



Senate Committee on Finance
U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Chairman

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Hatch Statement at Finance Committee Markup of Trade Bills

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, today delivered the following opening statement at a committee markup of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation, S. 995, [The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015](#), and a number of additional trade bills:

Today's markup is an important step in a multi-year-long effort to enhance American trade. Each of the bills before us today have been in the works for some time. And, each of them are the product of bipartisan compromise and cooperation.

I want to start by restating what I said in our hearing last week: U.S. trade with foreign countries a good thing.

That's a pretty simple statement, one that's hard to disagree with. Yet, while I don't think that many would quibble with that premise, there is a wide range of views as to how we should go about facilitating trade.

I expect many of those views will be expressed today. Indeed, I think we'll have a spirited debate on these issues. I'm looking forward it.

My personal view is that we need to be doing all we can tear down barriers to American exports while, at the same time, creating enforceable rules for our trading partners so we can be sure that American workers and job creators are competing on a level playing field.

That is the goal of all of the bills on today's agenda. I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about each of them.

The first bill we'll consider today is a bill to renew Trade Adjustment Assistance, or TAA. This legislation represents a compromise between Senator Wyden and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan.

Now, I'm not a fan of TAA. But, I recognize its importance to members of this committee on both sides of the aisle. While I plan to vote against this legislation, I'm glad we have the opportunity to debate the program on its merits.

Next, we'll consider a bill that will reauthorize and improve three of our trade preference programs: the Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP; the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA; and tariff preferences for Haiti.

These preference programs are very important tools to build our trading relationships with the beneficiary countries by encouraging development, diversifying their economies, and creating jobs. At the same time, U.S. manufacturers benefit and rely on the tariff reductions provided under the programs. I'd like to thank Senator Isakson who has been a leader for years on the African Growth and Opportunity Act. We're going to report legislation to renew AGOA today, thanks, in large part, to his input and assistance.

The preference bill represents an agreement reached by Senator Wyden, Chairman Ryan, Representative Sander Levin, and myself.

After considering both TAA and the preference bill, we'll move to legislation designed to strengthen enforcement and improve the trade facilitation work of the Customs and Border Protection agency. The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 puts in place the right tools to keep out pirated and counterfeit products that threaten American innovation and the health and safety of the American people. The bill also helps bolster American exports by ensuring other countries comply with U.S. trade laws and protect intellectual property rights. This is another bipartisan bill that will help advance America's trade agenda and create better jobs and a stronger economy at home.

Finally, after we've debated and voted these three bills, we'll move to consideration of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act, the bill to renew Trade Promotion Authority.

This legislation represents a bipartisan, bicameral effort to empower our trade negotiators and assert Congress's role in crafting U.S. trade policy. It was introduced by Senator Wyden and myself here in the Senate and by Chairman Ryan in the House.

This is truly a historic bill, containing clearest articulation of trade priorities in our nation's history.

It includes almost 150 ambitious, high-standard negotiating objectives that will direct our trade negotiators to break down barriers that American exporters face in the 21st century economy.

The bill also contains unprecedented consultation requirements that will enhance Congress's role throughout the trade negotiating process. I would like to commend Senator Crapo for his leadership, bringing greater attention to the problem of insufficient public and

congressional access to trade negotiations. One of the important changes to the new bill will ensure the public greater access to agreements well before they are signed. This provision should help us restore public confidence in the process and Senator Crapo has been influential in helping us get there.

Like prior TPA bills, the procedures in our bill guarantee that all trade agreements will get an up-or-down vote in Congress. At the same time, we included new tools to hold the administration accountable, including a procedure that Congress can employ if our trade negotiators fail to consult or make progress toward meeting the negotiating objectives.

This is a good bill, one that I think members of both parties can support. At the end of the day, I think we'll see a strong, bipartisan vote in favor of our TPA legislation.

I'll have more to say on TPA and on all the bills on today's agenda as the meeting wears on. For now, I just want to once again thank my colleagues for their help on these issues.

In particular, I'd like to thank Senator Wyden for working with me on all of these bills. It's taken us a while to get here, but I think it's been worth all the time and effort.

I'd also like to thank Senator Portman for all of his assistance on all trade issues. He's an expert on trade and his advice and counsel have been vital to our efforts. I'd specifically note that his leadership on TAA and HCTC has been extremely helpful.

In addition, Senator Toomey has been most helpful when it comes to enforcement issues. The bills before us today include the strongest language yet on enforcement and much of that has been due to Senator Toomey.

Senator Thune has been a leader on issues related to digital trade. We've been able to incorporate a lot of his ideas. I'd like to thank him for his help in this and other areas. And of course, Senator Grassley has provided invaluable advice on agriculture issues. Thank you, Chuck, for your help.

With that, I just want to say that this is a good day for the Finance Committee. But, it's not time to celebrate yet. We've still got a lot of work to do.

I'm eager to get started.

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