

Testimony of Representative Brian K. Fitzpatrick

Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations

December 3, 2025

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Schatz: thank you for holding this timely hearing.

There is nothing accidental about Russia's abduction of Ukraine's children.

It is not a byproduct of war.

It is calculated, it is state-directed, and it is one of the clearest expressions of terror we have seen in this war.

Since February 2022, Ukrainian authorities have documented at least **19,546 children** have been forcibly taken from their families and transported into Russian custody or Russian-occupied territories.

These abductions are not random or isolated – they are part of a deliberate effort designed to destroy Ukraine by erasing its culture and breaking its next generation.

Silence in the face of such deliberate evil is not an option.

We have a responsibility, a moral obligation – as a Congress and as a country – to act.

And that begins with sending the following message to the Russian Federation:

If you continue to kidnap Ukraine's children or refuse to return them, you will bear the full weight of being recognized for you have become: **a State Sponsor of Terrorism.**

This bipartisan, bicameral legislation is a necessary first step. But it cannot be the last. Congress can and must come together, without any further delay, to sanction every element of the Putin regime.

Each official, institution, and entity complicit in Russia's assault against Ukraine must be held to account.

Our adversaries must be put on notice: if you enable the abduction of Ukraine's children or bankroll the slaughter of innocent Ukrainian civilians, the United States will hold you responsible.

I am grateful to today's panelists – especially Ukraine's Ambassador to the United States, OLHA STEFANISHYNA – for highlighting the urgency of this issue and the staggering disregard which Russia has for human rights.

To all my fellow Members of Congress, I urge you to join us in this effort and just as importantly, to consider your role in this moment in history.

We are at an inflection point—a critical fork in the road.

We can choose Peace Through Strength, or we can choose War Through Weakness.

History has recorded our predecessors' choices. And history, too, will record ours.

The stakes are clear. And so is what's required of us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.