

**Statement of Jennifer L. Johnson**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**May 17, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Ricketts, and distinguished Members of the Committee.

I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia. I am grateful for the confidence that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me with this nomination.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress to advance U.S. national security interests by reinvigorating our ties with our Pacific neighbors, particularly with our close friend and partner, the Federated States of Micronesia.

I'd like to thank my family – my husband, Pat, and my daughters Maryn and Nola – for their support and willingness to join me around the world. I'd also like to thank my parents, siblings, and Foreign Service colleagues and mentors. I am deeply grateful for their guidance, inspiration, and support.

My interest in the Pacific Islands began when I was a student in Australia, and it has only grown over the years. Serving the American people is a tradition that runs deep in my family, and I feel privileged to continue it. My grandfathers both served in World War II – one with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, and the other received a Purple Heart while serving with the U.S. Army. My parents were schoolteachers, as is my sister, my grandmother and mother-in-law were nurses, and my father-in-law is a U.S. Marine.

The United States is a Pacific nation. The United States and the Federated States of Micronesia enjoy a partnership based on deep historical, economic, and cultural ties, and our shared democratic values. If confirmed, I look forward to deepening the already strong ties between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia by supporting their sovereignty and security and working together to strengthen democratic institutions and human rights.

For the Federated States of Micronesia, agreement on economic assistance related to the Compact is imminent. If confirmed, and pending the approval of implementing legislation, I look forward to operationalizing the new agreements to make tangible and lasting improvements in the lives of the citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw the strength of this partnership. The Federated States of Micronesia was included, along with U.S. states and territories, as part of the rollout of vaccines and the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment from the very start. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Micronesia to help the country continue to recover from the economic effects of the pandemic, strengthen the health care system against future pandemics, and combat transnational threats.

The Pacific Islands are highly vulnerable to natural disasters, whose devastating effects have imperiled the livelihoods of many Micronesians. If confirmed, I will work closely with the government, likeminded partners, and multilateral development banks to improve disaster preparedness and strengthen climate resilience.

The Federated States of Micronesia does not have armed forces of its own. Instead, the United States is responsible for its defense, and their citizens, in turn, serve in the U.S. military. Their service is a sacred trust and if confirmed, I will work with the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve the assistance Micronesian veterans receive.

If confirmed, I look forward to supporting our deep people-to-people ties. Existing initiatives, such as the Young Pacific Leaders Program, have been enriched by Micronesian participation. I will also help Micronesia to participate in new areas, including the U.S.-Pacific Institute for Rising Leaders.

Over the course of my career, one thing has always been clear: our people are our most important asset. If confirmed, I will make the safety and security of U.S. citizens and our Embassy team my top priority. As we expand our footprint across the Pacific, I will support our teams in these remote locations to develop a new cadre of Pacific experts who will be ready to lead in the decades ahead on Indo-Pacific issues.

Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Ricketts, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the members of this Committee to advance U.S. interests in the Federated States of Micronesia and the broader Indo-Pacific and to sustain and expand the progress we have achieved in this important partnership.

Thank you for inviting me here today and considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.