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IRI Thanks Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Governor Kelly Ayotte for their Service on IRI's Board of Directors

Editor. (Jan. 21, 2025). IRI Thanks Secretary of State Marco Rubio [joined 2018] and Governor Kelly Ayotte [joined 2015] for their Service on IRI's Board of Directors, International Republican Institute (IRI). Source: <https://www.iri.org/news/iri-thanks-secretary-of-state-marco-rubio-and-governor-kelly-ayotte-for-their-service-on-iris-board-of-directors/>

January 21, 2025

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Washington, DC – IRI issued the following statement thanking Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Governor of New Hampshire Kelly Ayotte for their service on IRI's Board of Directors:

"As freedom and democracy came under assault from tyrants and dictators across the globe over the last decade, Secretary Rubio and Governor Ayotte were invaluable members of our Board who consistently championed the cause of freedom," said Daniel Twining, President of IRI. "Our mission of advancing democracy worldwide was made stronger because of their hard work and dedication to IRI and our staff. We are incredibly grateful for their service, and we wish them the best in their new roles."

"Secretary Rubio and Governor Ayotte have been dedicated members of IRI's Board and ardent champions of democracy around the world," said IRI Chairman U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan. "I thank them for their service and wish them the best of luck in their new roles."

Governor Ayotte first joined IRI's Board in [2015](#). Secretary Rubio joined in [2018](#).

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NEWS • NEWS RELEASE, AFGHANISTAN

Senator Sullivan Elected as New Chairman of IRI Board; New Board Members Include Senators Rubio, Graham, Ernst and Governor Romney

August 3, 2018

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Washington, DC—The International Republican Institute (IRI) today announced that Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) has been elected as the new chairman of the IRI Board of Directors.

Senator John McCain informed the board of his intention to step down as chair after 25 years in the role and recommended that Senator Sullivan succeed him. Senator McCain will remain a member of the board.

“In my years as chairman, I have been privileged to watch generations of young IRI foot soldiers serve a cause greater than their self-interest,” said Senator McCain. “Serving as chairman has been one of the most satisfying experiences of my life.

“Dan Sullivan’s record of public service is impressive: in the U.S. Marine Corps, as an assistant secretary of state, as Alaska’s attorney general, and now as U.S. Senator for Alaska. As an outspoken advocate for America’s continued international leadership, he’ll make a superb chairman.”

Senator Sullivan was elected to the Senate in 2014 and serves on the Committee on Armed Services. He is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and served on active duty in the reserves in a number of command and staff positions, including deployments to the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Afghanistan. He previously served as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs and as a member of the National Security Council under President George W. Bush.

“I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve as IRI’s chairman,” said Senator Sullivan. “When I attended IRI’s annual Freedom Dinner honoring Secretary James Mattis and Ambassador Nikki Haley earlier this year, I was once again struck by the vital role the Institute plays in advancing American interests. I look forward to helping to lead the organization in its critical mission of supporting democratic aspirations around the world.”

“John McCain’s leadership has been an inspiration to millions in America and around the world,” said IRI President Daniel Twining. “His tireless support for IRI’s mission of advancing democracy worldwide is a legacy which will endure forever. We are excited to welcome Senator Sullivan as the new chairman of the board, and look forward to working with him to make the world freer, more prosperous and more secure.”

In addition to the election of Senator Sullivan as chair, IRI appointed the following new board members:

- **Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA)** chairs the Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities and is a combat veteran. She was the first woman to serve in

federal elected office from Iowa and the first female combat veteran to serve in the Senate.

- **Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)** is a member of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Appropriations and is a retired Colonel in the Air Force Reserves. He served as an IRI board member from 2010-2012.
- **Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)** is a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Appropriations, and was a candidate in the 2016 Republican presidential primaries.
- **Governor Mitt Romney** is the Republican senatorial nominee for Utah (2018), and was the Republican presidential nominee in 2012. He served as governor of Massachusetts from 2003-2007.
- **General H.R. McMaster** is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and previously served as National Security Advisor to President Donald Trump (2017-2018). General McMaster retired from the military as a three-star general after 34 years of service.
- **David Kramer** is a senior fellow at Florida International University's Green School of International and Public Affairs. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor under President George W. Bush and as president of Freedom House from 2010-2014.
- **Ambassador Kristen Silverberg** is the managing director of the Institute of International Finance. She served U.S. Ambassador to the European Union from 2008-2009, and as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs from 2005-2008.
- **Frances Townsend** is an executive vice president for worldwide government, legal and business affairs at MacAndrews and Forbes Holdings, Inc. Townsend previously served as Assistant to President George W. Bush for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and chaired the Homeland Security Council.
- **Ambassador Gaddi Vasquez** is senior vice president of government affairs for Edison International and Southern California Edison. He previously served as director of the U.S. Peace Corps and as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies in Rome.

Senators Sullivan, Ernst, Graham and Rubio join Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) and Congresswoman Kay Granger (R-TX) as sitting members of Congress on IRI's board.

In addition to the election of the new IRI board members, board member Randy Scheunemann has been elected vice chairman. Former vice chairman James Kolbe will remain a member of the board.

Please refer all press inquiries to Julia Sibley, jsibley@iri.org.

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