

Statement of Constance J. Milstein
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malta
U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee
May 4, 2022

Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished Senators of this esteemed Committee, I am humbled and honored to appear before you today. I am deeply grateful to the President, Dr. Biden, and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Malta.

I would like to acknowledge my husband Saïd Abu-Kaud, my children Abby and Joanna, their husbands Rick and Bjorn, and my granddaughter Sara, who have all shown me unwavering love, support, and patience in my endeavor to follow my lifelong dream to serve our country, and continue my passionate advocacy for fairness, justice, and democracy. I would also like to remember my parents Seymour and Vivian who taught me the values of respect, responsibility, and giving. Their service to others was an inspiration to me to lead a life of purpose.

My father was a proud veteran of WWII who returned to the United States in 1945 on a hospital plane. Everyone on that plane signed a dollar bill, which my dad carried in his wallet until he died. I too am proud to have had opportunities for service. For decades, I have worked on programs and initiatives dedicated to military service members, disabled veterans, their families, and caregivers.

I have always maintained a strong interest in foreign affairs, and I have been active in public policy and global education. My varied experiences as an attorney and businesswoman will empower me to steward our important relationship with the Republic of Malta. Three priorities will guide my work:

First, promoting peace and security. If confirmed, my top priority will be to ensure the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens living in or traveling in Malta. Furthermore, I will prioritize the promotion of peace, security, and regional stability. Malta may be the smallest country in the European Union, but it has great strategic importance based on its location adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea's principal shipping routes and at the crossroads of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. I believe in growing the bilateral partnership between our two nations as we come together to face regional security challenges, transnational crime, and illicit financing.

Promoting peace and security in this region also means encouraging inclusiveness, protection of human rights, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms.

Second, promoting prosperity, trade, and people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I will increase U.S. and Maltese economic ties. Malta aspires to lead small island nations in sustainable development. Therefore, I will capitalize on our shared goals of promoting prosperity, trade, and people-to-people ties through U.S. innovation and commercial interests in Malta.

Third, tackling corruption and impunity. The assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia (an important Maltese investigative journalist) in October of 2017 showed the danger of corruption

in Maltese politics and society. If confirmed, I will champion rule of law efforts and an open and free press.

Rule of law reforms regarding anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism are also critical to Malta's efforts to fully implement the Financial Action Task Force Action Plan to remove Malta as a jurisdiction for increased monitoring. In order to fully implement these reforms, Malta will need a stronger financial regulatory environment, which will serve to strengthen and benefit Malta's economic institutions and reputation for the future.

If confirmed, I would work with Malta to make these reforms sustainable for the long term.

It would be an honor to be a member of the outstanding Embassy Valletta team, and if confirmed, I am committed to working with the members of this committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I am happy to answer your questions.