

Opening Statement of Katherine Tai before the Senate Finance Committee

February 25, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Crapo, and members of the Committee — thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The chance to serve the American people, fight on their behalf, and represent them on the world stage once again will be the greatest honor of my life. It's a privilege I've experienced before at the Office of the United States Trade Representative — and a responsibility that, if confirmed, I look forward to embracing once again. I thank President Biden for providing me with this opportunity.

Serving as the top U.S. trade representative around the globe holds special resonance for me as the daughter of immigrants.

My parents were born in mainland China, and grew up in Taiwan. The immigration reforms set in motion by President Kennedy opened a path for them to come here as graduate students in the sciences. And they made the most of their American opportunity.

My dad became a researcher at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. He helped the Army develop treatments for illnesses that had debilitated GIs during the Vietnam War — the war in which my father-in-law fought bravely as a young man.

My mom still works at the National Institutes of Health. She heads a clinical trials network, developing treatments for opioid addiction that will help to stem an epidemic causing so much suffering in our communities.

I am proud of their service to the nation that welcomed them. And I am proud to live in a country where, in just one generation, their daughter could grow up to represent the United States and our interests around the globe.

That sense of pride and patriotism will ground me every day if I have the honor to be confirmed as United States Trade Representative.

I know that the challenges ahead are significant.

Our first priority will be to help American communities emerge from the pandemic and economic crisis. USTR has an important role to play in that effort. Working with Congress, the entire Biden-Harris administration, and other countries and trusted partners, USTR will help to build out strong supply chains that will get our economy back on track.

In the longer term, we must pursue trade policies that advance the interests of all Americans — policies that recognize that people are workers and wage earners, not just consumers; policies that promote broad, equitable growth here at home; policies that support American innovation and enhance our competitive edge.

That's why I will make it a priority to implement and enforce the renewed terms of our trade relationship with Canada and Mexico. Too often in the past, Congress and the administration came together to finalize and pass a trade agreement. But then other urgent matters arose and we all moved on. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is a uniquely

bipartisan accomplishment that must break that trend. It represents an important step in reforming our approach to trade. We must all continue to prioritize its implementation and success. We must continue to pursue trade policies that are ambitious in achieving robust, bipartisan support.

I will also prioritize rebuilding our international alliances and partnerships, and re-engaging with international institutions. We must do the hard work, and secure the necessary reforms that allow the world to come together and address common threats like climate change, the COVID pandemic, and a global economic downturn.

That duty of leadership extends, of course, to addressing the challenges posed by China.

I previously served as America's chief enforcer against China's unfair trade practices. I know firsthand how critically important it is that we have a strategic and coherent plan for holding China accountable to its promises and effectively competing with its model of state-directed economics. I know the opportunities and limitations in our existing toolbox. And I know how important it is to build what the President has termed "a united front of U.S. allies."

We must recommit to working relentlessly with others to promote and defend our shared values of freedom, democracy, truth, and opportunity in a just society.

China is simultaneously a rival, a trade partner, and an outsized player whose cooperation we'll also need to address certain global challenges. We must remember how to walk, chew gum and play chess at the same time. That means here at home, we must prioritize resilience and make the investments in our people and our infrastructure to harness our potential, boost our competitiveness, and build a more inclusive prosperity. We must also impart the values and rules that guide global commerce — and we must enforce those terms vigorously.

This is work I am eager to take on once more.

Having spent my career fighting for American workers, I am honored by the opportunity to work alongside the bright and dedicated public servants at USTR, with our partners and allies, and with each of you. Having served nearly seven years in the House of Representatives, I know that U.S. trade policy is most successful when it is conducted through a healthy partnership between the administration and the Congress.

I look forward to bringing our trade relationships to bear helping American communities emerge out of crisis and into greater prosperity.

And I look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you.

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