American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)
FY26 Appropriations Testimony
Prepared for the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations
Regarding Global Markets at the International Trade Administration

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations bills, AFSA is writing to respectfully request robust funding for the Global Markets (GM) account at the Department of Commerce – a business unit of the International Trade Administration (ITA).

The mission of Global Markets is at the core of U.S. economic security. As the nation's frontline federal government unit supporting companies interested in doing business overseas, Global Markets (GM) brings investment back to our shores, counters aggressive foreign competition, enhances the competitiveness of U.S. exporters, and improves access to foreign markets. With specialized skillsets and expertise in 80 countries and across 127 foreign and 106 domestic locations, GM covers markets and economic activities that account for more than 95 percent of global output and 97 percent of U.S. trade.

For decades, Global Markets has consistently generated measurable returns for the U.S. economy. In Fiscal Year 2024 alone, Global Markets:

- Provided assistance to nearly 93,000 U.S. companies;
- Facilitated $109 billion in U.S. exports and $52 billion in inward investment with a total impact of $161 billion for American businesses, workers, and the economy;
- Supported more than 519,000 American jobs, from rural America to our biggest cities; and
- For every one dollar appropriated, facilitated average returns of $460 to the U.S. economy.

Despite these measurable returns, the FY26 President's Budget Request proposes a $145 million cut to the International Trade Administration's Global Markets account. This cut is a further reduction on top of the $50 million in emergency-designated funding that was excluded from the FY25 Continuing Resolution (CR). The FY26 Global Markets request includes just $178 million, reducing the account by more than half its FY24 actual funding total of $373 million.

Funding strains have already had harmful impacts on America's commercial diplomats. As mentioned, the FY25 CR did not continue the designation of $50 million in emergency funding for ITA, causing a budget shortfall with real implications for members of the Foreign Service. Foreign Service officers and their families have been ordered to freeze in place for an additional year, as the organization lacks the funds to pay for relocation. Language training has also been eliminated, which limits the effectiveness of officers serving overseas. AFSA is also concerned that the proposed FY26 cuts would cause reductions in force (RIF) throughout the world, especially in GM domestic offices.

AFSA asks the subcommittees to reject the request, as it would decimate U.S. national economic security and commercial interests, and would cause untold harm to American workers, manufacturers, farmers, entrepreneurs, and businesses. Instead, AFSA asks that Congress fully fund FCS with at least $373 million, or FY24 actual funding, to meet our nation's economic security challenges. Anything less would result in the disarmament of America's leading economic security organization and would further signal, especially to the People's Republic of China, America's retreat from the global economic playing field.

Thank you for your consideration.