



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER

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March 15, 2023

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch,

On behalf of our 1.6 million members, The American Legion respectfully requests that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee urgently work to fill the 27 vacant ambassador posts worldwide by expeditiously considering the administration's nominees and we encourage swift confirmation. We believe that our nation is stronger and safer when there is a full contingent of ambassadors in place and that a strong U.S. presence abroad is vital to our national security.

The current vacancies are in highly strategic areas for U.S. diplomacy while others are home to many of our nations servicemembers and their families. More specifically, embassies such as India, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia are in highly contentious regions of the world. Recently, Ret. Admiral Harry Harris testified before the House Armed Services Committee Hearing on February 9, 2023, and stated the absence of U.S. diplomats is creating a vacuum in pockets of the world that China has begun to use to their advantage.

Through American Legion Resolution No. 25: *Filling of Vacant U.S. Ambassadorships*, passed in May 2022, we believe the lack of ambassadors hampers the ability of the United States in promoting its interests, and may be viewed as a sign by other countries that the U.S. does not take them seriously. Since ambassadors serve as the face of U.S. foreign policy, leaving these vacancies unfilled makes it all the more difficult for the United States to lead on the global stage. Furthermore, the National Defense Strategy published in October 2022 emphasizes the strategic importance of allies and partners, therefore ensuring the greatest number of vacancies filled is a national security imperative. Finally, we think the current makeup of the 118th Congress offers a propitious opportunity for Senate action on the nominees.

The American Legion appreciates your leadership and support of our servicemembers, veterans and their families. We look forward to working with the administration, your committee and Congress to address this important issue.

For God & Country,

Vincent J. Troiola
National Commander