

Statement for the Record
Mr. Alan Robert Swendiman
Nominee for Peace Corps Deputy Director
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
April 9, 2019
3:00 PM

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, and other distinguished Members of the Committee; it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

I appreciate the President's confidence in me, and Director Olsen's support to join her team of dedicated individuals working toward building stronger partnerships around the world.

In addition, I would like to recognize my family. I am well aware that my public service career has been possible because of the unconditional support my wife Kathy, daughter Shelley, and son Robert, have provided over the years.

The Peace Corps is as important and relevant as ever. It represents the face of this nation. Volunteers build positive perceptions of this country in the minds and hearts of the people served throughout the world. And the impact of Peace Corps volunteers goes far beyond their time in service.

I have witnessed this when I visited my daughter, Shelley, who was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine. She worked alongside her Ukrainian teacher counterparts to inspire the next generation of students to build and improve their English proficiency. Some of her now former students still reach out to her today. After she returned to the United States, Shelley continued her public service. She currently works at the Department of Labor – Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor & Human Trafficking - overseeing grants made by this nation to foreign countries to stem the tide of child and forced labor.

Public service is important and meaningful to me, as it is to her.

I wholeheartedly believe in the idea of service above self, that is, to serve my country and be part of something far greater than myself. With that sense of mission, I am here today to share with you my commitment to advance agency priorities focusing on ensuring that the Peace Corps remains the premiere Volunteer program in the United States, while at the same time continuing to improve the application experience and mechanisms to promote the health, safety and security of Americans representing our country in the communities throughout the world where Peace Corps Volunteers are serving.

I am confident my years of experience with other federal agencies, including USAID, will transfer to Peace Corps' environment and, if confirmed, those experiences will guide my

recommendations to complement Director's Olsen priorities, including strengthening the country portfolio review process.

If implemented properly, this process can ensure that the Peace Corps is preparing Volunteers to serve in partner countries who share the same vision of maximizing the impact of projects that can be completed with finite resources.

Coupled with the passion of Volunteers, Peace Corps programs are designed to assist communities who are working hard to improve their economic opportunities. As you know, this approach has been a core mission of Peace Corps since its inception and it ensures that taxpayer dollars are used wisely in countries that have solidified their commitment by entering into a bilateral country agreement with the agency to guide expectations of our cooperation.

Equally important, I am committed to advancing procedures that have been established by subject matter experts to continue assessing the training and service delivery systems that are responsible for the health, safety, and security of all Volunteers. As a parent of a Return Peace Corps Volunteer, I have experienced first-hand the inspiring work a healthy and safe Volunteer can accomplish when he or she is properly trained and supported.

If confirmed, I look forward to supporting current and future Peace Corps Volunteers in the same manner Peace Corps professionals supported my daughter during her pre-departure and field service ten years ago. This includes working closely with experts and country directors to reduce risks Volunteers face every day, including a professional and compassionate response to sexual assaults and crimes when they occur.

I want families to know that, if confirmed, I will work diligently to ensure Peace Corps provides the best response and assistance in case their loved ones experience a crime during their service. I have a vested interest.

In closing, I also want to thank your staff and Peace Corps staffers who helped me prepare for today's hearing.

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, and other distinguished Members of the Committee; again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I look forward to your questions.
