

**Opening Statement of Kristina A. Kvien
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Armenia
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
November 30, 2022**

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch - and distinguished Members of this Committee - for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Biden's nominee for the position of Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia and I am grateful for the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with this Committee, and all Members of Congress, to advance U.S. interests in Armenia.

I am a career Foreign Service officer with 30 years of experience. Most of my career has focused on Europe, guided by my conviction that a Europe whole, free, and at peace, is in the best interests of the United States. Our successes in Europe since the breakup of the Soviet Union have created more stable and capable allies and partners, opened markets for U.S. goods, and ultimately protected and defended the people of the United States. I am proud to have played a role in advancing U.S. strategic interests in Europe over five U.S. administrations.

I appreciate the leadership of the members of this Committee and your work across Europe to resolve conflicts and support reforms in young democracies. I know first-hand that bipartisan support at home puts the United States in the strongest position to advance U.S. interests abroad. My recent diplomatic experience in Ukraine has only reinforced for me the importance of supporting the right of every country to choose its own path, forge its own alliances, and defend its own economic and political interests in line with the desires and aspirations of its people. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to strengthen Armenia's democracy, security, and economy... in a word, its sovereignty.

If confirmed, I would prioritize the safety and security of American citizens and our talented Embassy team and their families. I would also continue the efforts of my distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Lynne Tracy, to support Armenia's anti-corruption initiatives, civil society, independent media, business development, regional integration, and efforts to counter

malign influence. I would work with Armenians to help foster an impartial, independent judiciary and to safeguard respect for freedom of expression. In doing so, I would focus on ensuring that U.S. taxpayer money is spent effectively in support of U.S. goals and objectives.

The peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is essential to a more secure and prosperous future for Armenia and the South Caucasus. The United States is working through bilateral and multilateral channels to help the sides achieve a peaceful, lasting, negotiated settlement of the conflict based on the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. If confirmed, I will support the Administration's commitment to achieving this goal.

I grew up in Fresno, California, home to one of the largest Armenian diaspora communities in the United States. My teachers and friends of Armenian heritage spoke of the Ottoman-era genocide that forced many of their families to seek new homes in America. As President Biden said on Armenian Remembrance Day this year - "as we mourn the Meds Yeghern, let us redouble our efforts toward healing, and building the better, more peaceful world that we wish for our children." If confirmed, I commit to doing everything in my power to remember the victims of the Armenian genocide and support a peaceful future for Armenia. To this end, I will do all I can to encourage ongoing normalization discussions between Armenia and Turkey, which have made some steps forward.

I want to conclude by thanking those who have made it possible for me to be here today. I am joined by my husband Tom White, who has been my partner through 13 moves and eight countries, and my daughter, Hanna White, who is applying what she learned in her overseas experiences as a high school teacher here in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.