

BUSINESS MEETING

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:42 a.m., in S-116, The Capitol, Hon.

James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Ricketts, McCormick, Daines, Hagerty, Barrasso, Lee, Paul, Cruz, Scott, Curtis, Cornyn, Shaheen, and Rosen.

The Chairman: The Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate will come to order. Today we have a business meeting to consider a number, six to be exact, of appointments to send to the floor. Before we do that, the distinguished ranking member wishes to make a statement.

Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate our being able to get these nominees voted on today.

But I had two meetings yesterday, one with a delegation from Moldova that included their Foreign Minister and their Speaker of Parliament. The other was with the Serbian Foreign Minister. And when I asked each of them, "What can we do, in Congress, to be helpful to you, as you're thinking about the challenges you have in your country, especially against Russia?" what both of them said was, "Give us an ambassador." We need to urge the State Department to move career Ambassadors. We have a whole list of them, and so far I think we have moved five or six in this committee. And it's unacceptable that we are here, year-end to this Administration, and we still have so many critical places that we do not have ambassadors.

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So I do not know, Mr. Chairman, if we can send a message to Secretary Rubio from the committee, urging them to move career ambassadors, if we can send a message to the White House. But I think it is really critical that we do this. It is in America's interest to have our ambassadors around the world.

The Chairman: Thank you, Senator. I first would like to concur with you that we need people in these places, particularly places like Moldova and Serbia. And your thoughts in that regard are not unique to yourself. I have had a number of discussions with the people at the State Department, including at the very top. They are busy over there, and I know that is not an acceptable excuse, but it is a fact of life. And they are truly trying to get through these.

As you know, they do a thorough job of vetting and of preparing. It should not be as much of a problem when they have a career person to put in there, particularly when they have had a long career. But I will redouble my efforts in that regard, I promise. And I agree with you 100 percent, particularly in a country like Moldova. I mean, these people are struggling to keep the bear from eating them. They really need our people there to help them.

So your points are well taken, and I will do what I can.

Senator Shaheen: Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you so much. So with that, do you want to do these one at a time?

Senator Shaheen: Yes.

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The Chairman: Unfortunately, we have to take roll call votes on these, so we are going to have to do them all at a time. So let's start with Tammy Bruce. Is there a motion send it to the floor?

Senator Ricketts: So moved.

Senator Scott of Florida: Second.

The Chairman: It has been moved and seconded. We're going to have to have a roll call vote -- yes, I am sorry.

Senator Shaheen: That is okay. I would like to speak to Ms. Bruce, because I think it is unusual for us not to have a career person in the position as Deputy as the permanent representative. That Deputy provides the U.N. Ambassador with a wealth of knowledge and support, and I am disappointed the Administration chose a political nominee as opposed to a career nominee. I think Ms. Bruce, as we saw in her hearing, is lacking in her knowledge of the United Nations and the importance of U.S. engagement, so I do not intend to support her nomination.

The Chairman: Thank you, Senator. I appreciate your thoughts on that. The President wants Tammy for this position. I listened carefully to what she had to say. I think she is going to be an additional, and I am going to support her.

Is there further debate on the nominee? If not, the clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk: Mr. Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. McCormick?

Senator McCormick: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Daines?

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Senator Daines: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Hagerty?

Senator Hagerty: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Barrasso?

Senator Barrasso: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Lee?

Senator Lee: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Paul?

Senator Paul: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Scott?

Senator Scott of Florida: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Curtis?

Senator Curtis: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cornyn?

Senator Cornyn: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: No.

The Clerk: Mr. Coons?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Murphy?

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Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Kaine?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Merkley?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Booker?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Schatz?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Van Hollen?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Duckworth?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Rosen?

Senator Rosen: No.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Aye. The clerk will report.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, the yeas are 12, the noes are 10.

The Chairman: The motion is passed. Ms. Bruce will be forwarded to the floor with a do-pass recommendation.

With that we will take up the next one, Darryl Nirenberg, to be Ambassador to Romania. Is there debate? Is there a motion?

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Senator Ricketts: So moved.

The Chairman: And second?

Senator Scott of Florida: Second.

The Chairman: Moved and seconded that we send the nomination to the floor with a do-pass recommendation.

The clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk: Mr. Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. McCormick?

Senator McCormick: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Daines?

Senator Daines: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Hagerty?

Senator Hagerty: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Barrasso?

Senator Barrasso: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Lee?

Senator Lee: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Paul?

Senator Paul: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cruz?

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Senator Cruz: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Scott?

Senator Scott of Florida: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Curtis?

Senator Curtis: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cornyn?

Senator Cornyn: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Coons?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Murphy?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Kaine?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Merkley?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Booker?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Schatz?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Van Hollen?

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Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Duckworth?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Rosen?

Senator Rosen: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Aye. The clerk will report.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, the yeas are 18, the noes are 4.

The Chairman: The motion has passed. Now we will take up Melissa Argyros to be Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia.

[Off-record discussion about name pronunciation.]

The Chairman: All right. We will send it to the floor in writing. By the way, this is really important because Latvia is a critical country, looking right across the border. This is one of those places that we really do need to send someone.

Senator Cruz: Just don't mispronounce the Ambassador's name.

Senator Rosen: Leave it at that.

The Chairman: All right. Is there debate? Is there further debate on the nominee? There being no debate, the clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk: Mr. Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. McCormick?

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Senator McCormick: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Daines?

Senator Daines: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Hagerty?

Senator Hagerty: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Barrasso?

Senator Barrasso: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Lee?

Senator Lee: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Paul?

Senator Paul: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Scott?

Senator Scott of Florida: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Curtis?

Senator Curtis: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cornyn?

Senator Cornyn: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Aye.

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The Clerk: Mr. Coons?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Murphy?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Kaine?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Merkley?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Booker?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Schatz?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Van Hollen?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Duckworth?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Rosen?

Senator Rosen: No.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Aye. The clerk will report.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, the yeas are 15, the noes are 7.

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The Chairman: The motion is passed. The nomination will be sent to the floor with a recommendation of do-pass.

We have now Christopher Yeaw, to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Stability.

Senator Ricketts: So moved.

The Chairman: It has been moved. Second?

Senator Scott of Florida: Second.

The Chairman: Is there discussion?

[Off-record discussion about name pronunciation.]

The Chairman: Seeing no debate, the clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk: Mr. Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. McCormick?

Senator McCormick: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Daines?

Senator Daines: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Hagerty?

Senator Hagerty: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Barrasso?

Senator Barrasso: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Lee?

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Senator Lee: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Paul?

Senator Paul: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Scott?

Senator Scott of Florida: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Curtis?

Senator Curtis: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cornyn?

Senator Cornyn: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Coons?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Murphy?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Kaine?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Merkley?

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Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Booker?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Schatz?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Van Hollen?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Duckworth?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Rosen?

Senator Rosen: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Aye. The clerk will report.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, the yeas are 17, the noes are 5.

The Chairman: The motion is passed. The nomination will be sent to the floor.

The last, the second to last, is Yehuda Kaploun to be Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, with the rank of ambassador.

Senator Ricketts: So moved.

The Chairman: Moved.

Senator Scott of Florida: Second.

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The Chairman: Seconded. Is there discussion?

Senator Shaheen: Mr. Chairman, I am going to vote for Mr. Kaploun, but I continue to be concerned about his past statements that he has made, particularly about Members of Congress. They have been very partisan. I think partisanship weakens the collective effort to combat antisemitism. But I do think it is important that we have Senate-confirmed nominee. I agree with the past Special Envoy who is supporting Mr. Kaploun, that this position should be above partisanship. So, as I said, I do intend to vote for him, and I hope that he will recognize that once he assumes this position that he should be above partisanship and focus on combatting antisemitism.

The Chairman: Thank you, Senator. Is there further debate? Being none, the clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk: Mr. Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. McCormick?

Senator McCormick: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Daines?

Senator Daines: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Hagerty?

Senator Hagerty: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Barrasso?

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Senator Barrasso: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Lee?

Senator Lee: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Paul?

Senator Paul: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Scott?

Senator Scott of Florida: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Curtis?

Senator Curtis: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cornyn?

Senator Cornyn: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Coons?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Murphy?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Kaine?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

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The Clerk: Mr. Merkley?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Booker?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Schatz?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Van Hollen?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Duckworth?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Rosen?

Senator Rosen: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Aye. The clerk will report.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, the yeas are 14, the noes are 8.

The Chairman: The motion is passed. The nomination will be sent to the floor.

Finally, we have Bernardo Navarro to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Peru. Is there a motion?

Senator Ricketts: So moved.

Senator Scott of Florida: Second.

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The Chairman: Is there debate? Being none, the clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk: Mr. Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. McCormick?

Senator McCormick: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Daines?

Senator Daines: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Hagerty?

Senator Hagerty: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Barrasso?

Senator Barrasso: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Lee?

Senator Lee: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Paul?

Senator Paul: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Cruz?

Senator Cruz: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Scott?

Senator Scott of Florida: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Curtis?

Senator Curtis: Aye.

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The Clerk: Mr. Cornyn?

Senator Cornyn: Aye.

The Clerk: Mrs. Shaheen?

Senator Shaheen: Aye.

The Clerk: Mr. Coons?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Murphy?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Kaine?

Senator Shaheen: Aye by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Merkley?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Booker?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Schatz?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Mr. Van Hollen?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

The Clerk: Ms. Duckworth?

Senator Shaheen: No by proxy.

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The Clerk: Ms. Rosen?

Senator Rosen: No.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Aye. The clerk will report.

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, the yeas are 14, the noes are 8.

The Chairman: The motion is passed. The nomination will be sent to the floor.

With that, thank you all for getting here on time so we can move these. The committee will be adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 9:54 a.m., the business meeting was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Submitted for the Record by Senator Rand Paul

LETTER SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF RABBI YEHUDA KAPLOUNAS
THE UNITED STATES SPECIAL ENVOY TO MONITOR AND COMBAT ANTISEMITISM

Shalom Senator,

On behalf of the Kentucky Jewish Council, I am writing to express our strong and unequivocal support for the appointment of Rabbi Yehuda Kaploun as the United States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism. Our community, like so many across the country, has witnessed a dramatic rise in antisemitic rhetoric, harassment, and violence. At this moment of deep concern and national urgency, the country needs a leader whose moral clarity, compassion, and lived experience uniquely equip him for this role. Rabbi Kaploun has demonstrated these qualities consistently and powerfully throughout his life.

Rabbi Kaploun's relationship with Elie Wiesel, of blessed memory, is a testament to his lifelong dedication to Holocaust memory, human dignity, and the fight against hatred. His connection with Professor Wiesel was far more than symbolic; it reflected shared principles, responsibilities, and a shared moral mission that continues to inspire Rabbi Kaploun's work today.

When our nation faced one of its darkest days, on September 11, 2001, Rabbi Kaploun volunteered at Ground Zero, offering comfort, support, and spiritual strength amid devastation. His willingness to step forward in moments of crisis reflects a character rooted in service, courage, and a profound sense of responsibility for others.

The horrors of October 7th touched Rabbi Kaploun personally as he experienced the heartbreaking loss of beloved family members in the Hamas attacks. Despite this unimaginable grief, he has continued to advocate for Jewish safety and dignity with poise, moral conviction, and remarkable resilience. His personal experience with the consequences of unchecked hatred gives him a depth of perspective that is rare and urgently needed.

Rabbi Kaploun has spent decades strengthening Jewish communities, supporting vulnerable populations, and building relationships grounded in respect and shared civic values. His leadership reflects a commitment to unity, community security, and the promotion of American democratic ideals.

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For the Jewish community of Kentucky—where combating antisemitism requires both national partnership and local leadership—Rabbi Kaploun’s appointment would be a profoundly meaningful step. We believe he brings the wisdom, experience, and moral voice required to represent the United States with dignity and strength in the global fight against antisemitism.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this crucial appointment. Please do not hesitate to contact the Kentucky Jewish Council if further information or perspective would be helpful.

With respect and appreciation,

Rabbi Shlomo Litvin

Chairman - Kentucky Jewish Council