

**Statement of Kevin Marino Cabrera
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Panama
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 25, 2025**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Committee Members, it is an honor to be here with you today.

I am grateful to President Trump for nominating me to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, and to Secretary of State Rubio for his support throughout this process. With your concurrence and approval, I look forward to beginning my work in Panama and serving the people of the United States of America.

I appreciate the opportunities I've had to meet with many of you and discuss our bilateral relationship with Panama. I take this opportunity to serve as Ambassador with great seriousness, humility, and clarity of purpose. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our dialogue on national priorities and ensuring our country strengthens its partnership with Panama.

As a proud first-generation American and the son of Cuban exiles, I carry a deep appreciation for the opportunities this country has given me.

My family's journey—from hardship and oppression to freedom and success—has shaped my values and reinforced my commitment to the ideals of liberty and democracy.

This personal history instills in me a profound sense of duty to uphold these principles and to work for our nation's interests.

From day one, President Trump made it clear that U.S. foreign policy must always prioritize the interests of America and its citizens. His "America First Policy Directive" reaffirmed our commitment to achieving peace through

strength while ensuring that our diplomacy reflects U.S. values, sovereignty, and security.

As I sit before you today, I recall Secretary Rubio's confirmation hearing, where he outlined a clear, principled vision for U.S. foreign policy—one rooted in strength, purpose, and accountability. He framed it around three fundamental questions:

Does it make America safer?

Does it make America stronger?

Does it make America more prosperous?

These questions reflect the core mission of American diplomacy. They serve as a guiding framework that I fully embrace.

I take this charge seriously, knowing that representing the United States abroad is both a privilege and a solemn duty.

My mother, a woman of faith, always reminded me that to whom much is given, much is expected. Her wisdom and resilience have shaped my approach to service. She taught me that faith and hard work can overcome even the greatest obstacles—a lesson I carry with me always.

The U.S.-Panama bilateral relationship is of paramount importance, rooted in shared values and mutual interests. Our partnership spans a wide range of areas, including shared security concerns, immigration cooperation, and economic engagement. This relationship is vital for the stability and prosperity of the Western Hemisphere.

One of the key aspects of our cooperation is ensuring the security of the Panama Canal, a critical international waterway that facilitates global trade and economic growth. Our collaborative efforts with Panama to maintain the Canal's neutrality and security are essential for safeguarding this

strategic asset. Recent actions, such as Panama's decision to exit China's Belt and Road Initiative and audit port concessions, demonstrate their commitment to this shared goal.

Immigration cooperation is another cornerstone of our bilateral relationship. Both nations face challenges related to illegal immigration and transnational criminal activity. By working together, we can develop effective strategies to manage immigration flows, combat human trafficking, and enhance border security, contributing to long-term regional stability.

Economic engagement between the United States and Panama is also a critical component of our partnership. U.S. investments in Panama support energy production and infrastructure development, fostering economic growth and resilience, while working to enhance supply chain resiliency will further strengthen our economic ties and benefit both nations.

Throughout my career, I have worked across party lines to advance policies that benefit our communities. As an elected official, I have worked with and had the support of Democratic leaders, including the Mayor of Miami-Dade County, the former Minority Leader of the Florida House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the Florida Senate. These partnerships demonstrate my ability to build consensus and work in the best interest of the people we serve. I would bring this same spirit of collaboration to my role as Ambassador, ensuring that our foreign policy remains a unifying force for American interests.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of this committee, our relationship with Panama has a direct impact on the safety, security, and prosperity of the American people. As ambassador, it would be my honor to protect American citizens and promote U.S. economic interests. I recognize the obligation of implementing the strategies and policies of the United States. I recognize the responsibilities that I have to the Constitution of the United States, President Trump, Secretary of State Rubio, and to Congressmembers of the United States. Thank you very much for your time today. I look forward to answering your questions.