**U.S. Statement at the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Korea,**

**42nd Session, January 26, 2023**

**Delivered by Ms. Kelly Billingsley,**

**Deputy Permanent Representative to the Human Rights Council**

Thank you, Mr. President.

The United States welcomes the delegation from the Republic of Korea.

We applaud the Republic of Korea for promoting good governance and human rights globally and have enjoyed working together as members of the HRC this past year.

While we understand not all asylum seekers may ultimately qualify for refugee status, we are concerned by reported low rates of approval of refugee status and by the lack of a clear pathway to naturalization for refugees.

We recommend that the Republic of Korea:

1. Pass anti-discrimination legislation protecting members of marginalized communities, including LGBTQI+ persons, and provide legal recognition of same-sex marriage.
2. Repeal the Military Criminal Act’s article criminalizing same-sex conduct in the military.
3. Replace criminal defamation and libel laws with civil laws and reform national security laws to protect freedom of expression.

We wish the Republic of Korea a successful UPR. I thank you.