

Opening Statement for Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.
Committee on Finance
Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness
Hearing on:
“Trade Enforcement and Infrastructure: Safeguarding our Industrial Base from
Present and Future Challenges”
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We're here today to discuss what I view as two of the most critical issues that relate to the competitiveness of our nation – manufacturing and infrastructure, which have a substantial impact on jobs and wages. I'm honored to be joined today by Senator Wyden, who came from Washington to be with us, but as you know represents the state of Oregon, and has worked for years on all these issues – trade issues, economic and jobs issues, manufacturing, infrastructure and the like.

We know that steel overcapacity, as well as trade cheating, and China's efforts to literally steal our future by stealing our companies IP, are some of the most fundamental trade issues of our time because they directly impact Pennsylvania jobs and wages. I've said for years and I'll say again: when China cheats, Pennsylvania loses jobs. It's that simple. So we have to face that reality when we're confronting these issues. China is going after America's competitive advantage by any means necessary; if China can't buy it, or if China can't run it out of business, they steal it. And unfortunately that's a harsh reality. You don't need to look far in our state to find companies and unions who have been hacked by the Chinese government. Just talk to U.S. Steel, talk to the Steelworkers, talk to other institutions in Southwestern Pennsylvania who have been victims of these actions.

I went to the White House this past Tuesday to meet with the President and a bipartisan bicameral group of legislators, Senators and House members of both parties, including Senator Wyden, to discuss steel and aluminum. At that meeting, I told the President how Pennsylvania companies and steelworks have been hammered by the surge in imports since the Commerce Department announced its section 232 investigation last April on whether rising steel and aluminum imports represent a threat to national security. I also heard from Senators telling the President to exercise caution – that's what a number of Republican Senators and House members were telling him. I have a different view, which we'll get into later.

When the Commerce Department launched this investigation in April of last year, I along with steelworkers across Pennsylvania were hopeful that the Commerce Department would quickly complete their study, and the President would take decisive action. And then, we waited. Through the spring and the summer, rumors were swirling, but still steel imports were surging. The Commerce Department seemed ready to transmit the report by the end of the summer and then the President told the Wall Street Journal in July that he did not intend to move forward on a final determination on the steel Section 232 case until “Everything finished up between healthcare and taxes, and maybe even infrastructure”. So said the President at that time. Meanwhile, we watched imports rise for the first 12 months of 2017 – total steel and finished steel imports were up 17.5% and 14.6%, respectively, from the same period in 2016. So total steel basically up 18%, and finished steel imports up basically 15% in that time period. Imports

of electrical steel, which many of you know is the steel used to ensure we have an electricity grid have more than doubled from 2016 to 2017. Pipes and tubes surged 82% from 16 to 17. So electrical steel up 100%, pipes and tubes up 82%.

The Commerce Department had 270 days to transmit the report to the President, and they submitted it just shy of that by a few days. The President then had 90 days to make a determination. At the White House this week, I urged he not take that long, and move swiftly on this long delayed relief.

I said earlier we can't allow China to steal our future, and that's not drama and hyperbole, that's the truth. If we allow them to continue on the pathway that they've been on, they will steal our future. Actions matter, and the actions we take today must be directed at long-term outcomes we want for our children and grandchildren. This means an economy that creates opportunity for all Americans, and system that creates a fair environment for our workers to find jobs and pay family-sustaining wages. This also means investing in our roads and bridges, schools, locks and dams which are so important to commerce here in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and of course our electric grid, and broadband. Infrastructure matters, it's about our security, it's about our safety, and it's about our jobs. So this means putting real federal dollars behind infrastructure that is fundamental to our combined competitiveness.

I believe you can do infrastructure one of two ways – you can do the corporate way, which is not the way to do it, or you can do it the American way. I want an American infrastructure bill. It means we're all in this together, we're all one American family, we ought to put public dollars in, and big dollars, to really make a difference and create jobs. So this means making sure that the inputs to that infrastructure are made in America. I think both parties agree on that, and I'm grateful that Senator Wyden is here today to make these points and to discuss these critical matters for the economy of Pennsylvania, and jobs of Pennsylvania, as well as American jobs and American competitiveness.