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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

December 5, 2024

The Honorable James E. Risch  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Risch:

I write to congratulate you as you prepare to become Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) during the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. As you know, the Committee plays a key role in the Senate's constitutional duty of advice and consent for ambassadorial and other foreign affairs nominations. Committee Democrats have led the nominations process in a manner consistent with the SFRC's longstanding tradition of comity. I urge you to do the same during the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, as our Nation is stronger when we are working together.

During the four years in which Democrats held the Majority, the Committee reported nearly three hundred nominations. In every case, hearings occurred only after the executive branch and nominee submitted completed materials (including an official indication from the White House that the FBI or Diplomatic Security had conducted a background investigation) and after you and your staff had ample opportunity to review the full nomination file, exhaustively vet the nominee's record, meet with the nominee, and ask and receive written responses to any pre-hearing questions. In fact, Democrats noticed all but one of the approximately seventy nominations hearings during the 117<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> Congresses only after securing your agreement.

Similarly, for virtually all of the hundreds of nominations reported, Democrats noticed Committee votes only after you received and were satisfied with responses to questions for the record and after you agreed to a vote. As you will recall, you and I reached an impasse on four nominations that had been pending for many months (and in one case well over a year). At that point and only with regard to those four nominations, I followed your precedent from the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress and noticed them for a markup without the agreement of the Ranking Member.

I am proud that we moved so many nominations forward together. Doing so was in the best interest of the Committee, the Senate, and the American people even when it required resisting pressure to take a different, unilateral approach. I urge you to work with Committee Democrats in the same manner in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, including upholding longstanding Committee practices such as requiring FBI or DS background investigations. I am confident that Committee Democrats will engage with you in the spirit of comity.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin  
Chairman