

Statement for the Record
Dr. Alma Crumm Golden
Nominee for USAID Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Global Health
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 31, 2019

Senator Rubio, Senator Cardin, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to come before you today as the nominee for Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Global Health at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am humbled by President Trump's nomination of me to serve in this important role, and am grateful for the confidence Administrator Green has placed in me.

I would like to recognize and thank the incredible leaders in the Global Health Bureau. USAID's Global Health programs demonstrate the great compassion of the American people, while advancing U.S. national security priorities and prosperity here at home. If confirmed, I commit to supporting the mission of the Global Health Bureau to control the HIV/AIDS epidemic, prevent child and maternal deaths, combat infectious diseases, and promote global health security.

I am privileged to be the mother of four children. In one of my last conversations with my late son, Matthew Davis, we discussed new opportunities I had been offered in health policy, which ultimately led me to serve in this Administration and sit before you today. Just like the accomplished trauma surgeon that he was, Matt cut to the heart of our conversation and said, "Go for it, Momma! Just go for it!" Now, three and a half years after my son's death, I know he is pleased that I have this opportunity to truly "go for it." I honor his inspiration today.

I consider myself one of the richest women you will meet. My wealth is not in money, but in relationships. I am the grandmother of 12 amazing grandchildren, and I can assure you, I am heavily invested in the future. Today, my youngest son, Daniel Davis, my daughter, Barbara Eppink, my middle son, David Davis, Matt's wife, Sharron, and their families are supporting me from Texas. I am pleased to be joined today by Marina Svistova McCreight. She joined our family as a Freedom Support Act Scholar from Ukraine 25 years ago and has been the daughter of my heart since. I am grateful to Congress for extraordinary programs like that which bring the world together.

Administrator Green's inspiring vision for USAID--ending the need for foreign assistance--is irresistible to this Texas pediatrician. I have had a passion for access to health care for vulnerable populations for as long as I can remember.

As a child with severe asthma, I admired the doctors and nurses who cared for me. This admiration grew into a life-calling after hearing stories at church of selfless missionaries who were providing medical aid to those in need overseas. Like most young women in the 1960's interested in a career in healthcare, I prepared to enter nursing. However, my father, a decorated WWII aviator who taught me to fly when I was 14, gave me wings of another sort when he asked, "Why don't you just become a doctor?" That question set me on a new path.

After medical school, I became a pediatrician in my hometown of Alvin, Texas. As a working single-mother of four, my capacity to serve overseas was limited, but the needs in my own county captured my heart. While volunteering with a free clinic, the absence of affordable, accessible, and quality health care for children distressed me. I left private practice to work for the University of Texas Medical Branch, where, for a decade, I ran a network of 16 clinics that spanned over 270 miles of rural East and South Texas, and provided maternal and child health care in rural and under-served communities. This experience of front-line health care informed my four years at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services while directing the Office of Population Affairs and collaborating on the launch of the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and has also provided unique insights during my tenure at USAID since October 2017. If confirmed, I commit to bring not only my passion for access to quality care, but also my clinical, community, national and international experience, to the countries in which for women and their families, USAID operates.

USAID's work in global health saves lives at home and abroad. This Administration proudly supports the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), an effective coalition to prevent, detect and respond to infectious-disease threats, and the International Health Regulations (IHRs). In March, on my second trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo, I witnessed the complexity of the current Ebola epidemic first-hand. If confirmed, I commit to doing everything I can to support and strengthen the implementation of the IHRs, the GHSA, and the Administration's Global Health Security Strategy as tools for building resilience and responsibility across nations to protect the United States and the world.

USAID prioritizes the empowerment of women and girls through health care, education, legal protection, and economic empowerment. It is critical that USAID remain engaged in personal, community, national, and international venues to stop the harmful practices of child marriage; the sexual exploitation and abuse of girls and young women; domestic and sexual violence; and trafficking in persons and other forms of modern slavery. Communities thrive when women and girls thrive. If confirmed to lead the Global Health Bureau, I commit to promoting increased interagency collaboration to address these important issues, particularly to the Departments of Health and Human Services and State.

In addition, we must recognize one agent of change in health outcomes that is mostly under-appreciated and inadequately resourced: men. Positive male figures, including caring fathers, strengthen diverse health outcomes, such as the use of prenatal care, improved immunization rates, lower rates of domestic violence, higher rates of school completion, greater use of modern forms of voluntary family planning, and lower prevalence of wasting and stunting that reflect adequate nutrition. If confirmed, I commit to identifying synergies with current programs, and to develop new opportunities to promote male champions of the health and well-being of women and children.

The Journey to Self-Reliance is only possible with the engagement of local partners, community groups, faith-based organizations, and the private sector, which together produce long-term and sustainable progress across sectors. Many of these partners have worked with us to yield significant impact around the world for decades. If confirmed, I commit to supporting innovative ways to strengthen USAID's existing partnerships, and to exploring new collaborations.

Global health is at the threshold of significant change. The next ten years will likely bring us unprecedented challenges, including new epidemics, a rise in non-communicable diseases, an increase in antimicrobial resistance, rapidly changing populations, and additional man-made crises. If confirmed, I fully commit before God, this august body, the Administration, and the American people to partner with governments, civil society, and the private sector in developing nations to improve health, resilience, opportunities and self-reliance around the world.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.