

Crystal Nix-Hines

Ambassador-Designate
to the
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Paul and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am grateful that President Obama has nominated me to represent the United States at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Thank you for your consideration.

I also want to thank Senator Coons for his kind introduction. We not only grew up in the same home state, but share a common interest in effecting societal change through public service.

Although regrettably my husband, David, is manning the fort in Los Angeles with our children, Julia, age 9, and Samuel, age 7, they are excited about the possibility of living in a new country.

I was raised in a home where public service was regarded as a duty and a privilege, more important than wealth or fame. My Mom, Dr. Lulu Mae Nix, who is here today, was an appointee in the Carter Administration and, at 85, still serves at-risk communities. My Dad, Theophilus R. Nix Sr., was only the second African-American lawyer to receive his law license in Delaware, and as such, felt a

profound responsibility to open pathways for minorities, women, the disenfranchised. As a beneficiary of these pioneer efforts, I, too, would like to effect positive change in the world. If confirmed, this appointment would afford a unique opportunity to do so.

Amid the devastation of World War II, UNESCO's founding members formed a global organization to foster cooperative projects focused on education, science and culture that sought to "build peace in the minds of men and women." But what was more like a think tank in 1945 today has evolved into an organization that does real, concrete work on the ground and facilitates collaboration among its 195 Member States. For the United States, participation in UNESCO has more than a "feel good" benefit. It significantly advances U.S. interests.

First, UNESCO allows us to promote quintessential American values. An agenda that includes concrete action to promote tolerance and respect for all; underscores the importance of press freedom; combats extremism including ethnic and religious violence; and protects world heritage represents who we are and what we believe will secure a better world.

UNESCO's initiatives to end illiteracy among women and girls, and use mobile technologies to expand educational access, mirror our view of what is important in a developed or developing society. More than 775 million adults

worldwide are illiterate; two-thirds of them are women. More than 57 million children are not in school. Access to quality education is essential for a nation to fully realize its potential. America's partnership in this effort creates friends in the world who understand our values and are equipped to help chart their nation's course.

Second, UNESCO advances our commercial interests. America has built its success upon a capitalist model. We invent, we make, we sell, we barter, and are integral to the economic system. As a result, companies such as Microsoft, Intel, Amazon, Google, Walt Disney, PepsiCo, and Proctor & Gamble, have lent UNESCO significant support, while expanding their global reach.

Economic benefits also flow from designation of a U.S. locale as a UNESCO World Heritage site, a program developed with U.S. leadership. An economic impact study estimates that if the San Antonio Franciscan Missions in Texas receives a World Heritage designation, it could generate more than \$100 million in tourism revenue, including over 1,000 new jobs. Similar benefits would flow to Poverty Point in rural northeast Louisiana. The U.S. currently has 21 World Heritage sites, including the spectacular Yosemite and Redwood State Parks in my home of California. If confirmed, I would work to expand the number of U.S. sites in this elite group.

Third, UNESCO promotes U.S. security interests. The only UN agency with a specific mandate for Holocaust education to prevent genocide and mass atrocities, UNESCO is doing creative work with youth, ethnic and religious minorities and other groups to combat prejudice and deter violence. UNESCO's coordination of the Global Tsunami Warning System and study of coastal erosion are integral to curbing widescale devastation, including along our own coastlines.

Now let me address the elephant in the room: the cut-off of U.S. contributions to UNESCO which resulted from the 2011 decision by UNESCO member states to admit the Palestinians as a state, despite our best efforts to prevent this action. The Administration has requested a national interest waiver to resume contributions because American interests will best be served by full engagement with UNESCO – not retrenchment. We are not a country that turns tail when decisions do not go our way. We are not a people who shrink from challenge. As Americans, we roll up our sleeves and get ready for the next round. In this case, that means returning to a full financial and diplomatic partnership with UNESCO – one that will best position the U.S. to advance our strategic and commercial interests, and protect those of our allies, including Israel.

I know first-hand from helping to establish the International War Crimes Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda how crucial U.S. leadership

is. Both through my background in law, media and government, and my temperament as an “*intrapreneur*” – a person who changes organizations from within – I am well-positioned to help UNESCO and the United States accomplish great things together.

Thank you. I welcome any questions.