Opening Statement of James Russell Middleton

Before the United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

November 10, 2026

Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is James Russell Middleton, and I am honored to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as a Board Member of the Farm Credit Administration.

With your permission, I would like to take a moment to introduce my family, who are here with me today. My wife, Renata, who I met on Capitol Hill more than 39 years ago, while we were both working for members of the Texas delegation. We are joined today by our son, Jonathan, and our daughter, Julia.

I am deeply appreciative of this nomination. If confirmed, I would consider it one of the greatest honors of my career to serve on the Farm Credit Administration Board.

I retired from the Farm Credit Administration nearly three years ago, concluding a 36-year career in public service—19 years on Capitol Hill and 17 years with the Farm Credit Administration. I am proud of my decades of service to our country. Federal service has been a privilege, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have made a meaningful contribution throughout my career.

Nearly 40 years ago, I moved from Texas to Washington, D.C., to serve as a staff assistant to my congressional representative, Charles Stenholm, in his personal office. I had interned in his office the previous year, and that experience helped shape the course of my career.

Coincidentally it was during this time that the House and Senate Agriculture Committees were working to address the agricultural crisis of the 1980s. The challenges of that period led to many of the reforms that helped shape today's Farm Credit System and the Farm Credit Administration.

In 1997, I transitioned to the House Agriculture Committee staff, where I continued working under Ranking Member Stenholm and later under the leadership of Congressman Collin Peterson. One of my primary areas of responsibility was the Farm Credit System and the Farm Credit Administration.

During my more than nine years on the House Agriculture Committee, I had the opportunity to visit Farm Credit System direct-lender associations, meet with System borrowers, and observed their agricultural operations firsthand. These experiences gave me a deep appreciation for the System's cooperative structure and its congressional mission to meet the credit needs of all eligible, creditworthy farmers, ranchers, and their cooperatives.

In 2006, I was offered the opportunity to join the Farm Credit Administration as policy advisor to Board Member Dallas Tonsager. After Mr. Tonsager left the agency to serve as USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development, I remained at the FCA, working in the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs and briefly serving as staff to Board Member Jill Long Thompson. I subsequently served as policy advisor to Board Chairman Kenneth Spearman before returning to the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs.

During my time at the FCA, I gained valuable experience managing the relationships among the Farm Credit System, the Agency, and Congress. I also developed an understanding of the coordination necessary to maintain effective working relationships among these three entities. If confirmed, I look forward to drawing on that experience in serving as a Board Member.

Access to competitive credit is essential to any agricultural operation. The System's mission to serve as a dependable source of financing contributes to a robust marketplace for rural communities. Competition benefits farmers and ranchers through competitive rates, affordable financing, and the flexibility they need to invest in their operations. The Farm Credit Administration plays a vital role in ensuring that the System remains strong, sound, and capable of meeting those needs for generations to come.

Throughout my career at the FCA, I have seen firsthand that the System's mission remains a priority for the Agency and its employees. They are an exceptionally capable and dedicated workforce. I have been fortunate to work alongside individuals from across the country who are committed to FCA's critical role of providing effective, responsible oversight.

I am committed to helping the Farm Credit Administration continue this important work. If confirmed, I would be honored to rejoin the agency as a member of its Board and contribute my experience, knowledge, and dedication to fulfilling its mission.

That completes my remarks, thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.