

**Statement of Kenneth A. Howery**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**May 16, 2019**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the honor and privilege of addressing the Committee as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden.

I thank President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their trust in me for this important nomination. I also thank the professionals at the White House, State Department, and the U.S. Embassy in Sweden for sharing their expertise and guidance.

My mother, Karen Howery, is here, and my father, Ken Howery, is watching from overseas. I owe them my thanks as well. They embody integrity, hard work, and giving back, and instilled those values in their children—as my sister, Christina, can attest. She's here today, and her husband, John, and their daughters, Emma and Eden, are watching in Austin.

Family taught me the importance of public service. My grandfathers are no longer with us, but their legacies remain. Both served in World War II: Fred Howery in the Navy in the Pacific Theater and Hubert Jurek in the Army in Europe and North Africa. Without the encouragement of my family, and the examples they set, I would not be here today. I'm grateful to them all—and I believe my grandfathers would be pleased that I might also serve, in a different way, the nation that they loved.

A visit to the Capitol is a reminder that ideas and determination can and have shaped our country and the world for the better. I hope that my own experience reflects those inspirational principles. When I graduated from Stanford, I co-founded PayPal. Our idea was simple: to make on-line payments convenient and secure.

PayPal started small: we drafted our first business plan in a windowless broom closet. Today, PayPal is one of the world's largest e-payments systems, operating in over 200 regions and countries, with over 18,000 employees. But what's extraordinary about that story is how ordinary it is. America's tremendous talent pool and business climate encourage constant innovation; new ideas, companies, and jobs emerge daily. That's true for Sweden, too.

After PayPal, I co-founded a venture capital firm that has and continues to support hundreds of new companies, helping create tens of thousands of jobs, and fostering innovation in space exploration, quantum computing, biotechnology, virtual reality, alternative energy, and consumer technologies. One of those companies is Spotify, the popular music streaming platform, which was born in Sweden, has operations in the U.S., and trades on the New York Stock Exchange.

International issues have always been important to me, in business and more broadly. I've participated in the World Economic Forum and am a member of the Explorers Club, which promotes scientific exploration. I also advise Kiva, a non-profit that helps individuals to fight poverty by making micro-loans to people in over 80 countries. Kiva has helped more than 3 million people, over three-quarters of whom are women, to build better lives.

I've had the good fortune to travel to 99 countries, including trips to Sweden, a country for which, like many Americans, I have great affinity. Our two nations share long ties of kinship and common values. Swedish settlers first arrived in North America in 1638, settling along the Delaware River and today, over four million Americans claim Swedish ancestry. In addition to family, Sweden provided our young nation with one of its earliest friends. In 1783, Sweden became one of the first nations to formally recognize the United States, in the Treaty of Amity and Commerce co-signed by Benjamin Franklin, our first envoy to Sweden.

If confirmed, I will devote myself to deepening that legacy, emphasizing economic and security partnerships. American-Swedish trade already encompasses everything from medicines and machine parts to clothing and furniture; you can find iPhones in H&M pockets, and IKEA desks in American homes. The depth of our nations' commerce affirms the strength of our shared values and our commitments to free and fair trade. The United States is Sweden's largest trading partner outside of Europe, and some 1,300 American companies operate in Sweden, the largest foreign contingent that Sweden hosts. Our ties are reciprocal: Sweden is a major investor in the United States, supporting over 200,000 jobs here. Indeed, on a per capita basis, Sweden is one of the biggest investors in America, a testimony to the Swedes' enduring faith in the American endeavor. We can expand on those relationships, furthering existing trade, while paving new avenues to promote growth and employment.

In particular, American and Swedish leadership in science, technology and entrepreneurship offers considerable opportunities for mutual benefit, which I will vigorously pursue. Stockholm is already home to the second-highest number of billion-dollar technology companies per capita after Silicon Valley, creating tremendous potential for further cooperation. Our two nations also partner on everything from polar science to cancer research. And, of course, the Nobel Prize famously attests to Sweden's essential role in fostering an international climate that rewards scientific and artistic excellence, as America's many Nobel Laureates can confirm.

Another priority I will work to advance, if confirmed, is our nations' mutual commitment to security. Our countries are committed to a safe Arctic, and partner on regional security in the Baltic Sea. Sweden is also a NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner, and has participated in international security operations in Afghanistan, Libya, and the Balkans. Our nations are close partners in the fight against terrorism, and are both members of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Sweden has long served as the United States' protecting power in North Korea, and continues to play an important role in helping to bring detained Americans home.

Security, and the prosperity it permits, are pillars of the American-Swedish relationship. Strengthening those pillars allows us to build great things upon them, including the expansion of our artistic, scientific, and cultural exchanges.

While there is no perfect preparation to serve as an ambassador, I believe that my experience and outlook would prove particularly useful in Sweden. I've spent my career thinking about technology, which is increasingly central to growth and a priority for both nations. I also firmly believe that many goals, even those that seem impossible, can be achieved through cooperation—always being mindful that the pre-conditions for success are, as Franklin showed, friendship and shared priorities.

An ambassadorship is a position of honor and trust. I take those ideals seriously. If confirmed, I will strive to do credit to the office, always faithful to the values of decency, progress, and freedom that are responsible for the successes of the United States of America, the Kingdom of Sweden, and our 236 prosperous years as global partners.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before the Committee today. I welcome your questions.