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July 30, 2019

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Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on NAFTA 2.0
As Prepared for Delivery

The Finance Committee meets this morning to discuss what needs to happen for NAFTA 2.0 to deliver better results for American workers and farmers and ranchers and their families.

I want to start my remarks by welcoming one of our witnesses -- and not only because she's an Oregonian. It's because her business is a perfect example of why the original NAFTA needs an overhaul. Paula Barnett is an artisan from Brownsville, Oregon in Linn County, population 1,800. She founded a jewelry businesses that produces in Oregon and sells online, primarily on Etsy, to customers in the U.S. and around the world. She also sources some of what goes into her jewelry from abroad. Getting that kind of business off the ground would have been a lot harder just a few short decades ago when NAFTA was created.

According to Etsy, the total economic output of its sellers based in Oregon is more than \$125 million, and that's just one of the many online platforms that businesses use to grow. Oregon's many success stories also includes Ruffwear, based in Bend, a producer of gear for Very Good Dogs all over the U.S. and in other countries.

Updating NAFTA means addressing the challenges facing these businesses that operate online. It also means confronting the other areas where older trade agreements continually fall short. Fighting to protect labor rights and the interests of working families. Preventing a race to the bottom when it comes to the environment. Making sure there is vigorous enforcement of our trade agreements, so that other countries cannot treat those deals as empty documents that give them time and opportunities to rip off American jobs.

The administration has released its NAFTA 2.0 agreement, and it is consulting with the Congress on what comes next. A few points I need to make on that process. As I've said in the past there's work left to be done on key issues. I have concerns about enforcement because the new NAFTA carries over the weak enforcement system of the old NAFTA. It's too easy on trade cheats, and it's not good enough for American workers -- particularly on labor rights. Senator Brown and I have proposed some additional tools to address specific challenges in Mexico and I'm hopeful there will be progress on that front.

Additionally, one of the bigger challenges that we confront is identifying the hundreds of thousands of sham labor contracts in Mexico that have exploited workers there and harmed workers here in the United States. Mexico must remain on track to get those contracts renegotiated on behalf of the workers' interests.

During this overhaul, the original NAFTA remains in place. Workers, farmers, ranchers and businesses should not have to fear that economic uncertainty will cost them their livelihoods. It's a problem when the president acts out and makes impulsive threats regarding our trade relationships. American workers and farmers have already been hurt by the president's impulses, and more will get hurt if Trump threats and chaos cause the Congress to accept a bad deal on NAFTA.

Passing a trade deal that would allow this president to unilaterally change trade rules and jerk around entire industries would be a dangerous mistake that promotes uncertainty. That's not how you get to trade done right. Based on that, I have some real concerns about how the administration wants NAFTA 2.0 to be implemented.

I'm looking forward to discussing these issues and more today. Thank you again to Ms. Barnett and all our witnesses for joining the committee today.

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