

**Statement of Nicole D. Theriot**  
**Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**March 30, 2023**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Ricketts, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. I am grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Blinken have placed in me and am thankful for your consideration of my nomination. If confirmed, I will work closely with you and all Members to advance our nation's interests in Guyana and the broader Caribbean.

Over the past 24 years, I have been privileged to represent the United States in 10 countries on four continents. Any success I have had was made possible by my family, so I would like to thank my spouse, Tom Agnew, my father, Preston Terry Theriot, my mother, Brenda Foti Theriot, who passed away in September, and my sister Tiffany Theriot for their unstinting love and steadfast support.

Three of my overseas assignments have been in the Western Hemisphere, including two in the Caribbean – Haiti and Barbados – and others have been in countries with incredible potential for economic growth, so I am familiar with the challenges and opportunities that exist in Guyana. I have worked on programs dealing with security and the professional development of law enforcement; on increasing bilateral trade and investment; on creating stronger military-to-military ties for regional security; on combating drug, weapons, and human trafficking; on increasing sustainable energy and bolstering climate resilience, and on combatting corruption, all while enhancing critical people-to-people ties that give us an important advantage over others operating in the region, including the People's Republic of China. Given my service in the Caribbean and in countries ripe for economic advancement such as Morocco and Pakistan, I am particularly honored to be considered for this important position in Guyana.

Guyana is experiencing rapid transformation. It has tremendous potential, with large oil reserves and mineral resources, fertile agricultural lands, virgin rainforests, a large U.S. diaspora, close ties to the United States, and significant opportunities for modernization of infrastructure, policies, and processes. It also, however, continues to face significant challenges, including climate change, crime, poverty, corruption, and trafficking of several types. If confirmed, I will work with the Guyanese government and people to address these challenges and bolster and

diversify economic growth, strengthen democracy and governance, improve respect for human rights, and promote opportunity for all Guyanese.

If confirmed, I will proudly champion U.S. values in ethnically, religiously diverse Guyana. I will work with the government to continue responsibly leveraging the country's newfound oil revenues to expand economic opportunities, develop reliable infrastructure, and improve and expand social services. I will work diligently to increase transparent, reciprocal trade and investment and to promote the many exciting opportunities for U.S. businesses. I will support the Guyanese government and people to build upon their gains in democratic governance and rule of law. I will help them to continue addressing humanely the influx of Venezuelan and other migrants, all while respecting Guyana's sovereignty. If confirmed, I will work to identify immediate opportunities to support Guyana's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions across every sector, including being a central partner on regional security. A secure, democratic, and prosperous Guyana will remain an important ally to the United States in the region.

Guyana is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth, with the IMF designating it one of 2022's highest growth economies. With its extensive oil reserves, Guyana must carefully guard against the "resource curse" by diversifying its economy, capitalizing on gains in good governance, and strengthening its civil society in an equitable, inclusive manner. The Guyanese government has recently begun to tap into its oil wealth to improve critical infrastructure, health, and education. If confirmed, I will help build upon this productive path that wisely leverages Guyana's new wealth and encourage continued partnerships with both the public and private sectors to make sure Guyana's transformation benefits all.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Guyanese to help them reach their laudable goals of greater security, good governance, and economic prosperity, all while enhancing bilateral relations. As Secretary Blinken's representative to CARICOM, I will work to increase U.S.-Caribbean collaboration, especially through the new U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis (PACC 2030), and in the areas of regional stability, security, human rights, food and energy security, and climate resilience.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Ricketts, and Members of the Committee, I sincerely thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.