

Statement of Kyle McCarter
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya
Submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 31, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today.

I am grateful to President Trump for nominating me for this position and to Secretary Pompeo for his support. Thank you Senator Inhofe for your gracious introduction and members of the Illinois Congressional delegation for your tremendous support.

I am grateful to have with me today my beautiful wife of 34 years, Victoria, who continually advocates for the empowerment of women in both the United States and Kenya; and my son, Austin McCarter, a graduate of my alma mater, Oral Roberts University, now running our family manufacturing company. My other son, Air Force Captain Zachary McCarter, who was born in Kijabe, Kenya, is not able to attend today as he is on assignment in Africa. I am also thankful to my mother, Linda McCarter who is unable to be here today. She and my father showed me first hand how to live a life of sacrifice to others and for that I am eternally grateful. I am motivated by the legacy of my father, Lt. Col (Ret) Chaplain Calvin McCarter who passed in March the day after receiving the news of my nomination. I am inspired also by the memories of my daughter, Amber, who lived in Kenya with us for two years.

It is an especially high honor for me to be nominated to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, a country I have come to know very well and whose people I admire greatly. More than 30 years ago, I moved with my wife Victoria and our daughter Amber, who was two at the time, to a distant place named Tharaka, Kenya. It was there that we built a medical clinic that continues to operate today, serving over 15,000 patients a year. The work now serves numerous HIV positive families, operates a K-8 school and a children's home. In those early days, I never imagined that I would return to Kenya countless times to lead various development projects like this and have the opportunity to combine this with my experience from serving as a State Senator in the Illinois General Assembly.

If confirmed, I will take as my first responsibility to lead the dedicated team of Foreign Service professionals and their families from the U.S. State Department and many other U.S. government agencies at our embassy in Nairobi. Serving with this team of dedicated civil servants, who work daily to promote America's interests in Kenya, would be a great honor.

I will use my experiences in business, public service, and philanthropy to build on the already strong bilateral relationship between the United States and Kenya. I will continue to demonstrate the goodwill and generosity of the American people through important programs like PEPFAR and I will ensure ongoing investments are made in critical efforts to defeat terrorism in the region. To help put Americans here at home back to work, I will be a resource for American companies doing business in Kenya and work to promote partnerships that advance our common interests.

The relationship between the United States and Kenya is strong and, if confirmed, I am confident that we can build on this already solid foundation. Kenya is a leader in East Africa and with continued support from the United States, I believe that we can make strides in promoting greater freedom and opportunity, which has the potential to bring new investments to Kenya that create jobs for both our countries.

My experience gained from building businesses and making win-win deals has prepared me to work in the best interest of the American taxpayers, while at the same time stimulating the economy of Kenya with respectful well paying jobs. We must continue to prove to Kenya that America is the greatest of allies. I am also encouraged by the recent handshake between President Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga.

The security of Americans in Kenya comes first. I take seriously the responsibility to protect Americans living and working abroad as well as the need to meet our broader national security objectives. I will work diligently to prevent Kenya from being used as a gateway for terrorists. This is an immediate concern for the people of Kenya, America and the rest of the world. Maintaining a strong strategic alliance with Kenya to fight the terrorist threat from Al Shabab is a priority and, if confirmed, it will rank as one of my highest. We must continue our efforts to share intelligence and work together on counter-terrorism initiatives.

I understand the real challenge of the job. I take this opportunity, if confirmed, as an assignment to serve. My talents, my passion and my love and loyalty to our great country will be invested in the mission. My success in life as a husband, father, business owner, and legislator is based on serving others and this challenge, with your approval, will receive that same level of dedication.