

Statement of Kari Lake
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 18, 2026

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as Ambassador of the United States to Jamaica. I am deeply honored by the President's trust and mindful of the responsibility this role carries.

I am joined today by my husband of 28 years, Jeff, my daughter Ruby, and son, Leo.

I spent three decades as a top-rated television journalist and news anchor, communicating complex national and international issues to broad audiences with clarity and purpose. That experience, combined with my work leading modernization and accountability efforts at the U.S. Agency for Global Media, has prepared me to represent American interests abroad with transparency, discipline, and results-driven leadership. Over the past 35 years, I have traveled to Jamaica on numerous occasions.

Jeff and I honeymooned in Jamaica – and from the time our kids were little to now we've spent family vacations, birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays in Jamaica. Yes, Jamaica has beautiful beaches, but it's the incredible Jamaican people – whose warmth, resilience, and deep pride in their country – kept us going back. Jamaica has more churches per square mile than anywhere in the world – and it's evident that belief in God is a source of strength, guiding Jamaica through challenges and shaping the nation's character. That is something I deeply admire, as I lean on my faith every day for guidance. That shared sense of faith and resilience is part of what makes Jamaica not just a neighbor, but a trusted partner.

Jamaica is among our largest trading partners in the Caribbean, with bilateral trade in goods exceeding \$3 billion in 2025. Americans account for more than 70 percent of tourists visiting the island, and tens of thousands of Jamaican workers support American farms and businesses each year across more than 35 states. Jamaica is also a key security partner and a founding member of the Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition combating narcotics trafficking in the region. These deep economic and people-to-people ties are the foundation of a strong and enduring relationship. Under the Trump Administration, we are seeing a renewed focus on strengthening partnerships in the Western Hemisphere — recognizing that our neighbors are vital to our security and prosperity.

If confirmed, I will focus on four priorities.

First, keeping Americans safe. Protecting the tens of thousands of U.S. citizens living in Jamaica, along with the roughly two million who visit each year, is a core responsibility. With hurricane season now underway – and after two devastating storms in the past two years – it is especially important that this role is filled and actively engaged to work with the Jamaican government to strengthen preparedness, improve coordination, and respond effectively to future disasters. The United States and the American people stood firmly with Jamaica during its

recovery from Hurricane Melissa and acted with generosity and compassion. If confirmed, I will build on that commitment and ensure this critical work continues.

Second, strengthening security cooperation. I will work closely with the Jamaican government to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, disrupt drug trafficking, and combat lottery scams that target and defraud vulnerable Americans.

Third, advancing American economic interests. I will advocate for U.S. businesses, work to address trade barriers such as Jamaica's long-standing restrictions on U.S. pork exports, and promote American investment – especially as Jamaica continues to recover from Hurricane Melissa. I will also work to ensure American companies can compete and succeed as we deepen our economic partnership with Jamaica.

Fourth, countering China's growing economic influence less than 500 miles from our shores. The Chinese Communist Party has made strategic investments across the Caribbean in ports, infrastructure, and critical sectors that carry long-term security implications. In a region this close to the United States, those efforts are not just economic – they are strategic. I will work to ensure that Jamaica continues to choose transparency, sovereignty, and partnership with the United States over dependence on actors whose interests do not align with our shared values.

Jamaica's democratic traditions, strategic location, and resilient people make it an indispensable partner in the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will bring my strong work ethic, clear communication, and a commitment to accountability to this role, and I will ensure that the United States Embassy represents the American people with professionalism and purpose.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.