

Crapo Statement at Hearing on President's 2025 Trade Policy Agenda
April 8, 2025

Washington, D.C.--U.S. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) delivered the following remarks at a hearing entitled, "The President's 2025 Trade Policy Agenda."

As prepared for delivery:

"Members and the public have questions and concerns about the recent tariff actions. That's ok. We should think about tariff impacts and ask questions. Thoughtful and respectful debate on the issues is good and why we call hearings, like this one, with the United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Jamieson Greer.

"We need to think strategically about tariff policy, including how to minimize unnecessary costs on American families. I also recognize that although it is easy to see the costs arising from tariffs, it is far more difficult to assess the cost of denied market access opportunities.

"Tariffs can advance American interests in market access. In the first Trump Administration, we used tariff threats to stop France from imposing discriminatory digital services taxes.

"Tariffs also forced China to discuss the systemic challenges between our two nations. Frankly, every enforcement action—whether it is a WTO dispute, a Section 301 investigation or a preference program review—ultimately relies on the threat of tariffs to secure objectives.

"Accordingly, it is important to contextualize the tariffs in the design of the larger policy. The real headline then becomes the fundamental shift in trade policy since President Trump's inauguration—where the United States actually plans to do trade again.

"My colleagues and I in Congress want to pursue a real trade policy. That was put on hold during the Biden years. We now have a President who will partner with us in that effort. Together, we will enforce our rights; we will negotiate again; and we will expand opportunities for Americans.

"This Administration is not deliberating endlessly over whether 'trade can be a force for good,' like the past Administration. Trade today is the centerpiece of our international economic engagement and we have plenty of substantive trade ideas to discuss.

"Businesses want certainty from good policies that will continue so they can invest confidently in prospects that create jobs and wealth.

“That is one of the primary reasons that I am working so hard to make the Trump Tax Cuts permanent—to provide businesses with the certainty they need to make long-term investments, to drive growth and to increase prosperity across all segments of the economy.

“Contrast this kind of certainty and forward thinking on trade with that of the last four years, where the only ‘certainty’ was that you were going to lose ground because your government fundamentally rejected free markets, free enterprise and free trade.

“The last Administration turned to industrial policy because it was certain that the free market failed in delivering what government planners believed necessary for climate and social agendas.

“Indeed, China’s central planners saw their own strategic thinking in the Inflation Reduction Act’s approach of bestowing massive subsidies to stimulate investments that the market would not.

“We can restore faith in free markets by making it easier than ever to do business in America. The President’s Executive Order last week to assist major investors to navigate our regulatory system efficiently is a good start. We plan to do more.

“The Biden Administration provided us with only the ‘certainty’ that in the face of a foreign government’s discriminatory policies, like digital services taxes, data localization or other non-tariff barriers, it would not stand up for its citizens because it believed that the so-called ‘right to regulate’ trumped the principle of free enterprise.

“Respectfully, democratic governments do not have rights—they exist to secure them for their citizens.

“One immediately welcome change, under the Trump Administration, appeared last week in USTR’s National Trade Estimate.

“Last year, the Biden Administration deliberately cut from the Estimate a number of discriminatory measures imposed by foreign governments on American businesses because it sided with those governments over our citizens. This year’s Estimate is exhaustive because the Administration carefully identified all of the ways Americans lose out in the global marketplace.

“Finally, the validity of free trade will be seen again. The last Administration did not pursue market access in its negotiations. Instead, it demanded governments to undertake a number of social and environmental commitments, even ones Congress did not approve domestically. Not surprisingly, our partners did not put their trust in such negotiations.

“While tariffs inherently may be seen at odds with free trade, we must also acknowledge that many of our trading partners deploy barriers that have gone unchallenged for too

long. Free trade, by definition, must be reciprocal. We do not have it if others can impose barriers on us unchallenged.

“Our failure to enforce our rights over the last four years lost a lot of ground for us. This cannot continue because what I am certain about is American goods and services are innovative, high quality and globally competitive.

“Senior Administration officials say that a number of countries are ‘coming to the table’ to engage with USTR. We look forward to hearing about this engagement and the steps toward better opportunities for Americans.”