

**Statement of MaryKay Loss Carlson**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**April 7, 2022**

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Romney, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to be here today and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for placing their confidence in me to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines. I appreciate the opportunity to answer your questions and hear firsthand your thoughts about our relationship with the Philippines, our oldest treaty ally in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee and other Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States, protect the safety of our citizens, and strengthen the bilateral relationship for the benefit of both of our countries.

I would like to take a few moments to thank some people whose support and guidance have shaped my life in important ways: My parents, George and Kay Loss of Little Rock, Arkansas, who serve as my inspiration and to whom I owe everything, including my sense of public service; and my husband Aubrey and our daughters, Kathryn and Karen, who are the center of my life. I want to also thank the many U.S. Embassy teams with whom I have had the honor to serve over the course of my 37-year career – especially the dedicated local staff members who are the backbone of our overseas operations. And to my three siblings and other family watching from Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, New York, Connecticut, and California, and mentors, friends, and colleagues around the world – thank you.

If confirmed, I would be thrilled to represent our country in the Philippines, a vibrant democratic ally with which we share a long history, and one of our most important partners. Our ties are enriched by the more than four million Filipinos and Filipino-Americans in the United States and more than 350,000 U.S. citizens who live and work in the Philippines. We must work to deepen the roots of the longstanding friendship and people-to-people ties between our two democracies, upgrade and modernize our alliance to face new challenges, expand U.S. trade and investment, and support the rule of law and good governance.

The U.S.-Philippines alliance is irreplaceable and foundational to our strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific. The Mutual Defense Treaty that our countries signed in 1951 serves as the bedrock of our unwavering commitment to the security of the Philippines. That treaty, and the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, enable our strong security and defense cooperation with the Philippines. If confirmed, I pledge to continue to expand opportunities for bilateral training, exercises, and capacity building, to support the long-term modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and to advance peace and security in the region. I will also work to ensure our security cooperation continues to help the Philippine military and law enforcement bodies combat terrorism, transnational crime, and violent extremism.

Concurrently, I will continue U.S. efforts to urge the Philippine government to conduct all law enforcement operations in accordance with the rule of law and consistent with international human rights standards, and I will urge the government to conduct thorough, transparent

investigations into all suspected unlawful killings, and to hold accountable those who are guilty.

We support the aspirations of millions of Filipinos who want to live in a society characterized by good governance, human rights protections, and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the administration of justice and support Philippine human rights defenders and civil society, and encourage respect for freedom of expression, including for members of the press.

Among the values our two democracies share is the respect for international law, which underpins freedoms of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea and around the world. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to bolster Philippine capabilities that enhance maritime domain awareness and enable it to counter coercive activity in its Exclusive Economic Zone and other areas.

The United States seeks to remain a leading trading partner and foreign investor partner as the Philippines progresses toward economic recovery and upper middle-income status. If confirmed, I will support reforms that enhance transparency, assure labor rights protections, boost beneficial trade and investment between our two countries, and increase cooperation to ensure resilient supply chains. I will promote an economic partnership that engages the U.S. and Philippine private sectors to invest in climate action and support low-carbon energy security.

Understanding that our consular operations at the U.S. Embassy Manila play an important role in helping provide visas to qualified skilled workers in crucial industries such as healthcare, if confirmed, I will ensure that our Mission resources remain focused on this effort.

Finally, let me add that our U.S. embassies overseas are more than places of work. They are communities of people. If confirmed, I will prioritize the safety and well-being of Embassy Manila's talented staff and families, maintain their focus on top goals, and ensure they represent the diverse talents of our democratic societies.

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