

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER WILSON**  
**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**OCTOBER 26, 2021**

Chairman Wyden, Senator Crapo, members of the Committee – good morning.

In 1982, as a college junior, I spent a semester interning for my distinguished home-state Senator, Bob Dole. At the time, Senator Dole was serving as chairman of this committee. To now find myself sitting at this table, in this room, is an honor that is maybe made a little more special by virtue of that personal history. I am honored that President Biden nominated me to serve as the first-ever Chief Innovation and Intellectual Property Negotiator at the Office of the United States Trade Representative. And I am grateful to you, Senators, for your consideration.

I also want to acknowledge the many friends and colleagues who have enriched my career at USTR over the past two decades. I have had great teachers and excellent examples among both my fellow civil servants and the agency's political leaders over the years.

I'm glad that my husband, Mark Hegedus, is here this morning, and I'm grateful for his love and support.

If confirmed for this position, I would be the first person to hold the title. To do a job for the first time is both exciting and a little daunting. Fortunately, Congress has provided a very clear expectation about what the position is about, namely to be a "vigorous advocate on behalf of United States innovation and intellectual property interests." If I'm confirmed, those words will be prominently posted on my desk at USTR.

I understand how protecting U.S. innovation through intellectual property rights is key to our economic success. This principle has been woven through every position I've held during my years at USTR. In addition to serving in USTR's IP office from 2006 to 2008, I have worked on important intellectual property issues in my engagements with trading partners in Central America, Europe and the Middle East, South and Central Asia, and in the context of the World Trade Organization.

This work has reinforced my belief that trade policy must protect American innovation and creative endeavors, and that rules governing that protection should be effectively enforced. I look forward to your input – today and going forward – on how best to advance those objectives.

Senators, one of my early mentors at USTR taught me that, in any negotiation as well as in the process of policy development, listening is as important as talking. I intend to apply that lesson every day I am in this position. My experience has taught me that, perhaps more than in many other areas of trade policy, IP is the subject of strongly-held and often widely divergent views among a broad spectrum of stakeholders. If confirmed, my door will be open to all and I will listen carefully. I assure you that this

Committee and its staff would be prominent among those from whom I expect to be guided.

Ambassador Tai has laid out a worker-centered trade policy that ensures, as President Biden often says, our economy grows from the bottom up and the middle out. If confirmed, I will always be thinking about how we can defend U.S. innovation and intellectual property in order to help workers and generate broad-based, durable prosperity.

Finally, Senators, it will be important to me to ensure that the relationship between this new chief negotiator function and the dedicated career professionals in USTR's IP office is placed on a sound, sustainable, and respectful footing.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning. I look forward to your questions and advice.