

**NOMINATIONS OF THE 113TH
CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION**

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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MAY 7 THROUGH DECEMBER 17, 2013
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Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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NOMINATION OF CATHERINE M. RUSSELL

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2013

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

Catherine M. Russell, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:28 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Barbara Boxer presiding.

Present: Senators Boxer, Kaine, and Paul.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BARBARA BOXER, U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA

Senator BOXER. Good afternoon. Today, we meet to consider the nomination of Catherine Russell to be the United States Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues.

I want to welcome Ms. Russell, and congratulations on your nomination.

If confirmed, Ms. Russell will play an important role as our country's second Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. This position and the office created by President Obama in 2009 is strongly supported by Hillary Clinton, our former Secretary of State, has elevated the status of women's issues in U.S. foreign policy, and has helped ensure that the United States stands as a powerful advocate for the rights and empowerment of women and girls all over the world.

But as we know, despite the tremendous efforts of Secretary Clinton and our first Ambassador at Large, Melanne Vermeer, much work remains to be done. This important work ranges from ending the devastating scourge of violence against women and girls to ensuring that young girls have the opportunity to avoid child marriage and, instead, receive an education, to providing women and girls the opportunity to own and inherit property, to hold elected office, and to start small businesses.

Ms. Russell's distinguished resume indicates that she is up to the task. Most recently, she served as chief of staff to the second lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden, another tireless advocate for women's empowerment. Prior to her time in the White House, Ms. Russell served as senior advisor on international women's issues to our former chairman and current Vice President, Joe Biden.

Ms. Russell also served as an Associate Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice and as the staff director for the Senate Judiciary Committee. She attended Boston College, where she received her B.A. in philosophy, and George Washington University Law School, where she received her juris doctorate.

And I am so pleased that Senator Leahy is here. You could not have a finer Senator to introduce you. He is so respected and well loved here.

And Senator Leahy, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF HON. PATRICK LEAHY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VERMONT**

Senator LEAHY. Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I apologize for bursting in at the last moment. We have been doing hearings on the Voting Rights Act with—

Senator BOXER. Good.

Senator LEAHY [continuing]. Congressman Lewis and Congressman Sensenbrenner, a bipartisan panel.

But I really wanted to be here to introduce Cathy Russell, and you talked about all of the amazing things that she has done. I cannot think of anybody better for the President to pick to be U.S. Ambassador at Large for Women's Issues.

If I could just on a personal note, I do not want to take from something she is going to say, but she has a note from her two children here saying the fact that, "Mommy, we love you." So I knew when both those children were born because we have known Cathy and her husband, Tom, for so many years, known them for more than 25 years.

And I went back over the compilation like that, and I said this had to be the first 10-year-old we ever hired in here—

[Laughter.]

Senator LEAHY [continuing]. When she served as senior counsel on the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Technology and the Law. Brilliant mind. Uncanny ability, though, to take the most complex issues, get them down to where even a Senator like myself and others could understand it, but to make sure that Senators on both sides of the aisle knew that what she gave them was the best knowledge possible.

She wanted to serve as staff director to the full Senate Judiciary Committee several years later. Again, the women's issues in the Judiciary Committee, she worked on the bedrock of her qualifications for this role.

Then she became senior advisor to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She specialized in international women's issues. She helped draft the International Violence Against Women Act of 2007. And I know, Madam Chair, how hard you worked on the Violence Against Women Act here in the Senate and the House, and Cathy Russell worked to expand that worldwide.

I know that Dr. Biden, Jill Biden, has found Cathy to have been an invaluable chief of staff over the past 4 years. She assisted both Dr. Biden and the first lady to support women in military families through the Joining Forces Program.

She oversaw a governmental interagency process to develop the first United States strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based

violence globally. I mean, I could go on and on with all of these things about her.

If I could just close with this. She is able to handle the most complex issues and seeking the truth and being totally honest in it. But I have known her as a lawyer, as a person, as a mother, spouse of one of my best friends. And throughout all that time, I have been constantly impressed with her, thinking here is a person any one of us could rely on on any issue she took and know that she would be totally honest, totally loyal to this country.

And I think that it is wonderful she is willing to take this position.

Senator BOXER. Senator Leahy, let me say your words mean a lot to us. We are so pleased, and I am sure Ms. Russell is eternally pleased and grateful to you for this, all that you have to do. And we thank you for coming over here. We know you have a lot to do. So thank you so much.

And I have a hunch it is going to be smooth sailing. I do not see a lot of people here, which is an indication of that. We have a vote coming up soon. So we are going to hear from Ms. Russell, and if things go the way I plan, you will be out of here in time to take your wonderful husband for a celebratory cup of coffee. [Laughter.]

And I know that Tom Donilon is here. We are so grateful to you, sir, for your amazing contribution to this country.

And are there any other members of your family you wish to introduce?

Ms. RUSSELL. Senator, I think my brother-in-law, Mike Donilon, is here, and my cousin, Susie Saraf, is here.

Senator BOXER. Welcome.

Ms. RUSSELL. My children are not here today. One is at camp, and one is in school. So neither one of them is here today.

Senator BOXER. Well, that makes a lot of sense. So here is the deal. We would love you to synthesize your remarks to 5 minutes.

Ms. RUSSELL. OK.

Senator BOXER. I have some questions. If no one else shows up, that will be it.

Ms. RUSSELL. OK. Great.

Senator BOXER. This might go well. Go ahead.

STATEMENT OF CATHERINE M. RUSSELL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR AT LARGE FOR GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

Ms. RUSSELL. Senator Boxer, members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today.

I would like to thank Senator Leahy so very much for coming here to speak on my behalf.

I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for asking me to serve as the next Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues. I am humbled by their trust and by the prospect of following in the footsteps of Melanne Vermeer, who served in this position so extraordinarily during the President's first term.

Finally, I am grateful to share this day with my husband and my children, at least in spirit, Sarah and Teddy.

As Senator Leahy mentioned, I started my career in the Senate, first as a lawyer on the Judiciary subcommittee he chaired and

then as staff director of the full committee when Senator Biden was the chairman. I saw firsthand not only the vital work of the Senate, but also the expertise and careful deliberation that Senators and their staffs bring to the issues before them.

During my tenure as staff director of the committee, in 1994, Congress came together to pass the Violence Against Women Act. That legislation was important for many reasons, not least of which it made clear to all Americans that domestic violence was not a private family member—private family matter, but a crime. I am proud that landmark law has, indeed, made a difference in the lives of so many women in this country.

When I joined the Foreign Relations Committee staff more than a decade later, we sought to apply some of the same principles of the Violence Against Women Act to our global efforts against gender-based violence. We drafted the first International Violence Against Women Act legislation, which then-Senator Biden introduced in 2007.

My work on that legislation was informed in part by my experience with Women for Women International, an organization that helps women survivors of conflict rebuild their lives. I realize that while women are often targets in conflicts, they also have tremendous capacity not only to survive, but to thrive, to make better lives for themselves and their families, and to rebuild their communities and their countries.

While chief of staff to Dr. Jill Biden, I spearheaded an administration-wide effort to develop the U.S. strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally. It is my hope that this strategy and accompanying Executive order from President Obama will make a significant difference in efforts to ensure that all persons can live free from violence.

America's leadership in advancing the rights of women is vital not just to women themselves, but to our national security and economic stability. None of the world's most pressing economic, social, and political problems can be solved without the full participation of women.

As Secretary Kerry has said, gender equality is critical to our shared goals of prosperity, stability, and peace, and investing in women and girls worldwide is critical to advancing U.S. foreign policy.

Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Verveer made unprecedented progress not only in promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls abroad, but also in elevating women's issues in our foreign policy. They worked to integrate these issues into high-profile multilateral forums and bilateral dialogues and into the duties of our foreign and civil service.

If you grant me the privilege, I will work with Secretary Kerry to build upon this progress. I will continue to advocate at home and abroad that investing in women, advancing and protecting their rights, is not just the right thing to do morally, it is the smart thing to do economically and strategically.

I will focus my energies in six main areas. First, I will carry on with the critical work of moving the State Department to implement fully the Department's gender guidance, which requires that gender issues be incorporated into all aspects of diplomacy. I will

ensure that the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues remains a resource for the diplomats who will be advancing this work at our posts abroad.

Second, I will support efforts to expand women's entrepreneurship and economic participation. We know that women's potential to help grow economies is vast, yet still largely untapped. I will continue the Department's leadership in supporting women entrepreneurs in every region.

Next, I will provide strong leadership in implementing the United States first-ever National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. Today, with conflicts and transitions affecting millions, women must not only be protected from violence, but also be empowered to shape the futures of their countries.

I will work with global partners to expand women's political participation, ensuring that their voices are heard everywhere, especially in emerging democracies.

Next, the United States must be at the forefront of global efforts to address gender-based violence. The continuing reports of horrific violence against women and girls are simply unacceptable. I will work to help more women live in greater safety and gain access to health care, protection, and justice.

Finally, investing in women and girls is one of the most powerful forces for international development. We have seen that when a girl has a chance to go to school, has access to health care, and is kept free from violence, she will marry later, have healthier children, and earn income that she will invest back into her family and community, breaking the cycle of poverty.

I look forward to working with colleagues at USAID and PEPFAR to ensure strong investments in women and girls' health and education, in agriculture, child survival, nutrition, and preventing child marriage.

I am humbled by the task ahead, but eager to get to work. If confirmed, I am looking forward to the privilege of working with talented foreign and civil service members throughout the State Department to promote gender equality and advance the status of women around the world.

Most of all, I hope to work with each of you to advance our shared goals of global peace, prosperity, and security.

Thank you very much. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Russell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CATHERINE M. RUSSELL

Madame Chairwoman, Senator Paul, members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today. I would like to thank Senator Leahy for coming here to speak on my behalf.

I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for asking me to serve as the next Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues. I am humbled by their trust and by the prospect of following in the footsteps of Melanne Verveer, who served in this position so extraordinarily during the President's first term.

Finally, I am very grateful to share this day with my husband, Tom, and our children, Sarah and Teddy.

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Thank you very much. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator BOXER. Well, I must say that everything you said resonates mightily with me and just speaks to why this office is so important. And why, when I went to then-Chairman Kerry and asked that we have our first-ever subcommittee looking at the status of women throughout the world and he said yes, I knew it was a real breakthrough.

And there are many people out there in the audience who supported that, and I think it is critical. And I have to say the most conservative-thinking historians have said that the reason so much of the world is lagging is because they do not give women a fair chance. So, as you point out, it is a huge economic issue.

And of course, the tragedy of violence against women, we see it all over, in our own military, I might say.

Ms. RUSSELL. I know.

Senator BOXER. And we have to keep on pushing because if we do not, it is going to continue.

And I have to say we have a heroine in the world named Malala Yousafzai. And I introduced a bill earlier this year with Senator Landrieu, and we all know that incredible story. Shot in the head by the Taliban because she spoke out bravely for girls' education in Pakistan and around the world.

So the fact that she survived this is definitely God-given blessing to the world, and she is continuing her crusade. So, as you know, she spoke before the United Nations. I was just riveted listening to her words, but more than her words, her passion, and her power.

And so, this bill pays tribute to Malala's vision for her country by reinforcing the U.S. commitment to girls' education in Pakistan. It is a very simple bill. It expands an existing USAID program. So we are not adding more money.

It awards university scholarships to economically disadvantaged Pakistani students. It requires that new scholarships be awarded to women because, to date, only 25 percent of the scholarships awarded through the program have been for women. The women are the ones who need it. For them to be getting just 25 percent is just wrong on its face.

So I know we are going to take up this bill, and I know the State Department does not have an official position. So I am not asking you that. But I am asking if you would work with me, as we move forward, because I think you could be a great resource to me in just getting the facts out. Would you work with me to get the facts out surrounding this legislation?

Ms. RUSSELL. Well, Senator, first let me say that I think—I completely agree with you that girls' education is a critical issue for us to be working on. I think that the case of Malala was so horrifying for so many reasons. But first of all, it was such a cowardly act for them to go after her, and I think that the reason that they are so threatened by a young girl going to school is precisely why we need to be so supportive of girls' education.

It is a horrifying thing to imagine that girls on their way to a class are such a threat that they are going to shoot a young woman in the head. And I think it just reinforces the importance for us of really coming back and saying this is absolutely unacceptable, and we need to do everything we can to make sure that these girls can

get an education to make their lives better, to make their children's lives better.

Because I think one thing we know for sure, that girls getting an education is really one of the most—I mean, I think there are so many things that we need to do for women's empowerment. Education is one of them. Health care. Making sure legal protections are in place. But I think one of the first and most important is certainly education.

And I think we need to do everything we can to make sure that these girls have that opportunity, and so, yes, I will certainly work with you. I commend you for your leadership on that. I just think it is sort of first, one of the first principles, that girls' education is critically important.

Senator BOXER. Well, clearly, what the terrorists do, they rule by fear. And they know if people have confidence in themselves and they are educated and they can stand up for themselves, that is a threat to them.

Ms. RUSSELL. Exactly.

Senator BOXER. So, you know, they go after the women and terrorize. But I think what we saw with Malala's speech at the United Nations is if they thought they were going to stop the conversation, they certainly have another think coming.

Ms. RUSSELL. Yes.

Senator BOXER. And in this committee, we are going to work together, and we are going to see that the girls have that opportunity.

Ms. RUSSELL. That opportunity.

Senator BOXER. I see I have been joined by my ranking member. Senator Kaine, do you have time to just wait for his opening statement? All right, we will call on Senator Paul.

Senator PAUL. Actually, I am fine. I do not have an opening statement.

Senator BOXER. You are OK? OK. We will call on Senator Kaine.

Senator PAUL. That will be fine.

Senator BOXER. And then we will go back to you for questions. Go ahead.

Senator PAUL. Sure.

Senator Kaine. Great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Congratulations.

Ms. RUSSELL. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kaine. I cannot think of somebody more qualified to do this important job.

Just in terms of—I have two questions, really. One about partnership and one about the U.N. convention and the current status of it not being ratified in the United States.

Partnership. A lot of the success, I think, of the office is the partnership that you create with other entities within State that have a human rights portfolio, as well as partnerships beyond State. And I would like you to just talk about your sort of philosophy about such partnerships, partnerships that are already working between the office and other entities within or around State. I would love to hear that.

Ms. RUSSELL. OK. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

It is interesting. When I worked on the strategy on violence against women globally, one of the things that became very clear to me was that there are lots of entities around the Government who are working on different pieces of the violence portfolio.

We brought all of these pieces, all of the organizations together, many of them in State, AID, and then across the Government—Justice Department folks, people from Labor, people from CDC, OPIC. I mean, lots of people had a lot of interest in this.

I think that everybody was looking. I think sort of one of the things that happen anywhere across the Government is there is a lot of stove-piping that goes on. But everybody is looking for opportunities to work together, and I think that it is important—this is a fairly small office, but I think that what we can do is really—we have the opportunity to look for people who are interested in working on these issues and really look for partnerships and ways to kind of bring people together in a way that will benefit all of us.

I mean, everybody has some interest in gender, right? Because women sort of cross lots of different portfolios here. But I think what we are looking for are places where we can be particularly effective in using kind of the bully pulpit and also making sure that with the limited resources we have in the Government that we are all doing things that are the most effective way to help women kind of across portfolios.

And everybody—you know, obviously, I am not in the job. So—
Senator KAINE. Right.

Ms. RUSSELL. But everybody has been very interested in sort of reaching out to me and looking for opportunities, saying if you are confirmed, we would be interested in working together. So I think it is going to be a very effective way to do business.

Senator KAINE. What is your sense of—one worry I would have is that issues dealing with women's empowerment could be kind of an add-on issue rather than a central issue in bilateral foreign policy, whether it is bilateral or multilateral. What are your thoughts about the ways to take women's empowerment issues and not make them an add-on, but make them really central to the daily work of diplomacy that the Nation does?

Ms. RUSSELL. I think that was one of the things that Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Verveer were very good about. And I think it is the purpose of the gender integration that is going on at the State Department, where Secretary Clinton issued a policy saying you need to make sure that gender is integrated in the work of the Department.

It is an ongoing process, frankly. But I think that there are places where there are efforts underway now, but I think, obviously, we would need to continue to look for places to do that. There are probably places where it makes more sense than others to focus. But I do think that that is an ongoing process.

Senator KAINE. Finally, I just would like to get your thoughts about the convention. I am really struck and discouraged by the fact that we are a signator but haven't ratified the U.N. Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

And do you know whether the administration has plans to promote that issue before this Congress? And I would just like to have your sense of the convention and what it requires and its validity.

Ms. RUSSELL. Well, the administration supports the ratification certainly, and I would support it as well. What I understand is that certainly in the United States, we kind of have the gold standard in terms of nondiscrimination laws. And so, it really, I think, is more of an issue when we are overseas.

And my understanding is that what diplomats have expressed is that it would be very helpful as kind of a tool in our arsenal to say to countries where they are not abiding by nondiscrimination laws, where their laws and their practices are not favorable toward women—where ours are, but where countries are not as favorable—to say—and they are signatories to CEDAW, to say that—you know, to try to get them to abide by their obligations under CEDAW.

I understand that there are people in this country and in this Congress who have concerns about it. I know that those are not people who believe in discrimination against women. So I would like to think that there may be a way forward here, and certainly if I could be helpful doing that, I would be interested in doing that. Because I have to think that there is a way we can do this.

Because I am sure that it is not, as I say, that folks who have concerns about it, I have to believe that there is a way we can—

Senator KAINE. Their concern is probably more the sovereignty concern than the discrimination concern.

Ms. RUSSELL. Yes. And just given that it would be such an effective tool for us to use overseas, and I think as it is now, we are kind of lumped in with Sudan and Somalia and Iran as people who are not signatories to this treaty, it does put us in a bad place. And again, it is not really as much an issue in the United States. We do have great laws here.

But in other places, it would be very helpful for us to be able to say we, too, are signatories. And now they use it and say, well, the United States cannot even sign onto this. So why do we need to worry about whether we abide by our obligations under it? And that is kind of an unfortunate place for us to be at this point.

Senator KAINE. Well, I would love to be involved in an effort to get the United States Senate to ratify, and your advice about how it might be perceived and how it might help us internationally could be very valuable. I think the nonratification of that convention and the one on the rights of citizens with disabilities are just out of character with who we are.

Ms. RUSSELL. Yes.

Senator KAINE. I think we—in both the antidiscrimination areas and in the areas of treatment of citizens with disabilities, while every day we can wake up and we can and should do more, I think we have a lot of examples to offer the world about the things that we have done. And I think the absence of ratification of both of these conventions gets in the way of us presenting the best case that we can.

And I would look forward to you helping us maybe figuring out a way to make that happen.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. RUSSELL. Thanks.

Senator BOXER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Paul.

Senator PAUL. Congratulations on your nomination, and thanks for coming.

There is a Pakistani poet by the name of Parveen Shakir, and she has a poem that makes me think of Malala. It says, "The children of our age have grown clever. They insist on examining the firefly in the daylight."

I remember seeing the speeches of Malala before she was injured. Her speech is still incredible, even with the massive injury that she sustained. But what I would say is that there is such a mixture in so many of these worlds of allowing women to advance. I mean, there have been Prime Ministers of Pakistan. I have met the Ambassador from Pakistan, who is a woman.

But then there are strains, and not insignificant strains, I think maybe as much as a third of the population of Pakistan, maybe half, said they would vote for bin Laden, which basically means they are voting for the Taliban, voting for a repressive culture that would shoot a little girl. I mean, I think we should speak out on these things, and we should condemn these things.

I think there has been too much hesitancy sometimes in our society that we are going to offend all of Islam. I do think there need to be more voices within Islam saying this is not and does not represent Islam, and it is harder for a Christian because it looks as if I am just criticizing another religion. But someone should speak out, and our country, I think, should not be shy about speaking out about this.

Among the great human rights abuses I think is putting people to death for their speech. In Pakistan, there is a woman, and I do not know if this is a women's rights issue. But she is a woman, and she is in prison on death row, basically for speaking out. Well, she thinks, actually, for drinking out of the same glass as Muslim workers is why she thinks she is on death row.

She is officially charged with blasphemy and saying something about the prophet. She denies this. And in our country, gossip like that or any kind of accusation of religious speech would not be considered to be any kind of crime.

But I think it is important as we speak out that we not try to be so politically correct that we excuse behavior because we say, oh, we are afraid of offending an entire religion. I do think it would be easier if it were someone who were from the same religion saying this doesn't represent it. But at the very least, I think we need to not be afraid to speak out on issues where people are misusing religion, but it really is a human rights abuse and, in this case, the abuse of a woman.

I would appreciate your comments.

Ms. RUSSELL. Well, Senator, you raise a critical issue. I am not familiar with that specific case, but I do think that that is certainly a really important—

Senator PAUL. Her name is Asia Bibi, if you want to have your staff look into it.

Ms. RUSSELL. OK.

Senator PAUL. She has been, I think, in prison for 2 years or more. They say it may take another 2 years for her trial to come up, if it comes up. They say she may be pardoned ultimately. But

for goodness sakes, to spend 5 years in prison, even if that is all. But she is under the threat of the death penalty the entire time.

And it is the blasphemy laws. But almost every country through the Middle East has these laws. They do not always enforce them. But having them on the books is a great human rights abuse.

Ms. RUSSELL. Yes. No, I appreciate you raising that, and I will have somebody take a look at it, and I will look at it. And I appreciate your raising it, and then if I am confirmed in this position, I would be interested in continuing conversations with you about that. I appreciate that.

Thank you.

Senator BOXER. Anything else, Rand?

Senator PAUL. No, thank you.

Senator BOXER. I have just one more question. I was deeply disappointed by recent attempts by the Government of Bangladesh to fundamentally alter the future of Bangladesh's Nobel Prize-winning Grameen Bank, which was founded by Muhammad Yunus.

As you know, Grameen Bank provides lifesaving microfinanced loans to its shareholders, and the majority of them are very poor women. And what makes the bank unique is it is owned by the very women who borrow from it.

I had the privilege of speaking with Muhammad Yunus, and what an amazing man he is. And this idea, just getting a few hundred dollars, sometimes even less, and how that grows. So I have joined a number of my colleagues, including every female member of the Senate on both sides of the aisle, in urging Bangladesh to allow Grameen Bank to continue to operate with autonomy and without government influence.

Most recently, I joined Senator Durbin in an op-ed in which we wrote, "Any effort to restructure the bank is the wrong decision and one that threatens the most vulnerable and the tremendous strides the country has made toward poverty reduction and growing civil society."

Could you speak to this issue of the bank, and if confirmed, would you commit to working for the protection of this vitally important institution?

Ms. RUSSELL. Yes, Senator. I am not familiar specifically with what the Bangladeshi Government is doing, but I am certainly familiar with the Grameen Bank and with microfinance programs in general.

Senator BOXER. Well, they have basically taken it away, taken it over.

Ms. RUSSELL. Yes, which is a terrible thing. The microfinance programs are especially important for women because they provide such small loans that are often critically important for women to get started in business.

I saw a great program in Bosnia where the women were borrowing small bits of money, starting sewing businesses, milk businesses. It was amazing to see. And the women came together and made decisions about who in the community would get the loans. They all backed each other in the loans.

I mean, it was an amazing process, and it was interesting especially because the women finally had the kind of say in the family about what was happening with the money because it was they,

rather than the husbands, who were earning the money. And it changed the dynamic.

And initially, it was interesting because there were some kind of flareups of violence where the husbands resented the fact that the women were making decisions about the money. But ultimately, the men kind of got the hang of it. Sometimes the women were then employing their husbands in their businesses. And so, it changed kind of the family dynamic.

So I am a big believer in microfinance, and I cannot imagine why the—well, I actually can imagine why they would, but certainly I can see that this is a problem, and I would—

Senator BOXER. Well, we can work together on it.

Ms. RUSSELL. We definitely can work together on that, yes.

Senator BOXER. OK.

Ms. RUSSELL. And thank you for raising that. I appreciate your question.

Senator BOXER. Senator Kaine, have any more questions? Any more questions from—

Well, I told you this would be easy.

Ms. RUSSELL. You did. I did not believe you, but you did tell me that.

Senator BOXER. Well, we are all very happy that you are willing to do this. You will have to fill very giant shoes, but I know that you are up to it.

And we thank you, and we stand adjourned.

Ms. RUSSELL. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

[Whereupon, at 3 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF CATHERINE RUSSELL TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

Question. The Office of Global Women's Issues is a critically important tool in advancing the rights of women around the world. Our values, and U.S. policy, call for preserving and advancing the role women have in society, improving access to health and education, and alleviating the impact violence has on women. These measures are necessary, not only for promoting essential rights for women, but for economic growth and global security.

- What advances have been made with regard to women's health and education since the office's installment in 2009? How can we improve access in conflict-ridden areas like Afghanistan?

Answer. Investing in women and girls is one of the most powerful forces for international development. Improving the health and education of women and girls also enhances their productivity and social and economic participation, and acts as a positive multiplier, benefiting the development and health of future generations.

Since 2009, the United States and partners around the world have made remarkable progress in advancing women's health—including in reducing maternal mortality, increasing access to contraception, and increasing access to HIV prevention, care, and treatment services. In 2010, for example, the U.N. Secretary General launched his "Every Woman Every Child" strategy, an initiative to reduce maternal and child mortality worldwide.

President Obama's Global Health Initiative (GHI), launched in 2009, recognizes that the health and rights of women and girls have a significant impact on the success—or failure—of our global health programs. In 2011, the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) led an interagency working group to develop "Supplemental Guidance on Women, Girls and Gender Equality" to help countries integrate gender issues and priorities into their health strategies. Today, every country-level global health initiative strategy has incorporated this gender guidance.

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) promotes the integration of gender throughout its prevention, care, and treatment programs. Furthermore, S/GWI and PEPFAR jointly support approximately \$3 million in small grants to grassroots organizations in over 25 countries working to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, with a link to HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

The world has also seen significant progress in girls' access to education; and in many countries across the developing world gender parity in primary school enrollment has been reached. In FY 2012, around 9.5 million girls were enrolled in primary and secondary schools (or equivalent non-school-based settings) with USG support. USAID, which directs the United States global education investments in developing countries, focuses on the following three goals: (1) improving reading skills for primary school children; (2) improving workforce training programs; and (3) increasing equitable access to education in conflict and crisis environments. Efforts to promote gender equality within USAID's education activities include: creating safe spaces for women and girls pursuing education in fragile environments; ensuring teacher training and education materials reflect equitable gender norms; engaging communities to ensure girls have equal access to education. USAID also supports programs that target girls' access to education in countries such as Ethiopia, Liberia, South Sudan, and Tanzania. The recently concluded Ambassador Girls Scholarship Program provided more than 500,000 scholarships to girls in 40 African countries between 2004 and 2011.

In 2012, S/GWI brought USAID and PEPFAR together to support "Empowering Adolescent Girls to Lead through Education (EAGLE)," a 5-year, \$15 million program to ensure that more adolescent girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) make successful transitions to secondary school. Just 11 percent of Congolese women over age 25 have completed secondary education, and studies show that keeping girls in school dramatically reduces their vulnerability to HIV and improves overall health outcomes. EAGLE seeks to raise this rate by tackling many of the barriers keeping girls from continuing their post-primary educations—including cost and school safety.

The State Department also seeks to support girls' education through its exchange programs. Beginning in 2013, all teachers who come to the United States under the auspices of Department-sponsored Teaching Excellence and Achievement and International Leaders in Education exchange programs will take courses on addressing the unique challenges girls face in the classroom. Hundreds of teachers per year come to the United States through these programs, most from the developing world, where a lack of such training and awareness is considered a serious barrier to girls' success in school.

The United States also recognizes the critical importance of ensuring women's and girls' access to health care and education in conflict and post-conflict areas.

For example, U.S. efforts in Afghanistan to increase and improve primary health care, increase safe childbirth, support healthier adolescent girls and women, and build training and job opportunities in health for women have all contributed to the improved status of women. Maternal mortality has fallen from 1,600 per 100,000 births to 327. Life expectancy for women has risen from 44 years in 2001 to 64 years today. USAID will continue to help address urgent problems by providing basic health and essential hospital services to women in 13 provinces and supporting mid-wifery training programs.

Additionally, USAID's education programs in Afghanistan—whether focused on basic or higher education or on technical and vocational education and training (TVET)—have had a significant impact over the last 10 years. Today, 37 percent of the 8 million Afghan students in primary school are girls. Since 2001, more than 120,000 Afghan women have finished secondary school and 40,000 are working on university degrees. Earlier this week, USAID launched a new initiative, Promoting Gender Equality in National Priority Programs (PROMOTE), which will invest in opportunities to enable educated women to enter and advance into decisionmaking positions in Afghanistan's public, private, and civil society sectors. USAID will further our commitment to Afghan women in education by providing an international scholarship program for Afghan women pursuing careers in highly technical professions and through the establishment of an Institute for Gender and Development Studies at an Afghan university.

If confirmed, I will seek to strengthen all these efforts and continue to be a strong voice for increased access to health care and education for women and girls worldwide.

Question. What efforts are being made to encourage women's participation in the political process in nascent democracies?

Answer. The U.S. Government supports the aspirations of women around the world, especially those in nascent democracies, who seek to participate fully in the political lives of their nations. U.S. officials regularly convey to foreign officials and civil society representatives that security, stability, and economic prosperity cannot be achieved without the participation of women.

U.S. officials regularly meet with women's rights activists to support their efforts. They also encourage governments, political parties, police and security forces, religious leaders and other civil society groups to include more women in their organizations, and to listen to and act on the concerns of women's rights advocates.

Around the world, the United States is actively supporting women's political empowerment. For example, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) funds initiatives to support emerging women leaders, including the Arab Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI). AWLI trains female elected officials and women leaders to support their efforts to lead constituent-driven reforms. AWLI trainees have gone on to win public office and play active roles in developing advocacy efforts. The Women in Public Service Project, an initiative launched by the State Department and several leading women's colleges, identifies, trains, and mentors young women leaders from countries in transition.

The United States and Tunisia cohosted the ninth Forum for the Future in 2012, which brought together government officials from 21 Middle East and North African countries (including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen) and G8 countries, and civil society and private sector representatives. Ministers agreed by consensus to the Tunis Declaration, recognizing that the full and equal participation of all people regardless of race, sex, or religion, is critical for political and economic development. Ministers, in particular, publicly recognized the critical role women play in the transformations underway in the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) region, and underscored the importance of making progress on longstanding BMENA objectives related to gender equality, with a view to achieving women's full political, social, and economic empowerment.

In Egypt, the President, the Secretary of State, and other senior officials have made clear to Egyptian leadership the need for a transparent, inclusive, democratic government in Egypt that respects universal human rights, including the political rights of women. Along with USAID, the State Department has programs on the ground that work in partnership with local civil society organizations to reinforce these values.

I understand the U.S. Government is watching closely how the Egyptian Government drafts and implements the new constitution. Human rights activists have raised concerns about provisions in the constitution that could limit women's rights. If confirmed, I will continue to highlight the importance of equal protection under the law and urge the Egyptian Government to include women in the ongoing transition process. The interim President of Egypt recently swore in three women ministers in his new Cabinet.

In Syria, U.S. officials continue to reiterate that no transition can be considered inclusive and democratic if it does not include the concerns and participation of Syrian women.

In the Balkans, the Office of Global Women's Issues is working with our Embassy and mission in Pristina and the Government of Kosovo to implement an ongoing initiative to highlight the work and build the capacity of women leaders in government, politics, and civil society in fighting corruption and to advance key elements of the rule of law in their societies.

In Afghanistan, the United States provides extensive support to bolster women's participation in the political process and support advocacy efforts through equal voter registration outreach, assistance to women candidates, gender equality in political parties, and support of female Parliamentarians and diplomats.