

**Statement of Ambassador Bridget A. Brink
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
May 10, 2022**

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of this Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Biden's nominee for the position of Ambassador to Ukraine. I am grateful for the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. If confirmed, I commit to work with you to advance U.S. interests in Ukraine.

I am a career Foreign Service officer with 25 years of experience. My career focus has been supporting the freedom and independence of the countries of Europe and greater Europe. I view this work to which I have dedicated my professional life as fundamental to our own security. Our collective effort has created more stable and capable allies and partners, opened markets for U.S. goods, and advanced strategic priorities which protect and defend the people of the United States.

I am deeply proud to have advanced the longstanding strategic goal of a Europe “whole, free, and at peace” over five U.S. administrations. I appreciate the leadership of the members of this committee and our work to resolve conflicts in the Balkans, push back against Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and support reforms in young democracies on the edge of Europe. I know America is its most influential overseas when we have bipartisan support at home with regard to our core national interests.

I appreciate this bipartisan support as we face the biggest threat to peace and security to Europe in decades. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to continue our commitment to a sovereign, democratic, and independent Ukraine, free to choose its own future. To paraphrase the President: in this battle between democracy and autocracy, between freedom and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force, freedom must prevail. Ukraine must prevail.

If confirmed, my number one priority would be to advance the United States’ strategic interests, which includes a democratic, sovereign, independent, and prosperous Ukraine. The courage and heroism of President Zelenskyy and the people of Ukraine has inspired us all. If confirmed, I pledge to work with Congress to help Ukraine succeed on the battlefield and at the negotiating table. We will ensure that Russia’s effort to dominate Ukraine is a strategic failure. I also commit to working with you to continue to provide humanitarian assistance and to pursue accountability for war crimes. In supporting Ukraine, we are defending the principles of sovereignty and independence and the international rules-based order.

My second priority would be to help Ukraine rebuild. We support the decision of the people of Ukraine to integrate more closely with Europe and to undertake the serious and difficult internal reforms needed to achieve that goal. It will require Ukraine to seize this historic

opportunity with the eyes of the world upon it. A democratic, sovereign, and independent Ukraine is also in the interest of the United States.

Finally, I take as my most solemn responsibility the safety and security of the people of our Embassy. While we will not be able to conduct diplomacy in a war zone without risk, I pledge to work with my leadership and our team to balance risk against our goals in a way that advances our national interests in Ukraine.

Coming from Grand Rapids, Michigan, I entered public service with the values I learned from my family and community. I want to relay how proud I am to be a part of our career Foreign Service, underscore the vital role it plays in promoting U.S. interests and values, and pay tribute to the people and their families who sacrifice so much to serve our great country. I want to salute the current Charge d'Affaires, Kristina Kvien, for her exceptional service and the team of dedicated Americans and Ukrainians who make up the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. If confirmed, it will be an honor of a lifetime to join this team and lead our collective effort there.

I want to conclude by recognizing those who have made it possible for me to be here today. First, I want to thank my husband and fellow Foreign Service officer, Nicholas Higgins, for his love and support for over 29 years. We are so proud of our children, Jack and Cole. As part of a diplomatic family that has moved every few years for their entire lives, I want to thank them for their own service to our country. I would also like to thank my mother, Gwen Brink; father and stepmother, John and Judy Brink; sister, Joanna Brink; nephews, Andrew and Andre Brink; aunt and uncle, Mary and Patrick Sayne; my in-laws; Adrienne and Kingsley Foster and my brothers and sisters-in-law for being bedrocks of support every step of the way.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.