

**Opening Statement of Peter Lord
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Benin
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
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 the President and the Secretary have placed in me with this nomination.

Please allow me to begin by thanking my family, in particular my wife, Leah, and our two daughters. I would also like to offer my appreciation to our parents – Richard & Debbie Lord and Ken & Kathy Zimmerman. I am truly grateful for their support.

As a career member of the Foreign Service, I have been honored to represent the United States in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and at the United Nations. In each assignment, I have sought to serve with integrity, lead with vision and by example, and advance the interests and values of the United States. If confirmed, I believe this background will be valuable in leading our mission and furthering our objectives in Benin.

If confirmed, I will dedicate my attention to leading the team at the U.S. embassy to foster a workplace with high morale and a team-oriented ethos. I also commit to working closely with this committee and hope to be in position to welcome you and your staff on a visit to Benin.

The United States engages Benin as a capable partner with shared interests. On the commercial front, there are opportunities to deepen our work on trade and investment, particularly in the technology and security infrastructure sectors. When U.S. diplomacy aligns with private sector opportunity and a clear sense of American interests, we can deliver results that no other partner can match. If confirmed, I will work to close deals, open doors for American companies, and ensure that Benin's key sectors are shaped by American investment, not by our competitors.

As partners, our mutual interests with Benin extend to the wider region of West Africa, and we appreciate the work Benin is doing to promote stability, facilitate trade, and enhance infrastructure. Benin's investment in these important areas

creates opportunities for partnership and collaboration on U.S. interests. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging on these issues to advance the America First agenda.

As the oldest and first charge of U.S. missions overseas, the welfare of American citizens in Benin will be a top priority if I am confirmed.

I look forward to your questions.