

Statement of Carol Perez
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Chile
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 21, 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the Committee. It is an honor and a privilege to appear today to seek your confirmation as the next Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Chile. I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in putting forward my nomination for this position.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the members of my family --my mom and dad, Irene and John Zelis, who are at home in Chicago, and my husband Al, my son Michael, daughter Caroline and her husband Jacob, and my daughter Marisa, who are here with me today. They stood by my side as I proudly represented the United States overseas and in Washington.

For over 28 years, I have had the privilege to advance U.S. interests and values by leading interagency colleagues committed to serving our country. I advocated on behalf of U.S. businesses interested in entering Europe's energy markets, led efforts to counter violent extremism, and supported business, cultural and educational exchanges during my tenure as Consul General in Milan and in Barcelona.

I worked to advance the rule of law and combat corruption in Haiti, Ukraine and the South China Sea during my tenure as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. In my current position as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources, I have led efforts to ensure our diverse 73,000 plus workforce is prepared to meet global challenges and advance U.S. foreign policy interests.

I am prepared to take the next step and serve as Ambassador – and would be very proud to lead our U.S. Mission in Santiago, which has representatives from more than a dozen federal agencies, and terrific locally employed staff, many of whom are U.S. citizens.

Chile is one of our closest hemispheric allies. Shared values and mutual interests anchor our bilateral and regional cooperation in almost every sector. Chile stands as a testament to the transformational possibilities of democratic governance and inclusive economic policies. It is a nation that supports free

markets, human rights, rule of law and respect for the environment. It is a contributor to global peacekeeping missions and supports shared priorities in security and military cooperation.

Chile is a valued trading partner. Our bilateral trade has quadrupled to almost \$28 billion per year since our Free Trade Agreement went into effect. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing in the United States will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries. This economic cooperation is a win-win.

Our cooperation in the sciences and on the environment is second to none. Indeed, U.S. and Chilean scientists are collaborating to uncover the mysteries of outer-space, conserve our oceans, and advance scientific research in seismology, and clean energy.

Our people to people relationships are robust and wide-ranging. 50,000 Americans live in Chile, and in 2015, a record 220,000 Americans visited there. The number of Chileans studying in the United States has grown by 40 percent in the last five years to over 2,500. And Chile has one of the largest Fulbright programs in the Hemisphere.

Our shared focus on education, entrepreneurship, opportunities for women and girls, and collaborative research projects makes the United States and Chile natural allies able to take on global challenges together

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with you, your colleagues, and all U.S. stakeholders to advance the interests of the United States and to deepen the bonds between our two countries. I would work every day to ensure the safety and security of our embassy staff and all American citizens. This will always be my number one priority.

Thank you and I would be pleased to answer your questions.