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Wyden Opening Statement on Nomination of Jamieson Greer for US Trade Representative

As Prepared for Delivery

Donald Trump has spent the past year lying nonstop about trade policy. He shouted that tariffs were something other countries pay, when the truth is that tariffs are a tax on American families. That's why I've been so committed to fighting Trump's across-the-board tariffs.

America had its first taste of Trump's rancid trade policy this week. Here are the receipts:

At this time, Mr. Chairman, this might be a first, but I would like to enter into the record three Wall Street Journal opinion articles titled, "The Dumbest Trade War In History," "Pray for Surrender in Trump's Dumb Trade War," and "Trump Blinks on North American Tariffs."

Who could have seen that coming???

Trump governs by whim, and in trade that hurts American families. His tariff bluff created huge uncertainty that is costing American businesses and putting the global economy on a month-to-month lease. My top priority today is to figure out who the hell in Trump's Administration is going to be in charge of trade, what they plan to do, and how this sort of bedlam is supposed to do a damn thing for American families.

This weekend featured a bunch of fake promises, starting with Trump's threats to slap huge, blanket tariffs on products from Canada, Mexico and China. But Trump backed down after Canada and Mexico repackaged some stale border security promises in a new box. Foreign leaders around the world are laughing at Trump for getting rolled.

That brings us to the business before the committee today, considering the nomination of Jamieson Greer, to serve as U.S. Trade Representative. Mr. Greer previously served as an attorney at several notable law firms and as chief of staff to Trump's previous USTR, Bob Lighthizer.

Mr. Greer, thank you for meeting with me on Tuesday. I appreciated your commitment to telling me what's going on with trade before I read about it online. This committee can't function if it is kept in the

dark like it was over the past week. I expect that you will pick up the phone and call us when trade is on the agenda in this administration.

In our conversation, I was trying to figure out the trade chaos that occurred over this past weekend. I thought it was trade. My constituents in Oregon thought it was trade. But you said these tariff threats were not actually a trade issue at all, but rather an issue of border security. So which is it? I didn't leave that conversation too confident that you would expect to be in the room when these kinds of trade decisions are being made. If that is still your view, I would be very concerned.

The American people need to know who's making the case for them. The law says USTR is in charge of international trade. Yet, in this administration, it is not at all clear that is the case. Is it Mr. Lutnick, at the Commerce Department? Treasury Secretary Bessent? Homeland Security?

The Senate Finance Committee needs a USTR who doesn't pass the buck. The USTR must speak with authority on the administration's trade policy.

I'm also concerned about the nominee's views when it comes to using tariffs to settle scores that don't have anything to do with trade. No administration had used the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose tariffs before Donald Trump, and in my view it is a clear abuse of that law. If the USTR has no role in decisions like that, I'm not sure what their job is.

International trade policy is far too important to American families, workers, small businesses, manufacturers and farmers to be sacrificed to make headlines on some unrelated issue. Blueberry farmers in Oregon and potato farmers in Idaho need to sell their products in foreign markets to stay afloat. It's my hope that this committee will be spending more time on making it easier to sell made-in-the USA products, and less time figuring out why this administration is putting Americans' livelihoods at risk.

Mr. Greer, I don't envy your position. Based on last week, it's unclear what say you'll have in the Administration, or whether you'll have any at all. But now is your opportunity to make your case for how you'll keep trade on the rails.

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