

SHARE THE STORY OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE

One of AFSA's primary outreach goals is to create a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service in all 50 states. To do this, increased understanding of the critical role of a professional, non-partisan Foreign Service in preserving, protecting and promoting America's interests and values is needed. Retirees, with decades of experience winning hearts and minds, and no longer subject to the Hatch Act, play a unique role in helping to tell the story of the Foreign Service. Below are ideas for outreach and advocacy in your local community. AFSA has resources available to help in your efforts and we're always interested to hear about local outreach activities. **Contact Christine Miele, Manager of Retiree Outreach and Engagement, at miele@afsa.org for more information.**

- **Speak Out.** One of the best ways to tell the story of the Foreign Service is speaking to local organizations, which are often looking for interesting speakers for their programs. Consider sending a letter of introduction and offering to speak about what diplomats do and why it matters (or a more specific topic of your choice) to community groups such as Rotary Clubs, business groups, religious organizations, libraries, high schools and universities, many of which offer lifelong learning courses and are seeking volunteer lecturers. AFSA has resources available to help you get started. Consider, too, joining **AFSA's Speakers Bureau** so that we can alert you to fresh talking points and contact you if we have a request for a speaker in your area. Speaking to community groups is a great way to leverage your expertise while engaging with your community. To sign up for the AFSA Speakers Bureau visit: www.afsa.org/speaker.
- **Letters to the Editor.** Writing to your local paper reminds both the editors and members of your community about what diplomats do and why it matters. When you get a letter published, let us know!
- **Join Community Organizations.** Many communities have internationally-minded organizations such as the World Affairs Council, Global Ties, United Nations Associations, and Sister Cities International. Consider joining their boards to share the perspective of the Foreign Service. Organizations such as Global Ties or Diplomacy Councils often serve as the coordinators for matching international visitors coming through State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) with homestay families.
- **Bring an International Focus into Schools.** Many schools host an international night celebrating different cultures or include a cultural studies component in the curriculum. Offer to speak about your international experience and the role of diplomacy and development. Consider raising awareness of AFSA's national essay contest to help students think about the role of diplomacy in peacebuilding efforts. www.afsa.org/essay.
- **Recognize Foreign Service Day.** The first Friday in May each year is Foreign Service Day. In recognition, consider participating in AFSA's letter to the editor campaign, send a letter to your representatives in Congress, post on social media, offer a prayer for members of the Foreign Service in your house of worship, or speak at a local school or community organization.

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- **Write to your Member of Congress.** Ensure your representatives know that as a constituent you care about a strong, professional, and adequately resourced Foreign Service. While AFSA can offer talking points and updates on current issues, what's most important is to express your personal connection.
- **Join a Retiree Association or Start Your Own.** Join your local retiree association (p. 8) and if you don't find one listed in your area, consider starting one. AFSA can help identify other Foreign Service retirees in your area.



Need a New Years Resolution? Join AFSA's

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Share your experience and expertise with groups in your community.
Tell the Foreign Service story to the American public.
It's easier than going to the gym.

To sign up and learn more, visit
www.afsa.org/speakers

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