

The **UNITED STATES SENATE**
COMMITTEE *on* **FINANCE**
CHAIRMAN RON **WYDEN**, D-OREGON

www.finance.senate.gov | @SenateFinance



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2021

Contact: [Keith Chu](mailto:Keith.Chu@senate.gov) (202) 224-4515

Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on the Nomination of Katherine Tai for U.S. Trade Representative
As Prepared for Delivery

This morning the Finance Committee wraps up Nominations Week by welcoming Katherine Tai, President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Trade Representative.

America's trade policy needs to be smarter and stronger; four more years of mean tweets and chaos from the White House won't cut it when our country is calling for more high-skill, high-wage jobs. Fortunately, chaos is not President Biden's style. A smarter, stronger trade policy requires a savvy leader at USTR who understands what working Americans are going through and knows how to develop a path for them to get ahead. That's precisely what Katherine Tai will bring to this job.

Ms. Tai has a wealth of experience working on trade policy from just about every angle. She's got leadership experience fighting back against China's trade cheating. She was at the forefront of the effort to improve the New NAFTA when the previous administration handed the Congress a deal that wasn't good enough to protect American jobs. She's got a proven record of achieving wins for American workers and businesses, for the environment, and for ranchers, farmers and innovators.

Ms. Tai is also no stranger to us at the Finance Committee. We've worked closely with her during her time at the Ways and Means Committee and at USTR prior to that. There's going to be a lot more for us to work on together in the months and years ahead.

In my view, that begins with developing a tougher new approach to China. To the extent that the previous administration ever had a strategy beyond the ex-president's gut impulses, it didn't get the job done. The Chinese market is more closed off to American-made goods and services today than it was four years ago. There hasn't been any real change to the trade rip-offs that wiped out so many American jobs and stole so many innovative ideas over the decades. I'm confident that the Biden administration and Ms. Tai will do better.

This committee is also going to put a special focus on ending the import of goods produced with forced labor. It's enough that forced labor is morally repugnant. It's also true that when American workers have to compete with slave labor, everybody loses. It's a race to absolute rock bottom for workers' rights.

Next, the U.S. also needs a full blockade against other nations' discriminatory policies aimed at knifing industries with taxes where America leads, such as digital goods and services. Trade in stolen timber and other natural resources that damage the environment and edge out hard-working Americans in the forestry sector must be stopped.

There's also a lot of work to be done when it comes to implementing the New NAFTA. Ms. Tai knows firsthand that the New NAFTA raised the bar for labor standards, environmental rules and digital trade. But the agreement will only deliver for American workers and businesses if it's implemented and enforced the right way. I want to work closely with USTR on that process.

Bottom line, getting trade done right is difficult. It's not about angry tweets and flimsy trade deals that produce more headlines than jobs.

Trade done right is about strong enforcement that protects American workers and businesses and creating new opportunities to raise wages and increase exports. It raises the bar for labor and environmental standards and digital trade rules around the world so that the global economy competes on our terms.

USTR leads the effort, but it also involves Customs and Border Protection, as well as the Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, State, the Treasury, and others. It requires strong and steady relationships with our international economic allies. None of that came easily to the last administration. In my view, the chaos that came out of the White House over the last four years cost a lot of opportunities to help American workers get ahead. So I'm glad that President Biden is already taking a different tack, and he made a great choice for U.S. Trade Representative.

I trust Ms. Tai's judgement and I know the depth of her experience. She is the daughter of immigrants to the U.S. As a child of immigrants myself, I know how much it means to give back to the country that welcomed in our families. And rounding out a week of historic firsts for nominees in this hearing room, she'd be the first woman of color to serve as USTR.

Katherine Tai's got a lot of fans on both sides of the Finance Committee, and I'm happy to support her nomination.

###