

Statement of Natasha Franceschi
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Nicaragua
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 24, 2026

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Kaine, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Nicaragua.

I thank the President and Secretary Rubio for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will work closely with all of you to advance U.S. interests in Nicaragua and to support Nicaraguans' right to decide their country's future.

I am joined today by my mother, Hilary, without whose encouragement I would not be here today. She has visited me at every one of my eight overseas postings, except Iraq. As my embassy colleagues throughout the years can attest, no one represents the United States at an Independence Day celebration with greater pride and joy than my mom.

I also am grateful for the support of my partner, Ambassador Steve Fagin, who joins us virtually from Baghdad. As a Foreign Service couple, we have served the American people together in multiple assignments, as well as during lengthy separations.

I would not be here without the support and guidance of other family members, lifelong friends who have traveled from California to join me today, and colleagues from across the Foreign and Civil Service who have tuned in online. I am deeply thankful for all of their support.

I have built my 25-year Foreign Service career promoting and protecting American interests in some of the world's most complicated political environments.

I have advanced U.S. policies in sensitive contexts; held the line with undemocratic regimes that violate their citizens' human rights and religious freedom; and responded to every challenge with clarity, discipline, and fidelity to the United States Constitution.

Throughout my career, I have worked on the questions that define my nomination: how to bring authoritarians to the table, work with governments committed to peace and stability to navigate away from brutal regimes and give voice to the will

of people suffering under tyranny. The status quo in Nicaragua is intolerable to its people, its neighbors, and the United States.

President Trump has reasserted American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere and secured our national security interests, making the region safer, stronger, and more prosperous. In Nicaragua, this means protecting American citizens and U.S. commercial interests, stopping illegal immigration, disrupting and deterring adversarial alliances, and ending the human rights and religious freedom crisis.

If confirmed, I will sustain diplomatic pressure toward a solution in Nicaragua that advances American prosperity and security. I will make clear the Administration will not tolerate threats and abuses, including confiscation of U.S.-owned properties and assets and repression of Christians, particularly the Catholic Church and its parishioners. I will use the full range of diplomatic tools and support our voice for freedom at the OAS, including through the foreign ministerial process underway and garnering significant collective regional support. I will also work with those committed to our same goals to ensure that Nicaragua cannot challenge a stronger, safer, more prosperous, and free western hemisphere.

If confirmed, I am confident that, working with this Committee, we can secure U.S. interests and deliver real results for the American people. I will never lose sight of the Nicaraguan people, at home and in exile, who all deserve better than their captors and abusers.

It is well past time that Nicaragua return into the fold of prosperous American nations, free from totalitarianism.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Committee Members, thank you for your consideration. I welcome your questions.