

Statement of Leo Brent Bozell III
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa
Submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 23, 2025

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of this Committee.

I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa. I am thankful to the President and to Secretary Rubio for their visionary leadership and the trust they have placed in me through my nomination.

I would first like to acknowledge the steadfast love and support of my extraordinary wife Norma, my five children, their four spouses and our 17 grandchildren. Each one is a blessing from heaven.

I come from a family devoted to public service. My father spent his life advocating for America to regain her moral footing. My uncle William F. Buckley Jr. was the intellectual leader of the modern conservative movement. My uncle James L. Buckley served his country as Undersecretary of State, federal judge, and in the position he most cherished, United States Senator.

Although I started my career in politics at the National Conservative Political Action Committee, and have led many other political groups, my experience transcends politics. The late Senator Joe Lieberman and I disagreed on most everything politically, yet he was my champion in the nonpartisan clarion call to restore decency to television. The late Senator Gaylord Nelson and I were in opposite corners during the Contra war in Nicaragua, but when I formed an international commission to bring free and fair elections to that country, he was my Co-Chairman. I served as a bipartisan presidential election observer in Nicaragua in 1990, and again in 1992 in Guatemala I know when and how to put political differences aside to advance a greater good.

If confirmed, I will approach my ambassadorship with respect for the South African people. South Africa is our largest trading partner on the African continent, and more than 500 U.S. businesses in South Africa employ over 250,000 South Africans. I take seriously my responsibility for ensuring the safety of the nearly 400,000 American citizens who annually visit South Africa, the 30,000 who live there, and for the care of the hardworking diplomats at our U.S. embassy and consulates.

I come before you at a challenging moment for U.S.-South Africa relations. The President has expressed serious concerns about South Africa that for too long have been unaddressed. When people and businesses in South Africa believe their private property rights are at risk; when many South Africans feel unsafe in their homes; when rampant corruption and unfair business practices hold back the South African economy; and when South African politicians greet as friends those who seek to destabilize the world's peace and security, then common ground between our two countries feels harder to find.

If confirmed as Ambassador, in addition to supporting U.S. citizens in South Africa, I will work on the following priorities.

- I will communicate our objections to South Africa's geostrategic drift from non-alignment toward our competitors, including Russia, China and Iran. I would press South Africa to end proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice and to pressure the International Criminal Court prosecutor to discontinue this lawfare, which is belied by Israel's support for the ceasefire in Gaza and commitment to the rules of war throughout the conflict.
- Second, I will advance the President's invitation to Afrikaners who wish to flee unjust racial discrimination. I will explore how we can support the South African government in making sure all South Africans can thrive free from the threat of violence. I will support the

President's call for the South African government to rescind its support for the expropriation of private property without compensation.

- Finally, I will advocate for business interests by promoting fair trade practices and reduced barriers that will level the playing field for U.S. companies and empower South Africa as an engine of economic growth, creating a more prosperous future for both our countries.

It is essential to actively engage on areas of disagreement while seeking opportunities to foster mutual benefit. I see the real opportunity for a lasting partnership.

Distinguished Senators, I appreciate your time today. If confirmed, it would be the honor of my life to serve my country and this Administration. I welcome your questions. Thank you.