

Statement of Douglas Holder
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 30, 2026

Thank you, Senator Scott, for your friendship and your leadership in Florida and your kind words. Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria. I am deeply grateful to President Trump for the trust he has placed in me with this nomination, and I am committed to serving the United States with dedication and integrity in this important role.

I would first like to express my sincere gratitude to my Father Doug Sr., Carolyn Ann, Mother Judy Marler, Sister Kerry, Daughter, Channing, as well as the rest of my family, friends, and colleagues, whose encouragement and support have been invaluable throughout my career. I am also deeply appreciative of the dedicated professionals at the Office of Government Ethics, the Department of State, and the many individuals across the Administration who guided me through the nomination process and worked diligently to bring me to this hearing today. From my early years in the private sector to my service in the Florida House of Representatives and my subsequent work advising businesses and organizations across Florida, I have been fortunate to work alongside exceptional people who have reinforced the importance of integrity, accountability, and building lasting relationships.

The experiences I have gained over the past three decades—in business, public service, and community leadership have given me the opportunity to work with people from diverse backgrounds, solve complex challenges, and build consensus in pursuit of meaningful results. Those experiences have shaped my approach to leadership and prepared me for the responsibilities of this nomination. I have already developed a deep appreciation for Bulgaria's rich history, vibrant culture, and resilient people, and I look forward to learning even more from our Bulgarian friends and partners. If confirmed, I am eager to dedicate my energy to strengthening the enduring partnership between our two nations, expanding opportunities for cooperation, and making a meaningful and lasting contribution to the relationship between the United States and Bulgaria.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Bulgaria, my top priorities will be to protect U.S. citizens and advance American interests. The United States and Bulgaria established diplomatic relations in 1903. For more than a century, our strong diplomatic and economic ties have improved the lives of citizens of both our countries.

If confirmed, I will further this relationship by promoting American values and interests, fostering economic growth, and strengthening our people-to-people ties. I will also work tirelessly to provide the necessary support and resources to United States citizens living in, and visiting, Bulgaria.

As a member of NATO, Bulgarians have stepped up to invest resources in our collective defense – spending more than two percent GDP on defense in 2025. Located on the Black Sea, Bulgaria is a critical ally in ensuring the security of the region. If confirmed, I will work closely with Bulgarian counterparts to strengthen our defense cooperation and help put them on a credible pathway to meet their Hague Summit commitments by 2035.

If confirmed, I will also focus on economic diplomacy. The United States and Bulgaria enjoy a strong economic relationship, but we can improve commercial ties, especially in the energy sector, AI, and critical minerals. I will promote American exports and encourage Bulgarian investment in the United States, which will create jobs and opportunities for American workers.

In conclusion, I am honored to be considered for the role of Ambassador to Bulgaria. If confirmed, I will lead our Mission to advance our priorities, protect American citizens, and strengthen the bonds between our two countries. I look forward to working with this Committee and Bulgaria to achieve these important goals.

Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome your questions.