

**Statement of Robin Bernstein**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**March 07, 2018**

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Cardin, Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I would first like to thank my long-time friend and esteemed Senator from Florida, Senator Bill Nelson for his kind introduction.

It is an honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. If confirmed, it will be an honor to be the second woman to serve as U.S. Ambassador to this country. I am humbled that the President has entrusted me with the opportunity – with your approval – to represent the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the White House, Secretary Tillerson, and our talented and dedicated staff to lead our engagement with such an important regional ally and partner.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family who are with me today – my wonderful husband Richard, our children Arthur, his wife Karla, Ariel, Alexandra and Julia, and my mother Karolyn. I would also like to acknowledge my late father, Archie, whose lifelong passion was to host young exchange student “ambassadors” in our home and whose vision enabled me to go to high school in France as an exchange student and later to the School of International Service in Washington, D.C. My family has sustained me throughout the many challenges and opportunities in my life and without their support I would not be able to undertake this next and exciting stage of my career.

I began one of my first professional positions here on the hill at the Joint Economic Committee, in this very building. After obtaining my MBA, I moved to Florida where I met my husband and where we raised our family.

For over three decades, I have worked alongside my husband at our family insurance business in a number of leadership roles. During this time, I continuously worked in the non-profit community in a wide variety of leadership positions, particularly in the areas of empowering and supporting women, health care issues and supporting the underserved community. I am especially proud that as the co-founder of the bipartisan organization Palm Beach County Cares, I helped facilitate the delivery of medicine and critically needed supplies to our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the aftermath of devastating hurricanes.

I am confident that my education, and my experiences in the public sector, private sector, and non-profit worlds have prepared me for this important diplomatic

mission. If confirmed to serve as U.S. Ambassador, I will work closely with the personnel from across the government to lead our embassy's efforts in forging stronger bonds with the government and the people of the Dominican Republic.

If confirmed, this appointment would be especially meaningful as a Jewish American. My grandfather, Morris Stein, fled Russia as a child with his family to escape religious discrimination. They came to the United States to pursue the American dream of religious freedom, human rights, democracy and economic opportunity. That is why I am humbled to stand before you today and, if confirmed, pledge to continue the fight to preserve these American values.

In the Jewish faith we have a saying, "When you save a life, you save the world." During World War II the Dominican government and its people opened their arms to thousands of Jews who were seeking refuge from the atrocities in Europe. Serving as Ambassador would be a personally significant way for me to show gratitude for how the people of the Dominican Republic cared for the Jewish people in their time of need.

The Dominican Republic and the United States share a long history. As close neighbors we also share mutually beneficial economic, cultural, sports and people-to-people ties enhanced by a very sizable Dominican-American diaspora. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that trade opportunities continue to grow and deliver prosperity for both our nations and to ensure that our economic engagement will continue to benefit the United States.

Over the years, the Dominican Republic has endured challenges to the health of its civil society. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to promote policies that advocate for the rule of law, strengthen democratic institutions, and tackle corruption.

Fighting illicit trafficking and transnational crime is one of President Trump's highest priorities. The Dominican Republic is one of our strongest law enforcement partners in the hemisphere. Continued strong bilateral security cooperation will help attack the drug-related addiction and crime related problems that affect both of our countries.

Finally, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to facilitate humanitarian, cultural, and educational exchanges that reaffirm to the people of the Dominican Republic, America's enduring foreign policy values of democracy, freedom, and human rights.

Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.