

**Opening Testimony for Benjamin Leon, Jr.
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 23, 2025**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Members of the Committee,

It is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as the United States Ambassador-nominee to Spain and Andorra. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to testify today, and I am humbled by the confidence President Trump and Secretary Rubio have shown in me.

At the outset, I want to thank my wife and family for their love and support, which is always with me. I am grateful as well to the memories of my parents, who overcame great challenges to start anew in the United States. In 1961, we came to Miami from Cuba to begin a new life in this land of opportunity. My father and I worked together to build a successful healthcare business and create a model of accessible and high-quality medical care.

I believe my background in business will prove essential. As the founder of Leon Medical Centers, I spent decades fostering a healthcare network that provides essential services to the community in Miami. I've also supported Miami Dade College, where my contributions established the Benjamin Leon School of Nursing to bring needed talent to the nursing profession.

I am also proud of my support to CasaCuba at Florida International University, a project celebrating Cuban culture, history, and traditions. And as the founder of Besilu Collection, I have made significant contributions to the equestrian world. Our purebred Paso Fino horses—a breed whose Spanish origin underscores the close, lasting ties between Spain and the Western Hemisphere—compete in high-profile events, showcasing the patience and strategic vision that I bring to all my endeavors.

I recognize the importance of our profound and historic relationship with Spain, one built on shared values, mutual respect, and a deep cultural connection. If confirmed, I commit to use the skills I have honed over many years—strategic planning, communication, negotiation—to build an even stronger relationship between the United States and our important ally, Spain. Spain played a crucial role in the American Revolution, providing vital support to achieve our independence. Spanish forces captured West Florida, securing the southern supply route and the Mississippi River. Spain also provided essential funds and supplies, including financing the final siege of Yorktown with gold and silver from Havana, then Spanish Cuba.

Our shared history is a testament to the strength of our alliance and shared values, including the promotion of democracy, free speech, and human rights. These principles guide our bilateral relationship and our efforts to safeguard national security. As Ambassador, I would work tirelessly to strengthen this vital relationship, focusing on four key priorities.

First, I will prioritize the well-being and safety of American citizens living and traveling in Spain and Andorra.

Second, I will enhance economic and trade relations between our two nations. Our economic partnership is already strong. We have a trade surplus with Spain, and we are Spain's largest investor. I will prioritize initiatives that further promote trade with Spain and Andorra. By fostering economic cooperation, we can create jobs and promote innovation on both sides of the Atlantic.

Third, I will deepen our security and defense cooperation. Spain is a key NATO Ally and host to thousands of our troops. Our collaboration on security matters is essential for maintaining stability in Europe and beyond. I will work to strengthen our defense partnership, including increasing Spanish defense spending and investments and continuing joint military exercises. Enhancing our security ties will help address common threats such as terrorism and cyberattacks.

Finally, if confirmed, drawing on my unique background as a Cuban exile, I will advocate for the promotion of human rights, democratic values and the rule of law. I will support efforts with Spain towards a more just and democratic world. This includes advocating for the rights of the Cuban people and supporting Spain's efforts to uphold democratic principles.

I look forward to working with the government of Spain, civil society, and the private sector to build upon our already strong bilateral relations and expand the political, commercial, educational, cultural, and artistic ties between our countries. I also look forward to fostering our relationship with the Principality of Andorra to further our joint goals of supporting democracy, human rights, and financial transparency.

In closing, I will work closely with this body and all Members of Congress to ensure your concerns are addressed, and that we work together to advance U.S. interests while strengthening our partnerships with Spain and Andorra. I am committed to serving the United States with dedication and integrity.

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