

Statement of Tobin J. Bradley
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 26, 2023

Chairwoman Duckworth, Ranking Member Hagerty, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala.

I would like to thank President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have shown in me and the privilege and responsibility to be considered for this position. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the Congress more broadly to advance U.S. interests in Guatemala.

In over 25 years as a career Foreign Service Officer, I have had the honor to represent the United States in Latin America, the Near East, and Europe, as well as multiple postings here in Washington, including service at the National Security Council under two presidents. Whether supporting the first democratic elections in post-war Iraq, strengthening the NATO alliance, protecting American citizens in Matamoros, or building partner capabilities in dozens of countries to combat drugs and transnational crime, I have dedicated my career to advancing U.S. security and democratic values. I have also sought to cultivate innovation and apply creative problem solving to the challenges that face us and our partners.

I would like to acknowledge my family here with me today. They have inspired and anchored me on this journey. Following his father's sacrifice in World War II, my father served with distinction as a city manager for 45 years; my mother was a teacher, church volunteer, and medical service provider helping thousands; my partner, a proud immigrant who has stood with me for 25 years through warzones and overnight shifts, dedicated years as a D.C. public schoolteacher. My sister, who represents all my siblings, is a part of a proud Navy family that has deployed around the world in service to our nation. They have taught me anything is possible with education, determination, and hard work. Finally, I know my Uncle Charlie Ward, who

served the Senate for 25 years as Chief of Staff to Speaker Carl Albert and Senator Boren, would be so proud to see me appear before you today.

In addition to its rich culture, significant world heritage sites, and abundant biodiversity, Guatemala's role in the region and beyond is vital. Guatemala has the largest economy in Central America. It is a critical transit node for people, as well as licit and illicit goods. It has a strong and vibrant civil society. Guatemala's diplomatic ties with Taiwan, support for Israel, and condemnation of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine provide a foundation to advance broader strategic interests. Our geography and strong family bonds between our two countries make our paths inextricably shared.

We have much to gain from cooperation that supports our security and regional prosperity. Thanks to strong U.S. congressional support, U.S. foreign assistance is advancing that vision. If confirmed, I will be a conscientious steward of U.S. taxpayer money. I will endeavor with this committee, the current and incoming Guatemalan government, civil society, and the private sector to address root causes of irregular migration – violence, corruption, poverty, and malnutrition. I will also promote inclusive economic opportunity and a level playing field for U.S. businesses so that Americans and Guatemalans can prosper together.

The United States and our international partners are closely monitoring Guatemala's runoff presidential election on August 20. A leader chosen freely and fairly, in accordance with Guatemala's constitution, would have the mandate of the Guatemalan people, and in turn, be an effective partner for the United States. While there are many challenges, Guatemala's close cooperation on key issues provides opportunities. Guatemala is implementing the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection and cooperating to strengthen reintegration services for returned unaccompanied children and families. Guatemala works with U.S. law enforcement to stem violence, combat transnational crime, and convict human traffickers under new laws. If confirmed, I will work to help Guatemala strengthen its own border against illicit trafficking and continue to advance safe, lawful, and humane migration management. I will also

support Guatemalan authorities and civil society to strengthen Guatemala's democratic and legal institutions needed to sustain the peace that ended 36 years of conflict.

The U.S. Embassy in Guatemala is one of the largest in the hemisphere, with a talented and committed team of U.S. and local staff. If confirmed, I would be honored to lead them. My utmost priority will be to protect the safety and security of the embassy team and of U.S. citizens who live in and visit Guatemala. I would be thrilled to return to this vibrant region and work to harness our collective strengths to champion U.S. interests.

Chairwoman Duckworth, Ranking Member Hagerty, and distinguished members of the committee, if confirmed, I look forward to partnering with you to further strengthen the U.S.-Guatemalan relationship. Thank you for the opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.