

Opening Statement of Keith Heffern
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 16, 2026

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored by the trust President Trump and Secretary Rubio have placed in me with this nomination, and I am deeply grateful to my family for their support and willingness to take on this most recent challenge alongside me in our service to the American people.

Gabon holds tremendous opportunity for the United States as a stable country with vast energy and mineral wealth. This Administration has focused on deepening commercial and economic ties, advancing infrastructure cooperation, and expanding opportunities for American businesses.

If confirmed, I will work with the country team, our interagency partners, and the Government of Gabon to protect American citizens and interests. This is my first priority, and it gives us a solid foundation for American prosperity. From that foundation, I will focus on expanding our economic and commercial ties. I will use every tool available through bilateral engagement to level the playing field for American businesses, and I will partner with the private sector to pursue smart investments.

These opportunities carry real risks, and we will manage them together. I will also work to deepen our security cooperation, keeping the United States and our partners safe.

If confirmed, I will draw on our nation's strengths to deliver results for the American people—protecting American citizens, prioritizing commercial opportunities that create jobs and investment, and strengthening the security partnerships that keep America safe.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to your questions.