

Statement of Kelly Keiderling
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 10, 2016

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, Members of the Committee,

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by sending my name to the Senate for your consideration.

My family accompanies me today: my husband David Franz, who is also a Foreign Service Officer, my daughter Katherine and my son Alex.

Like my kids who have grown up in this business, I, too, am a child of the Foreign Service. My father grew up in the New Jersey of the Great Depression. He was forever grateful and proud to represent our country as a Foreign Service Officer. He met my Bolivian mother at his first overseas post, in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

I grew up in this bicultural environment, and was always the foreigner, the outsider. Overseas, my father and mother taught me that the people around me would judge the United States based on my own character and actions. I did my best as a kid to be worthy of that responsibility, even though I thought back then that it was an unfair burden. My parents also taught me to look beyond myself and consider various viewpoints and motivations and then to search for common ground.

Since entering the Foreign Service in 1988, I've carried that essential approach with me, building bridges of understanding and of joint, principled endeavor. Overseas, I've served three tours in the Western Hemisphere, two tours in post-Soviet nations, and three tours in Africa. At State Department headquarters, I've worked in a variety of assignments, most recently, in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. I believe that the breadth of my career experiences and work on various policy issues would prepare me well to represent the United States, should you vote to confirm me for the position of United States Ambassador to Uruguay.

The United States and Uruguay cooperate across a broad spectrum of common interests. If confirmed, I would continue and strengthen our joint endeavors. The

United States and Uruguay are partners in the fight against drug traffickers, illicit financial flows, cyber criminals, human smugglers, and international terrorism.

On the international stage, our countries cooperate in international peacekeeping operations and the protection of civilians in conflict areas. Uruguay has a seat on the UN Security Council for the next two years; we look forward to engaging Uruguay on the issues that arise before the Council.

Both our countries seek to increase bilateral trade and investment to create more jobs and economic opportunity at home. We prepare our young people with 21st century, global skills so that they might be successful and contribute to our societies. We seek effective responses to climate change and to building resilient communities.

The United States and Uruguay have a common commitment to democratic governance and the defense of human rights. If confirmed, I would work with Uruguayan leaders to reassert our hemisphere's commitment to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, to fair and independent judiciaries, and to responsive legislatures.

Both Uruguay and the United States have a common cause in the equal treatment of people without regard to their race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social origin, or religion. We seek to reintegrate victims of human trafficking back into our societies. We believe human rights are universal and intrinsic to each individual.

The United States and Uruguay share these many interests and values. We believe that the law applies equally to all and that our nations are stronger because of the rule of law. Both our nations have been proponents of creating--and defending--international norms that make our global systems more secure, that increase economic prosperity, and that assert that citizens have a right to determine how they are governed.

Should you confirm me for the position of U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay, my commitment to you, Members of the Committee, and to my fellow Americans is to do my utmost to nurture and strengthen the strong partnership between the United States and Uruguay, and to help build a world that is more secure, more prosperous, and more just.