

**Opening Statement of Kelly Adams-Smith
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
May 9, 2024**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Ricketts, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I am immensely grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for putting their trust in me at this critical time. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this Committee to advance U.S. interests and strengthen our strategic partnership with Moldova.

I would not be here today without the love and support of my family, friends, and colleagues. In particular, I would like to thank my husband Steve, who is also a career Foreign Service Officer, and our two children Sophie and Ben. Their dedication to public service and the support they have given me through multiple Foreign Service tours has been inspirational. I am also grateful to my parents Edward and Carol Adams, my sister and brother Debra and Ed, and my late mother Anna Cramer. They always championed my education and career in service and never stopped believing in the American dream that allowed this Jersey girl with working class origins to represent the United States abroad. Finally, I also want to recognize my mother-in-law Ginny Purvis-Smith and my late father-in-law Terry Purvis-Smith, who passed away this week. Terry also served in the Foreign Service and would have loved to attend today.

I have dedicated 29 years in government service to advancing and protecting U.S. interests in Europe, with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe. I am convinced that support for the freedom, independence, and western integration of countries in this region is fundamental to U.S. security. This is especially true for a country like Moldova, which faces a moment in history that is filled with great opportunity and tremendous risk. If confirmed, I look forward to leading the talented team at Embassy Chisinau, who work tirelessly to advance the U.S.-Moldova relationship. I pledge to be a responsible steward of U.S. resources and I will prioritize the safety and security of those in Embassy Chisinau and of U.S. citizens in Moldova.

The Government of Moldova faces a historic geopolitical window of opportunity to secure the country's democracy, security, and western orientation. Russia's war of aggression in Moldova's neighbor Ukraine has forced Moldova to confront significant security, humanitarian, and energy impacts. With U.S. and European assistance, Moldova has managed these threats and welcomed refugees while pushing forward on an ambitious reform agenda designed to lead to western integration. At the same time, Moldova's success in the face of these challenges has made it even more of a target for Russian malign influence.

Since Russia's further invasion of Ukraine, the United States has significantly expanded its support for Moldova's resilience. I want to thank the Committee for its strong bipartisan leadership and support for this essential assistance. If confirmed, I will mobilize our personnel, resources, and partnerships to continue to support Moldova's efforts to protect its democracy, increase its prosperity, and enhance its security in the face of Russian destabilization attempts.

The western-oriented, democratic future Moldova seeks will not be possible without continued, significant progress in advancing rule of law and countering corruption. Understanding that corruption within Moldova's institutions has undermined political stability and economic growth in the past, the current government has made justice sector reform a top priority. If I am confirmed, I will support U.S. efforts to strengthen the capacity of Moldovan government institutions to investigate and prosecute crimes of corruption.

Moldova has made more progress on its EU accession path in the past two years than it has in all its post-Soviet history. Having served in five EU member states and from my current assignment as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to the European Union, I am convinced that there is no more efficient way for a country like Moldova to achieve the future it seeks than to go through the rigorous process of EU accession. If I am confirmed, I will use my EU knowledge, experience, and contacts to ensure our actions and assistance support Moldova's accession path, making it a stronger partner for the United States. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.