

Opening Statement of Mr. Nathaniel Morris
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Colombia
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
August 5, 2026

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee- Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia. I am grateful to President Trump, Vice President Vance, and Secretary Rubio for their confidence and for implementing an America First foreign policy that puts our country first. Our mission of America First diplomacy is simple: to make America stronger, safer, and more prosperous.

Thank you, Senator Moreno, for the gracious introduction.

I want to recognize my wife, Jane, and our son, JR, who are here with me today. I am grateful for their love and support. I come before the Committee today as a proud ninth-generation Kentuckian. My family descends from Appalachia, where people have fought for everything they have with the hope that they too can achieve the American Dream. I was raised by a single mother in a family of union autoworkers, people who believe that in this country, if you work hard, you can build something that matters. I will carry these values into the role of ambassador.

As an American entrepreneur, I founded one of the country's largest waste management companies and grew it from a \$10,000 line of credit to take it public on the New York Stock Exchange. As a founder and CEO, I created thousands of good-paying jobs, fought for my team and their families, and provided 100 percent free healthcare for all my employees. Building my company taught me that success depends on accountability, transparency, and especially hard work. Those are the principles I will bring to Embassy Bogota, if confirmed.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky and the Republic of Colombia share a history that reaches back to 1823, when the first American envoy to Colombia, a Kentuckian, took this post. If confirmed, I would be the fifth Kentuckian to hold this ambassadorship, and I am proud to carry that tradition forward. It is one of the most strategic posts in the world with a legacy of great American leaders at the helm, including a United States President.

The future of American foreign policy rests on America's dominance in the Western Hemisphere. This is our neighborhood, and I am proud, and inspired, that President Trump is treating it that way again. The inauguration of Colombia's new

administration on August 7th will be an important moment in our relations with this key ally. If confirmed, I will work with the new government on three priorities:

- One, stopping the flow of drugs and illegal immigration,
- Two, expanding economic opportunity, and
- Three, serving the Americans who live in and travel to Colombia.

Approximately 94% of the cocaine that is devastating American communities originates in Colombia. Colombia is also a source, destination, and transit country for illegal migration. I will work with the Trump Administration toward achieving its goal of a zero-tolerance policy toward drugs and illegal immigration. That means strengthening our cooperation on counternarcotics and transnational criminal organizations, supporting Colombia's efforts to improve citizen security, and ensuring that violent criminal networks do not threaten the stability of the region or the safety of the American people.

Colombia is one of the few countries in South America where the United States is still the largest trading partner. I will keep it that way by advocating for U.S. firms and advancing energy security, with one goal: creating jobs and long-term economic opportunity for the American people. American businesses and investment will be the first choice over China or any other competitor, every single time.

I will also prioritize the safety of U.S. citizens in Colombia, ensuring the embassy remains responsive, professional, and engaged across the country.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, I respectfully ask for your support. If confirmed, I will serve with integrity, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to the safety, prosperity, and strategic interests of the United States. Thank you. I look forward to your questions.