

Statement of George Glass
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Portugal
Submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 18, 2017

Thank you, Senator Wyden, for your gracious introduction. And thank you especially for your many years of public service to our great State of Oregon. Both Mary and I sincerely value your friendship and thank you for being here today.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the Committee.

It is with great humility and honor that I sit before you today. I am deeply grateful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and support in nominating me to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Portugal. If confirmed, I am committed to focusing all my energies to further the interests of the United States of America.

If I could take a moment, I'd like to introduce you to my family, for without their support and love, I would not be here today. I would like to acknowledge my wife Mary who is sitting here with me, she traveled out from Oregon to be here. I'd like to acknowledge my 3 sons and their wives who are supporting me from afar. Our oldest Gordon and his wife Giau are currently living in Japan. Our middle Son George and his wife Emily are not here for the best of reasons. They are due with their first child, and our first Grandchild in August. And lastly Our youngest son Andrew, who has just graduated from College and in the throws of his first job in Dallas Texas. I would also like to acknowledge my mother and step-father, Mary and Jay O'Leary, and Mary's parents Joe and Laurie Ferguson. Lastly, I want to thank my father who is here in spirit; his courage and wisdom bring me strength every day.

I take seriously the responsibility of representing the United States of America to the Republic of Portugal, which also includes the Azores and Madeira. Portugal is among our oldest and most reliable allies. The history of our two nations has always been one of mutual respect and support. Portugal was the second country to recognize America's independence, and our consulate in the Azores is the oldest continually operating consulate in the world. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with the outstanding Foreign Service personnel that currently serve our country at Mission Lisbon.

Portugal's traditional and geographic orientation to the Atlantic, the presence of 1.5 million Portuguese Americans living in the United States, and a strong pro-American sentiment across the political spectrum combine to make the relationship between our two countries one of the three focal points of Portugal's foreign policy. This unique relationship has allowed us to turn to Portugal for political and material support in almost every peacekeeping effort the United States, NATO, and the United Nations has led since the end of the Cold War. If confirmed, it will be my job to lead Mission Portugal to further expand and enhance this political and economic relationship.

More recently, the Republic of Portugal was hit especially hard by the 2008 global recession, to the point that a financial rescue package was adopted in May 2011. Mary and I were in Portugal

for an extended trip in 2014 and saw for ourselves what the wage and spending cuts, and the tax increases were doing to the business environment. At that time, unemployment rates were over 15% and nearly twice that for young adults. What we witnessed on that trip endeared us to the people of Portugal for life. Even with that economic backdrop, they were focused on the same values that we hold dear in America.....God, family, and the belief that hard work will ultimately help one to succeed. These observations were not unfounded.

Merely three years later, Portugal is in the midst of a remarkable economic recovery. Strong export performance and rebounds in private consumption and investment led to a positive GDP of 1.4% in 2016. And this year Portugal has posted its lowest deficit since the 1974 revolution, allowing the country to exit the EU's Excessive Deficit Procedure.

The United States is now Portugal's #1 trading partner outside the EU single market and the 5th largest trading partner overall. The most recent example of this resurgence in bilateral trade occurred in April of 2016 when Portugal received the first ever shipment of liquefied natural gas from the United States to Europe. This was followed by a second shipment in February 2017. The Portuguese government has expressed its eagerness to further expand bilateral cooperation in regards to energy.

It is this newfound momentum in Portuguese business that makes it such an exciting time to engage in commerce between our two countries. Lisbon is currently rated one of the hottest technology start-up cities in the EU. Given my former position as President of Pacific Crest Securities, I am uniquely situated to help partner U.S. and Portuguese businesses to build upon the technology boom we're seeing today. The emergence of small startups, incubators, and boot camps looks a lot like the San Francisco Bay Area of the 80's and early 90's. If confirmed, I can't wait to join the 200 strong of Mission Lisbon in their endeavor to support and expand these business ties between the United States and Portugal.

Lastly, if I may, I would like to express my deepest sorrow for the family and friends of the over 60 dead, and hundreds injured in Portugal's recent forest fire. This has been a tragedy of proportions seldom seen in our world today. Coming from Oregon, where timber and timber based products have been historically one of our largest industries, I know the pain that a forest fire can render and the burden that an entire people can feel. Mary and I continue to include the families of those who perished and the brave firefighters that battled mightily in our prayers. I hope, somehow, we can help prevent something like this from ever happening again.

Distinguished Senators, once again I would like to thank each and every one of you for your time today. Please have confidence that, if confirmed, I will serve our great country, the United States of America, to the best of my abilities. Thank you.