

Testimony of Ambassador Randy Berry
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 28, 2022

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

I am honored to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia. I thank President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their confidence and trust, and if confirmed, look forward to continuing my nearly thirty years of service to the United States Government to advance our relationship with the Namibian government and people.

I am a proud sixth-generation son of the great state of Colorado, though my Foreign Service career has taken me from a childhood on horseback on my family-run cattle ranch in the shadow of the Rockies to the Himalayas, where I am concluding my service as Ambassador to Nepal. I have had the opportunity to live and work on the African continent for nearly a decade advancing U.S. interests and relationships. As you are aware, the Foreign Service life demands a full family commitment. I want to acknowledge the enduring love and support of my family in this career and in all things: my husband Pravesh Singh, and my children Arya and Xander, who are joining me today.

For the past 30 years, Namibia has been a stable, democratic country and a model of U.S. -Africa partnership. It has built strong institutions and an independent judiciary, and typically ranks at the top in Africa for press freedom. Namibia's government and citizens share many of the United States' priorities, including strengthening democratic institutions, increasing free trade and investment to grow an inclusive economy, promoting human rights, and addressing global threats such as climate change. If confirmed, I look forward to leading our dynamic team to deepen our partnership and further our common interests and values.

I would like to share with you the priorities that, if confirmed, I would work to advance as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia. First and foremost, the welfare of U.S. Mission colleagues is my paramount priority, and I will work to ensure that our people are serving in a workplace that is healthy, inclusive, and marked by respect. I am excited to move us into a new Chancery that will provide a better physical work environment for all. Relationships of trust are a key part of diplomacy, both inside and outside the Embassy, and I will invest heavily in building relationships based on respect that produce results on mutual goals.

My Mission team and I will support Namibia as it builds on its tradition of good governance. Anti-corruption messaging and assistance to fortify Namibia's democracy is a priority for both our government and theirs. Through advocacy and partnerships, we will encourage Namibia to fully implement laws and policies that respect human rights. Namibia also faces threats to its abundant natural resources, which are, like our own, vulnerable to exploitation by transnational criminal organizations and foreign powers due to insufficient social and legal protections. We will partner with Namibia to minimize opportunities for corruption and nature crimes and ensure

that Namibia's ambitions to become a regional transport hub via the Walvis Bay Port include strong safeguards against illicit activity.

Both the United States and Namibia seek increased bilateral trade and investment. The U.S.-Namibia commercial relationship is growing, and recent successes show that fostering increased trade and investment through mechanisms like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Prosper Africa, Power Africa, and other infrastructure and economic initiatives are critical components of our efforts to accelerate economic development in Namibia. If confirmed, I will facilitate commercial relationships and call for a pro-business and pro-innovation policy environment. We will expand opportunities for U.S. and Namibian businesses and accelerate equitable and inclusive development. Creating opportunities for planning and security partnerships will allow us to advance our priorities as Namibia grows in strategic importance as an anchor for activity in the south Atlantic.

Finally, if confirmed, I will focus on our continued investment in people. Once facing one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, Namibia became a flagship country for the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program. It is now one of the few highly affected countries in the world nearing epidemic control of HIV/AIDS. Our investment of over USD \$1 billion in PEPFAR funds to Namibia since 2004 has saved thousands of lives and been a force multiplier for our bilateral relationship, fostering cooperation in areas other than health. The next chapter in our partnership with Namibia must ensure a resilient, well-equipped, civically engaged population – especially among Namibia's youth. If confirmed, I will use our resources to empower current and future generations to partner with us to respond to global threats and opportunities and to adapt to longer-term economic, social, and environmental challenges.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I thank you again for this opportunity and look forward to answering your questions.