

Statement of Chief of Protocol-Designate  
Capricia Penavic Marshall  
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you. I also want to thank Senator Sherrod Brown for his generous introduction and even more so for his hard work and dedication to the people of the Buckeye state, my home state of Ohio.

It is an honor and a privilege to be here today as President Obama's nominee for Chief of Protocol for the United States. I am deeply grateful for the trust he has placed in me for this esteemed position. Serving our country at this time of unprecedented opportunity and challenge is not a task I take lightly. If confirmed, I will guide the Office of the Chief of Protocol to support the Obama Administration's effort to renew America's leadership by advancing diplomacy and development in service of our country's interests and values. And I will attempt to do so with the grace and energy that so embodies the American spirit.

I also wish to extend my profound and heartfelt gratitude to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In addition to working with President Obama to address the country's greatest foreign policy challenges and opportunities, Secretary Clinton also leads the over 50,000 State Department employees around the world. She has been a mentor to me for almost two decades including eight years of service in the White House and, if confirmed, I would be honored to join her at Foggy Bottom.

I would also like to recognize my family: my supportive and compassionate husband, Rob and son, Cole; my brother Frank and his family; and my amazing parents, Frank and Mary Penavic, whose triumphant journey of hardship and strength is realized with me in this hearing room today.

As Secretary Clinton described in her confirmation hearings, and continues to demonstrate on her trips abroad and at Foggy Bottom, America must employ smart power, the full range of tools at our disposal -- diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural. The Office of the Chief of Protocol is an important tool of the President, Vice President and Secretary of State and is responsible for advancing the foreign policy goals of this Administration by cultivating an environment for successful diplomacy.

As a first generation American of Mexican and Croatian descent, the Office has a unique and personal significance to me. Growing up in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio, I lived with my Mexican grandmother and my home was known as the neighborhood's "United Nations" because so many people who visited hailed from different international backgrounds, cultures and perspectives.

Understanding and appreciating different cultures was a core part of my upbringing and it will continue to be a central part of the Office of the Chief of Protocol as it shares the fabric of

American life with the diplomatic community, and also seeks to represent the interests and wishes of visiting dignitaries. If confirmed, I will work to carry out these efforts with the five arms of the Protocol office: Visits, Ceremonials, Diplomatic Affairs, Blair House and Management. Each division plays a special role in promoting positive and collegial relations with diplomats here in the United States, and ensuring reciprocal treatment abroad.

The Visits division of Protocol works closely with entities from Customs and Border Protection to the White House to support Presidential delegations sent overseas and foreign officials visiting the United States. Protocol officers ensure a safe arrival and a smooth stay, arrange courtesies of the port and foreign press arrangements, and that's just the beginning.

The Ceremonials division executes official events for the Vice President and Secretary of State, coordinates programs for the Diplomatic Corps, maintains the Order of Precedence, and operates at full capacity thanks to the ambitious schedule of the Secretary and foreign policy agenda of the Administration.

Working closely with Ceremonials, I hope to expand the outreach efforts of the Office of the Chief of Protocol, which would provide the foreign diplomatic community with unique opportunities to engage with American leaders in economics, politics, energy innovation, science and technology and culture and the arts. As evidenced by the efforts of the President and the Secretary of State on international trips, this Administration espouses inclusion and outreach and this work will be an increasingly critical ingredient to diplomatic activities. If confirmed, I will embrace this unique opportunity to work with the diplomatic community and am enthusiastic about using new technologies to achieve this effort.

Diplomatic Affairs is responsible for determining the eligibility for privileges and immunities, and maintaining the records of diplomatic agents and employees officially assigned to the United States. It also manages the *agrément* process for foreign Chiefs of Mission and arranges the presentation of their credentials to the President and Secretary of State. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the dedicated people in this division on all matters, but especially on issues related to the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 as they pertain to domestic workers of diplomats and employees of international organizations. Diplomatic Affairs has been working with bureaus and offices within the Department to address and comply with the requirements of this Act and generally to further its goals. If confirmed, this will be a priority for me.

Another top priority is securing the resources necessary to maintain one of our country's landmarks and treasures: the official guest house to the President: Blair House. The residence is maintained by an indispensable staff of fourteen who care for the 110-room, 70,000 square foot complex. If confirmed, I will work with General Manager Randy Bumgardner and the Blair House Restoration Fund to address the recent findings of a GSA assessment to preserve this American gem.

I hope to bring to the position a mix of critical experience and unique perspective in addressing these priorities. As Assistant to the First Lady and Social Secretary during my time at the White House, President Clinton and the First Lady counted on me to carry out their vision for using

official social events to support and promote domestic and foreign policy objectives. I executed numerous state dinners and participated in the planning of many international conferences, summits and celebrations. One of my greatest collaborative challenges was the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of NATO, when over 40 Chiefs of State and Heads of Government and their delegations arrived in Washington in the midst of NATO's engagement in the Kosovo conflict. I was also afforded the opportunity to engage with many foreign leaders when I traveled with the President and First Lady to every continent on the globe. I am forever grateful to them for creating opportunities that have shaped my life and career today.

All of these experiences not only qualify me for the job, but also give me a thorough understanding of the importance of White House and interagency coordination. If confirmed, I look forward to once again working side by side with the White House staff and the dedicated employees at the Department of State and around the government to employ all of the Protocol tools at our disposal to deliver on the vision of President Obama, Vice President Biden and Secretary of State Clinton.

In closing, I want thank the many former Chiefs of Protocol, including Ambassadors Lloyd Hand, Molly Raiser, Mel French and Nancy Brinker who have personally offered me their support and best wishes, advice and counsel. I am especially grateful to Lucky Roosevelt with whom I share a first generation American commonality and appreciation for the American Dream. My parents arrived in this country with the dream of a better life for themselves and the hope of an even better one for their families. As Lucky so aptly states, I take great pride "in being an exponent of the American Dream."

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination. We are living in extraordinary times where we are facing both challenges and opportunities previous generations could never have imagined. If confirmed, I look forward to again serving my country and working with you and your staffs to advance our global agenda.

I look forward to your questions.

