



## 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 some ideas for outreach in your community.*

**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.

**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](http://www.afsa.org/essay).

**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](#) 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