

Statement of Carrin F. Patman
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Iceland
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
July 28, 2022

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today as the President's nominee for the United States Ambassador to Iceland. I am honored and deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

I'm also deeply appreciative for the support of my home state Senators, Senator Cornyn and Senator Cruz.

And I'm joined today by my husband, Jim Derrick, without whose love and support I would not be before you.

This nomination is particularly meaningful to me because I grew up in a family of public servants. My dad, Bill Patman, and my paternal grandfather, Wright Patman, both served in the United States House of Representatives. My maternal grandfather, Fred Mauritz, whose parents immigrated from Iceland's fellow Arctic country, Sweden, was a Texas State Senator. My mother's Scandinavian heritage was so important to her that she raised the money to establish the Swedish Excellence Endowment at the University of Texas and was awarded the Royal Order of the Polar Star by the King of Sweden. So being nominated for this public service role, and to a country representing my own Nordic heritage, is deeply special.

Moreover, it is a critical time in which to serve in this role, *and* in Iceland. Iceland has long been an important and highly valued ally. It is a strong democracy whose bedrock values mirror our own, a founding member of NATO, and a security partner with the United States for over 70 years. Iceland is a fellow Arctic nation with whom we have long cooperated on Arctic issues, and a country of great geostrategic importance to us and the world, as we collectively face concerning threats from other powers.

I have been blessed with opportunities that have prepared me to be a chief of mission, and to build consensus among diverse stakeholders. Most recently, I led the Houston region's \$1 billion transit agency serving almost 4 million people, bringing together the public and private sectors to develop and then secure overwhelming voter approval of a multi-billion-dollar plan to expand service, including to traditionally underserved constituencies. During several decades as a trial lawyer, I mastered complex and challenging cases, persuaded decision makers and often resolved disputes out-of-court even among antagonistic parties – one of my first cases was in then Judge Cornyn's court! -- and was elected to multiple terms on our international law firm's management committee. And of course, I've had a lifelong involvement in public service through my family's service as well as my own.

I'm thrilled to be nominated to serve in Iceland. The United States and Iceland cooperate on many important issues, from transatlantic security, to protecting fundamental human rights, to

combating climate change, to sustainably developing the Arctic. If confirmed, the following are top priorities I would seek to advance:

First, to protect the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Iceland, including those under Chief of Mission authority, Embassy personnel and their families, and U.S. tourists. More tourists visit Iceland from the United States than from any other country.

Second, to advance our shared security interests. Iceland's key location right between North America and Europe, and at the center of the critical maritime Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap, is now even more important as melting ice increases maritime traffic in the Arctic. Russia and the People's Republic of China understand the strategic importance of Iceland, both economically and militarily, and if confirmed, I will seek to deepen our security cooperation with Iceland and support Iceland in managing these challenges.

Third, if confirmed, I would seek to strengthen our economic relationship. The United States is Iceland's most important single-country trading partner, with great opportunities for additional trade and investment.

Fourth, Iceland plays a vital role in sustaining our planet, not only as an important site for research and understanding of climate developments, but also as a world leader in renewable hydropower and geothermal energy, and a pioneer in carbon storage.

Fifth, as a fellow member of the Arctic Council, Iceland is an instrumental partner in shaping Arctic policy, and if confirmed I will work closely with Iceland on Arctic issues.

Additionally, if confirmed, I will promote and strengthen people-to-people ties with Iceland through exchange programs and robust public diplomacy efforts.

I also look forward to working with Congress to further U.S. priorities in Iceland.

It would be a privilege and honor of a lifetime to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Iceland. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.