

Statement of Peter Hoekstra
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Canada
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 13, 2025

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Committee Members, it is an honor to be with you today.

I am deeply appreciative to President Trump for his nomination to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Canada. With your concurrence and approval, I look forward to beginning my work in Canada and once again serving the people of the United States of America.

As all of you who are a part of public service know, it takes the support of our families and our community to make our service possible. I would like to recognize Diane, my wife of very nearly 50 years, for her unconditional love and support. Our children have ridden out the joys and frustrations of having a congressman and ambassador as a father with grace, understanding, and a dedication of their own. Our time in public service has been special and rewarding for all of us.

I'm also appreciative of the relationship that Shefali Duggal and I built over the last four years she has served as the ambassador to the Netherlands during President Biden's Administration. And I'd like to thank David Cohen, the former U.S. ambassador to Canada for his commitment to work with me, should I be confirmed. Demonstrating these relationships across party lines sends a strong message to our host countries.

This is a special opportunity. I am a native Dutchman. I was born in the Netherlands in 1953. In 1956 my parents immigrated to the United States with their three young children. For them it was the beginning of an adventure in "the land of opportunity." They had some previous experience with Americans and North Americans. It was the Allied effort that liberated the Netherlands, but specifically Canadians troops who liberated the northern parts of an occupied Netherlands in 1945. This is where my parents lived.

My parents made the commitment that they would become “Americans”, even changing the name of one of their children so that he would fit in. We lived the American dream. My dad operated a small bakery. My mom was a stay-at-home mother. Their kids all graduated from college and 36 years later they saw their son sworn into the United States Congress. America has been all they had hoped for, and more. For all of us, it became our new home.

I am humbled to be given this opportunity to represent the United States in Canada during this important time in our relationship. I recognize Canada’s longstanding friendship, our deep economic ties, and our strong military alliance. Canada is our most valuable trading partner, our largest source of foreign investment, and our largest source of energy imports. We share the longest border in the world – more than 5,500 miles – and some 120 land ports of entry.

Hailing from Michigan, I have a special appreciation for Canada as a neighbor. My home state is connected to Canada by four, and soon five, bridge crossings and a long maritime border in the Great Lakes, vital links that drive businesses, jobs, and livelihoods on both sides. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with Canada to strengthen our border security and to promote lawful trade and travel. We can do so much more, together. Canada is also a close partner in NATO and in NORAD, the world’s only binational military command. Canada is also part of the Five Eyes, the unique intelligence sharing arrangement with our closest friends. Together, we defend North America, including a rapidly evolving strategic situation in the Arctic. The U.S.-Canadian defense relationship has proven itself time and again. For more than a century, Canadians have bravely stood shoulder to shoulder with us on battlefields as we defended freedom together. If confirmed, I will press Canada to invest and work with the United States as we prepare to defend North America economically and militarily for the next century.

Personally, I look forward to working again with those who have dedicated their lives to the foreign service. In my three years as Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and eighteen years in Congress, I observed the talents and the skills of our State Department professionals firsthand. Their knowledge of how to conduct foreign policy is something that I have relied on in the past and will continue to rely on in the future. They are truly talented people.

As a congressman, I have interacted frequently with the Canadians on trade, military and intelligence, and cultural issues. This position will enable me to build on that experience if I am confirmed.

As an ambassador, it would be my honor to promote U.S. interests and protect American citizens. I recognize the obligation of implementing the strategies and policies of the United States. These policies are established in Washington, D.C. I recognize the responsibilities that I have to President Trump and Secretary of State Rubio; and as a man of the House, my responsibility to the Congress of the United States.

With your approval, I look forward to once again having the opportunity to serve this great country and the American people. Thank you very much for your time today. I look forward to answering your questions.