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Contact: [Keith Chu](#) (202) 224-3789

Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on Trade Policy
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In several town halls I've recently held at home in Oregon, the number one issue that came up was secrecy. That's why I felt it was important to start the conversation on this issue as soon as possible. If you believe in trade and you want more of it, it doesn't make sense to have all this secrecy that makes the public cynical about what's going on. American trade policy needs to be pulled out of the time warp so that it works better for the middle class and delivers a new level of transparency. This has to be about creating more red, white and blue jobs and helping people climb the economic ladder. The same old playbook on trade won't work for Oregonians, so I won't accept it.

As Chairman Hatch and I discussed, we are working hard on finding common ground on modernizing our approach to trade policy. That includes Trade Promotion Authority, Trade Adjustment Assistance, tougher enforcement strategies and other important programs.

There are some very significant goals to accomplish. I believe it's essential to step up our enforcement of trade laws to stop rule-breaking countries more effectively. Enforcement should be based on defending American jobs and promoting economic growth at home.

It's time to raise the bar on labor standards, environmental protection, and human rights. No other country will carry the banner and fight for those values like the United States.

It's important to solidify the support system for workers in Oregon and across the country. Middle-class trade policies will work best when our workforce is ready to compete and when workers have access to job training, financial support, and health care.

And finally, it's necessary to build a better process and more transparency in trade policy. The public has a right to know what's at stake in trade negotiations, plain and simple. Those are some of the priorities I'm focused on as the committee works to find common ground. I look forward to discussing these issues with the witnesses here today.

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