

Opening Statement for Julie Stuftt
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
July 29, 2025

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Murphy, distinguished Members of this committee. I am honored to appear before you today, and I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Rubio for their trust and confidence. If confirmed, I will work closely with you to advance U.S. interests in Kazakhstan.

I'm deeply grateful to my husband, Tim, who is the greatest diplomat in our family; my son, Oliver; and my daughter, Amelia, here today. Foreign Service family members are heroes who sustain the Service and represent the United States beside us. Our daughter Nora began her own journey in public service this month at the U.S. Air Force Academy. My wonderful parents, Hal and Nancy Leach, are here today — I'm grateful to them for inspiring me to imagine a big world from our little farm in Wayne County, Ohio.

I've been so lucky to serve alongside the most courageous and dedicated force for diplomacy in the world: the men and women of the United States Foreign Service. As a career consular officer, I've seen their selfless commitment to protect Americans and American interests abroad — a sacred duty that predates our Constitution. If confirmed, my top priority will be to ensure the safety and security of all Americans in Kazakhstan, including my Embassy and Consulate teams.

The government and people of Kazakhstan have appreciated America's support since 1991, when we were the first country to recognize their independence. We helped Kazakhstan eliminate Soviet nuclear and biological weapons and infrastructure. Soon after, U.S. energy companies made multi-billion-dollar investments that still benefit both countries. Today, we're on the threshold of a new era of commercial and energy cooperation with Kazakhstan, a global leader in uranium production, a major

oil exporter, and holder of vast reserves of critical minerals. If confirmed, I will work with the Department's Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, U.S. EXIM Bank, and the private sector, to make the United States more prosperous by fostering deeper bilateral economic ties, including through U.S. investment in energy, technology, and infrastructure.

But our partnership with Kazakhstan goes beyond commercial interests. Russia looms over Kazakhstan across the world's longest land border, with China trying to dominate the telecommunications and extractive sectors. The United States benefits from a Kazakhstan that is stable, independent, and prosperous. Kazakhstan is a solid partner to the United States in other areas, including improving export controls to curb Russian sanctions avoidance and making essential contributions to the C5+1 diplomatic platform.

Senators, if confirmed, I pledge to work closely with you to support America's growing strategic partnership with Kazakhstan, and I look forward to welcoming you there. I welcome your questions.