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## HATCH STATEMENT AT FINANCE COMMITTEE MOCK MARKUP OF TRADE DEALS, TAA

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, today delivered the following opening statement at a committee “mock” markup of the draft implementing bills for the Colombia, Panama, and South Korea trade agreements and extension of the domestic spending program, Trade Adjustment Assistance:

Today we are meeting to discuss implementing legislation for our pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea.

Despite what you might read in the papers, I am glad to be here. Approval of these three free trade agreements is critical to helping our economy recover, expand, and generate the jobs we so badly need. I have appreciated working Chairman Baucus and his staff throughout this process. Though we do not always agree, and this is a sometimes sticky process, I consider him a friend. I understand that managing this committee is not an easy job, and completing these trade agreements is a case study in the difficulty of getting even popular proposals across the finish line.

Today’s mock mark-up is an important step in a long process, one which I hope will lead to quick Presidential submission of the Agreements and their approval on the Senate Floor.

It has been a long time since the Finance Committee has considered trade legislation of this importance. So, I think it is useful to remind ourselves about the significance of these mock-marks. Although not binding and not required by TPA, the mock mark-up lies at the heart of the consultative process.

It is the first and only opportunity for members to debate and offer amendments. If the Administration and Congressional drafters have done their job well, consulted effectively, and developed a consensus draft, the mock-mark can be relatively quick and non-controversial. If not, we end up with a broken process.

In my opinion, the process broke down last week. Rather than consult with the Minority about the process, the Administration chose a different path, laying down a partisan draft that contained a controversial domestic spending program that is only marginally related, at best, to the underlying implementing bill.

This was done with virtually no notice and no consultation, providing only forty-eight hours to review this highly controversial program.

The Administration certainly took its sweet time to ponder and deliberate over the fate of these FTAs, holding them back for years before finally taking steps to move them forward.

In contrast, they expect the Senate Finance Committee to be content with only hours to scrutinize this domestic spending program. To me this is a clear double standard.

It also shows one of the inherent flaws in the Administration's economic policy — slow to advance real job creating programs but quick to spend more taxpayer money.

We can do better. Today I will offer an amendment to strike the extraneous TAA provisions from the South Korea bill. To be clear, I support the South Korea trade implementing bill and want it to pass. But I cannot condone this abuse of Trade Promotion Authority or turn a blind eye to dubious domestic spending programs.

If my amendment fails, I will vote against the South Korea agreement, and I suspect many of my colleagues will do the same.

This outcome should not come as a surprise, as every member of the Finance Committee joined with me in putting the President on notice that placing the TAA spending program in the South Korea bill was not an acceptable outcome.

I cannot understand why these clear signals are being ignored. Putting TAA in the South Korea bill risks support for that agreement and puts its Trade Promotion Authority protections at risk.

There is some good news today. After years of delay the Senate Finance Committee will finally get an opportunity to consider our pending trade agreements with Colombia and Panama.

For this, we owe the Chairman of this committee and his staff our appreciation. Their steadfast support for our good friends and allies has helped us get to where we are today, and I am pleased that he will be joining me in supporting these important agreements.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity today. I hope we will be able to find a reasonable bipartisan path forward for the South Korea agreement, just as we have on our pending free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama. Thank you. ###