

For Official Release  
PR 001-04082022  
Office of the Governor  
Utulei, American Samoa  
April 8, 2022



## “Governor Lemanu P.S. Mauga Congratulates Ambassador Carmen G. Cantor on Her Nomination as OIA Assistant Secretary”

*“Congratulations on your nomination Ambassador. Someone of your proficiency would be an asset for the Insular Areas and we look forward to working with you.”*

Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga met with United States Ambassador Carmen G. Cantor, via Zoom on April 8, 2022. Ambassador Cantor was recently nominated by United States President Joseph Biden Jr., to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Insular and International Affairs at the Department of the Interior on March 11, 2022, and will be considered by the US Senate for confirmation later this month.

Governor Lemanu expressed his support for Ambassador Cantor, “Congratulations on your nomination Ambassador. Someone of your proficiency would be an asset for the Insular Areas and we look forward to working with you.” Ambassador Cantor is a career member of the Senior Executive Service and currently serves as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) carry out the Secretary’s responsibilities for U.S.-affiliated insular areas, which includes the territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance to three freely associated states: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Governor Lemanu highlighted three major issues American Samoa is facing that is also common in other Insular Areas. “The needs of our Territory are very much similar to Puerto Rico and other islands. You have an understanding of Climate Change and the issues we face considering our remote locations,” Governor Lemanu stated. He continued, “Another challenge is Health Care. American Samoa citizens travel abroad to seek medical care because it cannot be provided locally. We have one hospital, and are currently planning to build another with the hopes to provide the sufficient services our people need so they do not have to leave the island.”

Governor Lemanu voiced a third issue which threatens the Pacific Island Region, “We are concerned with China’s influence in the Pacific, this includes non-US island nations. Chinese companies have established strong diplomatic, trade and investment ties in some of our neighboring islands; the economic impact this may have in the Pacific region is a concern we should address.”

“Thank you, Governor Lemanu, for your support. All the issues you have mentioned are a part of my agenda. I am honored and I commit to working with all of you,” Ambassador Cantor remarked.

In his closing statement, Governor Lemanu acknowledged Ambassador Cantor for accepting the nomination and has invited her to visit American Samoa following her Senate Hearing for confirmation.

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