visitors per year and raised almost \$200 million for its renovation. Following my career at the Intrepid I started Constellations Group where I raised over \$6 billion for private equity, real estate investment, & startup capital. As a CEO I have supervised over 1000 employees and have been truly blessed with my educational work with our nation's youth.

I will bring that same tenacity and dedication to this prestigious role. None of this would be possible without my husband, Bryan Eure. His parents, Joe and Donna Eure, my sister-in-law and brother-in-law Adrienne & Todd Henningsen, our 14-year-old nephew, Ridge, and 16-year-old niece,

Alexa Henningsen, are all here today. I had extraordinary parents Patricia and Bill White - the best parents I could have ever had. At age 54, I met my biological mother for the first time - Mary Eileen Mooney. She is one of my heroes and joins me here today from Vermont.

Belgium is a vital U.S. ally and partner. Our Countries have great long-standing ties. Belgium is the host country of NATO's HQ and home to approximately 800 U.S. service members, many of them assigned to NATO related entities. The United States liberated Belgium in both World Wars. In 2024, Belgium honored the 80th Anniversary of the sacrifices of thousands of U.S. veterans who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. If confirmed, I promise to continue to strengthen these important historical ties.

I have spent much time in Belgium traveling to Iraq and Afghanistan with our NATO commanders to meet, entertain and visit with our troops. I have many long-standing and many new relationships there. If confirmed look forward to re engaging with these great Belgian Patriots who I know are anxious to partner with the USA.

Belgium is also the seat of the European Union & its Parliament and executive management.

Our trade relationship with Belgium is valued at \$74.8 billion annually, and the United States has a goods trade surplus with Belgium. Belgium is our 20th largest trading partner in goods, and 500 Belgian companies employ over 75,000 U.S. workers. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges alone moves 17 million metric tons of U.S. goods. Total American exports to Belgium were about \$341.52 BILLION last year, including significant volumes of U.S. liquified natural gas (LNG).

If confirmed, I'll advance President Trump's America First agenda through three main lines of effort.

First, we will advance the President's trade agenda - We will promote U.S. export opportunities to Belgium, with a focus in high-tech sectors like

semiconductors and biotechnology. We will work hand in glove with the Belgians to encourage more investments in the United States, leading to more American jobs.

Second, Belgium plans to accelerate its defense spending to reach NATO's five percent of GDP goal set by our President. Belgian leaders, including Prime Minister De Wever, have acknowledged that Belgium will do more. From all accounts we will have a great partner in Prime Minister De Wever and his well-formed Arizona Coalition.

Third, we will strengthen law enforcement cooperation to counter illegal immigration, illicit narcotics, and transnational organized crime. Belgium is facing growing threats from organized crime seeking to use it as a drug transit hub. I understand our law enforcement cooperation with Belgium is positive, but more can and must be done to safeguard the citizens of the United States and Belgium.

The safety of Americans will be our overarching priority. Some one million Americans visit Belgium every year for work, tourism, or study. If confirmed, I will make sure the embassy does everything possible to safeguard the wellbeing of our citizens.

I recognize the bilateral Mission in Brussels provides essential services for our Tri-Mission. If confirmed, I commit to lead the hardworking and patriotic officers at the U.S. Embassy for Belgium, for EU and NATO in the U.S. Tri-Mission, including the indispensable local staff. Together, we will deliver results for the American people.

In closing, it will be the honor of a lifetime to serve the United States of America with dedication and integrity. I can't wait to get things done on behalf of President Trump and the American people, if confirmed. I very much welcome your questions.