

**Opening Statement for Steven Gillen
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 17, 2026**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic.

I am deeply honored to be considered for this role. Public service has been the defining commitment of my career, and I do not take lightly the trust the President and Secretary Rubio have placed in me, nor the responsibility this Committee bears in advising and consenting to this nomination. If confirmed, I will bring to this post the same dedication to mission, integrity, and accountability that has guided me throughout my time serving the American people. I am grateful for the chance to continue that service in a region I believe is of growing importance to our nation's security and prosperity.

Before I go further, I would like to recognize my family, especially my wife, Grace, who is with me here today and has been "all in" with me for almost 25 years. I also remain ever grateful to my late World War II generation grandparents who helped raise me with their profound sense of duty and love of country and who were very proud of me for representing of our country as an officer in the United States Foreign Service. My family's support and sacrifice make this work possible, and any success I have had in service to our country reflects their love and partnership as much as my own effort. I could not undertake this responsibility without them.

As the Kyrgyz Republic celebrates 35 years of independence, the United States has an opportunity to offer a transparent, mutually beneficial partnership that advances the prosperity of both nations. This is not a new commitment, but one this Administration has reinforced through sustained, high-level engagement — including the historic C5+1 Summit at the White House last November, which marked the platform's tenth anniversary and brought together President Trump and the leaders of the five Central Asian countries.

If confirmed, I will work to build on this foundation. That means:

- **Strengthening security cooperation**, including on counterterrorism, border security, immigration enforcement, and countering transnational criminal organizations, consistent with the outcomes of the U.S.–Kyrgyz Republic Annual Bilateral Consultations.
- **Expanding commercial and economic ties**, including infrastructure cooperation and financial sector partnerships that generate export opportunities and support American jobs.
- **Advancing critical minerals and energy security cooperation**, ensuring secure, diversified supply chains for the United States and our partners in the region.
- **Encouraging sovereignty and sanctions compliance**, so that the Kyrgyz Republic becomes a reliable and transparent partner as it navigates pressures from larger neighboring powers.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a promising partner at a moment when Central Asia's importance to U.S. foreign policy has never been clearer. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to protect and advance American interests, strengthen our bilateral relationship, and ensure the United States becomes the partner of choice for the Kyrgyz people.

I look forward to answering the Committee's questions. Thank you.