

OPENING STATEMENT OF JAYME R. WHITE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
JUNE 24, 2021

Chair Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to be here at this desk, in front of you. This is a truly special moment after spending many years sitting behind you on the dais.

I came to Washington in 2000 to work for my hometown Congressman, Jim McDermott. Throughout a decade of service to Congressman McDermott, I helped guide his work on trade policy as a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, and I learned valuable lessons about how trade affects working people.

Since 2009, I have served this committee under Chair Wyden. I have represented this committee's legislative agenda and international trade priorities during three presidencies and in front of leaders around the world.

I grew up in West Seattle, which is on the waterfront and home to the Port of Seattle, a gateway of international trade. As a kid, I delivered newspapers across the area and got a bird's eye view of the positive and harmful aspect of trade policy. The region is home to everything from trains and trucks, to container ships and grain containers – all representing the hopes and dreams of workers, farmers, and families.

I have never forgotten where I came from and the people I grew up with. I'm keenly aware of how the policy made here in Washington has a direct impact on the lives of people back in West Seattle. And if confirmed as a Deputy United States Trade Representative, I will continue to fight for American workers, the environment, and our economic prosperity.

President Biden and Ambassador Tai have laid out a historic new policy approach centered around workers. Historically, trade, labor, and regulatory policy has been tilted in favor of corporations and the wealthy. Workers have not always benefitted from government policy. The promises often didn't reach the factory floor and wages didn't go up, creating deep skepticism about the efficacy of trade policy.

Ambassador Tai believes we need a different approach that gives workers a seat at the table – so their perspectives and voices are incorporated into the policy we develop.

Recent history shows that this approach can bear fruit. Next week marks the one-year anniversary of the United States-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement. USMCA proved that bringing all stakeholders to the table – labor, workers, the business community, and Members of Congress – can produce stronger trade agreements. The result was a bipartisan trade deal with overwhelming support from Congress that includes:

- Strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards;
- A new tool known as the Rapid Response Mechanism that, when used, allows us to promptly raise concerns with the Mexican or Canadian government when there are allegations of worker rights violations; and
- Necessary and long overdue intellectual property reforms to increase access of life-saving medication.

I had the pleasure of working with Ambassador Tai during the USMCA negotiations while she worked for the House Committee on Ways and Means. When she talks about putting workers front and center in our trade policy, it isn't shallow rhetoric. It's a genuine commitment to lift up voices and communities we don't often hear from – or worse, that we overlook and exclude.

That commitment was highlighted last week when Ambassador Tai and members of the Biden-Harris Administration negotiated a resolution with the European Union and the United Kingdom to end the long-running Boeing-Airbus dispute. The deal suspends the tariffs related to the dispute for five years. And it will help American workers and American companies compete fairly, while we work with our allies to address common challenges from China and other non-market economies.

As the son of two Boeing employees, this welcome news hits close to home, but I also know many of the workers that will benefit from the deal are your constituents. You and your staff hear from them frequently – and you know how difficult this dispute has been. They should know that the deal shows how we can work with our allies and trading partners to confront the threats of this new age and shape trade policies that lift up workers, people and communities that are often overlooked.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with all of you to develop a worker-centered trade policy that boosts our competitiveness and creates good paying jobs. Together, we can prove that trade doesn't need to exclude certain factions and communities. It can be inclusive, create shared prosperity, and help us Build Back Better.

Thank you for considering me for this position. I look forward to answering your questions.