

Statement of Sarah Rogers
Nominee for CEO of US Agency for Global Media

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

One year ago, I appeared before you as President Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy — the position I now hold. It is an honor to return today as nominee for Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, or USAGM.

I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Rubio for their confidence, and my family for their love, patience, and support.

Before entering public service, I spent my career as an attorney fighting for the First Amendment. I took that fight all the way to the Supreme Court, and remain devoted to that cause while in office. Like I said in my opening testimony last time: freedom of speech isn't just America's most famous freedom. It's our number one strength. And USAGM helps champion free speech and freedom of the press worldwide.

In my current role as Under Secretary, I lead a workforce of more than 5,000 employees and oversee roughly a \$1 billion budget to advance American foreign policy and counter propaganda from adversaries including China, Russia, Iran, Cuba, and North Korea. Countering propaganda without countenancing censorship has been my core mission. Sometimes that means sparking conversation with a tweet. But it means multilayered diplomatic engagement, too. It means reaching people through music, sports, and entrepreneurship. Above all, it means telling the truth, credibly, in a media ecosystem where adversaries want to seed your timeline with slop. Truth-telling is what AGM is for. And if confirmed, that's the effort I'll lead. Over the past year, I have traveled more than 70,000 miles and seen firsthand the power of free information in closed societies. In Turkmenistan, I met students exploring an uncensored internet through our American Center. In Seoul, North Korean defectors told me that snippets of American radio where the first hints they heard of another kind of life. These defectors risked torture and risked death fleeing toward a freedom they'd only heard existed. Here. And they heard it from us. That's a great honor.

And it's also evidence that Voice of America and our grantees — RFE/RL, OCB, MBN, RFA, and OTF — can be indispensable instruments of American foreign policy. Free people tend to choose America. And the truth sets people free. That's why delivering truthful information behind the Iron Curtain helped defeat Soviet Communism. And in today's information war, truth remains America's best tool.

As multiple administrations have agreed, USAGM must reform and modernize to meet today's media environment. If confirmed as CEO, I will work to meet audiences where they are — which isn't always television broadcast or shortwave radio. We won't abandon those mediums where we need them. But we will expand to short-form video, diaspora group chats, podcasts, and other timely forms of engagement.

Over a year ago, President Trump signed an executive order directing AGM to operate at its statutory minimum. Put plainly, that means the agency should do what Congress codified — no more and no less. That means we must reach audiences in strategically significant places, like Cuba and the Middle East, where censorship impedes our foreign policy.

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If confirmed, my first priority will be to stabilize the agency, strengthen its leadership, modernize its operations, and restore research capacity so we can actually measure reach and viewership. Are we actually reaching people, and how can we do it better, and how can we make every taxpayer dollar count — those will be my obsessions. I also pledge to engage consistently with Congress, and rebuild local-language and transmission capabilities in areas where we need them.

Just last week, I attended the second White House Correspondents Dinner of 2026, and listened to the President's remarks on the free press. At the first dinner, I never got the chance. Like most dignitaries, I dove under the table when the shooting started. One person sitting near me didn't, though. Susan Zirinsky of CBS, who's about four feet tall, stood on a chair to film the room as the rest of us crouched for cover. When I saw Susan Friday, I thought of the journalists across AGM, and our grantees, who report the news in the line of fire. Daily. Despite threats of detention, persecution, and violence.

If confirmed, I will work every day to be worthy of their courage, and of the mission Congress entrusted to this agency. That means keeping the cause of freedom alive where it is under the greatest threat.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.