

Statement of Arthur W. Brown
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
May 4, 2023

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the trust and confidence they have shown in nominating me for this position.

I appear before you today accompanied by my wife; Krista; I would first like to publicly honor you and express my deep gratitude and love for you. We began our public service journey in West Africa, where we met in 1991 serving as Peace Corps Volunteers (you in Togo and I in Benin). Today, we are the proud parents of Arrington (19) and Ella (15) who are in school and could not be here today. Krista, without your sacrifices, we would not have completed over 30 years of service with the federal government doing the nation's work.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve the United States of America. My career as a Foreign Service Officer has taken me to southwest Asia, Central America, Africa, and the Caribbean, and if confirmed, I believe my experience will serve me well in Ecuador. I have experience in expanding public health and education programs, promoting economic development and environmental activities, and strengthening governance and rule of law projects. I have dedicated decades of service to helping countries show that democracy can deliver. I look forward to leading our dynamic interagency teams at the embassy in Quito and our consulate in Guayaquil. U.S. Mission Ecuador is doing amazing work advancing this important bilateral relationship, and I would use my experience, if confirmed, to bolster the team's outstanding efforts.

If confirmed, the safety and security of U.S. citizens and Mission personnel will be my top priority. I will prioritize initiatives that protect and advance the interests of U.S. citizens in Ecuador.

Ecuador is a strategic partner for the United States in South America as we see democratic governance under pressure around the region. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will support the implementation of the proposed Innovation and Development in Ecuador (IDEA) Act, and the U.S.-Ecuador Partnership Act of 2022. Strengthening our bilateral relationship and continued cooperation with Ecuador through deepening trade and commercial ties, increasing cooperation on security matters, promoting mutual and inclusive economic growth, and cooperating on issues of mutual interest will be key priorities for me.

As the United States and Ecuador confront our shared challenges, if confirmed as the next ambassador, I will work with the Government of Ecuador, the private sector, civil society institutions, and Ecuadorian citizens to advance democracy, promote human rights and the

inclusion of historically marginalized communities, support anticorruption and crime prevention programs, and promote inclusive economic development and environmental conservation efforts.

Ecuador faces many challenges, including increased violence perpetrated by transnational criminal organizations. As cartels expand their influence, local gangs aligned with them engage in open warfare to control drug trafficking routes. Such rivalries have provoked the worst violence in Ecuador's recent history, with increased prison deaths and a record homicide rate in 2022. The Ecuadorian government and the Ecuadorian people have not backed down from these drug trafficking organizations. However, they need our support. U.S. government assistance helped Ecuador interdict hundreds of metric tons of drugs in 2022. If confirmed, I will focus on our mutual security interests, continuing initiatives led by our diplomatic mission in Ecuador to bolster the government's efforts to combat drug trafficking and associated violence.

In addition to these challenges, there are opportunities. Ecuador joined the UN Security Council in January for the fourth time at a critical juncture in history. If confirmed, I will further our collaboration with the Ecuadorian government, in conjunction with our mission to the UN, to support Ecuador as it stands for its democratic principles.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the committee, thank you for considering my nomination today. I look forward to any questions you may have.