



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Hatch Statement at Executive Session to Consider USTR Nominee**

WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) today delivered the following opening statement at a markup to consider the nomination of Robert Lighthizer to be the United States Trade Representative (USTR):

*On today's agenda are the nomination of Mr. Robert Lighthizer to be the United States Trade Representative and a bill providing an exception to section 141(b) of the Trade Act of 1974.*

*President Trump has ambitious plans on U.S. trade policy. Yet, due to repeated delays and artificial roadblocks created by some Members, the President's nominee to be his chief trade official has languished for months.*

*Congress established that the USTR is the primary official for developing and executing American trade policy. The USTR is our country's chief trade negotiator, and the President's key trade advisor. The USTR is also the principle intermediary between Congress and the President on trade policy. That means the sooner we get a confirmed USTR, the stronger Congress's voice will be in shaping American trade policy.*

*In other words, this unprecedented delay for a USTR nomination has been misguided, and I'm glad that the committee appears to be ready to take steps today to remedy this situation.*

*Mr. Lighthizer's qualifications to serve as USTR are beyond dispute.*

*Mr. Lighthizer has a long and distinguished career in public service, both in Congress and at USTR, and in the private sector.*

*Mr. Lighthizer's nomination has bipartisan support both here in the committee and in the Senate at large.*

*In short, this should be an easy nomination to confirm, and I look forward to moving the nomination out of the committee.*

*Toward that end, in addition to voting on the Lighthizer nomination today, the committee will vote on a waiver with regard to the nominee.*

*It's not clear that this waiver is legally necessary. However, this is not the first time the committee or the Senate has worked constructively to pass a waiver, even when there was not a consensus agreement on the need for the waiver. In the past, we've always passed waivers without any real controversy or conflict, and we've done so for nominees from both parties. I hope we are returning to that tradition today.*

*There are six Senate-confirmed positions at USTR. And, if we want to ensure that Congress's priorities and directives are fully reflected in U.S. trade policy, this Committee and the Senate will need to work cooperatively to process these nominations. Once again, I'm pleased to be taking constructive steps toward that goal today.*

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