

**Statement of Reta Jo Lewis**  
**Nominee for President, Export-Import Bank of the United States**  
**United States Senate**  
**Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs**  
**Tuesday, October 26, 2021**

Chairman Brown, Ranking Member Toomey, distinguished members of this Committee, I am honored to appear before you today and deeply humbled by the faith President Biden has placed in me as his nominee to serve as President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM).

As a proud Georgian, I am extremely pleased to testify before my home state Senators Ossoff and Warnock.

I grew up in rural Georgia in a family dedicated to public service. My mom and dad, Charlie and Alethia Lewis, were small business owners and community leaders who instilled in my siblings and me the value of work. Although my parents are no longer with us, I know they would be extremely proud that I will have an opportunity to support small businesses across this great country if confirmed. And while I currently reside in Washington, D.C., I have never lost my small-town roots. As all Georgians know, Georgia is always on our minds.

I would also like to acknowledge my siblings Le’Ontyne, Sharma and Charlie, who are here with me today, as well as friends and family watching who have provided me their steadfast support.

As a member of the leadership team at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, I am keenly aware of the deep connection between EXIM and its role in the implementation of the Marshall Plan. If confirmed, I hope to harness this history and lead the agency into a new, historic era through inclusiveness, transparency and consistent collaboration.

Throughout my career, I have sought to connect the best of America with the world. I have led effective teams in supporting American businesses and built international partnerships shaped by American values. I have worked to expand inclusiveness in foreign policy, including through participation in the Leadership Council for Women in National Security, the Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network and the Council on Foreign Relations.

During my tenure as the first-ever Special Representative for Global Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of State, I witnessed the immense, positive impact that America can have on the world. I saw the generous spirit of our citizens, our willingness to embrace different cultures, and our ability to move the world forward by working in common purpose with our friends and allies.

I have also seen the vital role entrepreneurs and their workers play in building a strong middle class. While leading strategic alliances at the US Chamber of Commerce and through my work as an attorney, I helped connect small, women and minority-owned businesses and organizations with resources and networks to foster strategic alliances and opportunities. I heard their stories and ensured that they were brought into the dialogue on vital business policy matters.

I pursued this work with a spirit of collaboration and bipartisanship.

Together, my experiences taught me an essential truth: Americans are the most hardworking, strongest people on earth. In return, they ask that those of us in positions of leadership stand up for them and create a level playing field.

Today, I ask for your support and for the opportunity to fight for America's exporters at EXIM. If confirmed, I will lead with integrity, and I will work hard to open new markets and new exporting opportunities.

America's exporters are in a competition to win the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and EXIM must stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

As we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, EXIM must seize this opportunity to live up to its mission. EXIM must partner with sister agencies like the International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), the US Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to enhance the global competitiveness of U.S. businesses and workers. EXIM must also renew its emphasis on supporting small businesses to help our country's economy build back better.

If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will lead the agency with high standards for our stewardship of taxpayer dollars and work with all of you to fully implement the provisions of EXIM's 2019 reauthorization, with a special focus on transformational export areas, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy storage exports, strategic competition with China, and increasing support for historically under-served businesses.

Lastly, I will work to diversify EXIM's portfolio by broadening outreach efforts in key strategic sectors and regions like Sub-Saharan Africa. I will also use my bipartisan network to enhance collaboration with state and local elected officials in support of their work to create jobs in their communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.