

Statement of Herschel Junior Walker
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to The Bahamas
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
September 11, 2025

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Members of the Committee, thank you for your time in meeting with me and for holding this hearing.

Those of you who don't know me personally may be wondering what qualifications I bring to the table that would enable me to serve with distinction as U.S. Ambassador to The Bahamas. Throughout my life, people have underestimated me – whether in academics, athletics, or business. I have ALWAYS proven them wrong. I have done it through discipline and determination and by outworking everyone in every task, large and small. NO ONE has ever questioned my work ethic. If confirmed, I will apply that same work ethic to my role as Ambassador. The country that I love deserves no less.

I also have been blessed with the gift of being able to relate to people from all walks of life. I build trust through compassion and humor and by finding things that unite rather than divide.

Although I have never held the official title of “Ambassador,” I have spent decades serving as an informal ambassador to our country's youth – encouraging them to get a good education and to be physically active. I have been an ambassador to our men and women in the military -- stressing the importance of mental health. I traveled to hundreds of military installations around the world, making sure our service members feel comfortable seeking mental health counseling and treatment. I also served as an ambassador to athletes in the United States and abroad through my participation in the Olympics and professional sports.

As the owner and CEO of two successful businesses in the food service industry, I know firsthand what it takes to start and run a business. I

understand the importance of tourism and trade. In addition to hard work, the secret sauce is relationship-building. That is my strength and my passion.

As you know, there has not been a Senate-confirmed U.S. Ambassador to The Bahamas since 2011. The American and Bahamian people deserve better. As Ambassador, it will be my highest priority to keep American tourists and residents safe and secure. I will work closely with the Bahamian government on all matters pertaining to our mutual security.

Having an ambassador in place is more important than ever. China is aggressively projecting power and malign influence. It built a nearly \$3 billion deepwater port and has made other investments in sensitive sectors that could have implications for U.S. national security. An uptick in drug smuggling through The Bahamas harms Americans. The threat to American lives cannot be overstated. Tackling this serious problem requires leadership and cooperation between our governments. Through Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, the United States works collaboratively with the northern Caribbean to help disrupt illicit trafficking. If confirmed, I will see to it that we make this collaboration even stronger.

The nearest islands of The Bahamas lie a mere fifty miles from the United States. The United States is The Bahamas' largest trading partner. If confirmed, I will work with the American business community to advise them of the abundant trade and investment opportunities that exist in The Bahamas. I will also work with the Bahamian government to maintain and promote a welcoming environment for U.S. investors to advance American prosperity.

As Ambassador, I will strive to build lasting relationships with the Bahamian-American community in the United States. Bahamian-American traditions and contributions are an important part of America's story. If confirmed, I will work to leverage the ingenuity and creativity of Bahamian-Americans to deepen our economic and cultural ties with the Bahamian people. I will also energetically showcase American excellence, including through sports

diplomacy and the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

In closing, if confirmed, I will partner with the people and Government of The Bahamas to advance our shared interests. I will work with all elements of the U.S. government, including and especially members of this Committee, to advance American interests in The Bahamas and throughout the region.

It would be my honor to serve my country as Ambassador and to strengthen ties between the United States and The Bahamas. I will always ensure that my staff and I represent the people of the United States of America to the best of our abilities.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.