

Statement of Nick Checker
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 24, 2026

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to be President Trump's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda.

Please allow me to begin by thanking my family, in particular my husband, Dylan. I would also like to offer my appreciation to our parents – Rob & Diane Checker and Doug & Christie Barclay. I am truly grateful for their support.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this Committee to promote U.S. interests in Rwanda and to build a bilateral relationship that contributes to a safer, stronger, and more prosperous America. Having had the privilege of working for Senator Hagerty, I understand firsthand the critical role of congressional oversight, and I hope to be in position to welcome you and your staff on a visit to Kigali.

Secretary Rubio has spoken of his hope that America remains a nation where anyone, from anywhere, can achieve anything. As the son of a blue-collar community in Wisconsin and the first in my family to attend college, I know that promise firsthand and being here today as the President's nominee is proof of it.

Public service carries a profound responsibility, especially in a role that demands engagement with nations whose histories continue to shape their present and future. Any discussion of Rwanda must be direct about the country's history. Just 32 years ago, Rwanda endured the Genocide against the Tutsi, in which nearly one million Tutsi were murdered.

Since then, Rwanda has undertaken a path that is, by any historical measure, extraordinary—restoring security, rebuilding institutions, and creating a national identity that overcomes the divisions which made such violence possible.

This required leadership willing to make difficult, sometimes stark choices in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophe to develop an enduring sense of self-reliance that continues to define Rwanda today.

While there is much to admire in Rwanda's achievement, I readily acknowledge that: 1) every nation bears the marks of human imperfection and 2) the purpose of our foreign policy is the protection of American national interests.

If confirmed, I would engage in an America First diplomacy grounded in strategic humility, respect for sovereignty, quiet leverage on values-based issues, and pragmatic collaboration on mutual interests. As Ambassador, I would have no higher priority than U.S. citizens in Rwanda and the safety and security of embassy staff. I would also lead the team of outstanding diplomats there to expand our trade and investment relationship and advance regional stability in the Great Lakes.

The Washington Accords are an important step toward lasting peace, but their success depends on full and verifiable compliance by all parties. If confirmed, I will work to advance this process and press Rwanda to meet its commitments, including by ending actions that destabilize eastern DRC. The United States seeks a strong relationship with Rwanda, but its government first must live up to its commitments to President Trump. At the same time, I will advocate to expand political and economic engagement, including new opportunities for U.S. businesses, and I will work closely with our partners in the region to address global issues, like the current Ebola crisis.

Again, this nomination is the honor of a lifetime. I thank the Chair and Ranking Member for the opportunity to be here today, and I look forward to your questions.