News



Brian Burch speaks during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on his nomination to be Ambassador to The Holy See, Tuesday, April on Capitol Hill in Washington. The U.S. The Senate Aug. 2 confirmed his appointment. (AP/Jacquelyn Martin)

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The U.S. Senate today (Aug. 2) confirmed Brian Burch, a critic of the late Pope Francis, as the country's Vatican ambassador.

Burch, who lives in a Chicago suburb, is a co-founder of CatholicVote, a political organization that backed Trump for president. Trump nominated Burch Dec. 20.

The Senate vote was 49-44 along party lines. The confirmation came amid a day of voting on a slate of nominees after Democratic senators refused to reach a deal to advance Trump's backlog of executive branch nominees by unanimous consent or voice votes.

"The Catholic Church is the largest and most important religious institution in the world, and its relationship to the United States is of vital importance," Burch said in a statement Aug. 2. "I am committed to working with leaders inside the Vatican and the Trump administration to promote the dignity of all people and the common good."

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Burch has said he saw a "pattern of vindictiveness" in Francis. In 2023, Burch gave The New York Times a list of ways he and other conservative U.S. Catholics had been offended by Francis, including the pontiff's 2015 remarks about good Catholics not having to breed "like rabbits." (Burch and his wife, Sara, have nine children.)

In his April 8 statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at his confirmation hearing, Burch described the relationship between the U.S. and the Vatican as "both unique and vital. It transcends traditional diplomacy, rooted instead in our shared commitments to religious freedom, human dignity, global peace, and justice."

If confirmed, he said then, "my primary goal will be to deepen this partnership. The moral witness of the Holy See together with its global influence make it a key

partner for an array of U.S. interests. I am confident we can contribute to a more just and peaceful world, reflecting the best of American values and the Holy See's mission."

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Burch's confirmation was previously blocked in May by Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, who placed a blanket hold on all of Trump's nominees to the State Department due to his concern over the Trump administration's closure of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Burch succeeds former Sen. Joe Donnelly, Democrat of Indiana, who assumed the role in April 2022 and stepped down in July 2024. Callista Gingrich served as Vatican ambassador during Trump's first term as president.

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