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**Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on the President Trump's Trade Policy
Agenda
*As Prepared for Delivery***

Today the Finance Committee will examine the president's trade agenda. In my view, the trade agenda ought to be focused on creating more high-skill, high-wage middle-class jobs right here in the United States -- red, white and blue jobs. That means aggressively going after trade cheats to make sure our U.S. workers are competing on a level playing field, and it means opening up new markets for the Oregon brand and the American brand.

I expect that much of our discussion today will focus on NAFTA, and that is where I would like to start. The president has been talking a big game about NAFTA for at least two years now - virtually since the start of his campaign. In May the administration set the renegotiation process in motion. But despite that, neither the Congress nor the public has much of an idea of what the administration is looking for in those discussions.

My view is, NAFTA could use a complete overhaul. That means high-standard, enforceable labor and environmental commitments; removing Chapter 19, which hampers our ability to fight unfair trade practices; and addressing challenges that are specific to dairy, wine and key manufacturing industries. The U.S. also needs to combat currency manipulation, market-distorting state owned enterprises, and the trade cheats that have become more sophisticated in evading our trade enforcers. But that's not the end of where NAFTA -- and our overall approach to trade agreements -- need improvement.

When container ships on the open seas began to transform the global economy, the U.S. fought for trade rules that protected the American-made products we sent around the world.

The fact is, our country hasn't kept up when it comes to digital products. The internet is the shipping lane of the 21st century and a greater platform for the free exchange of ideas and information than the world has ever known. That is worth fighting for, and it is long past time our trade policies reflected that reality.

So here's what our new approach needs to be. Our trade agreements must protect that free exchange of ideas and information, and they must protect access of American-made digital products to individuals around the world. Just as our agreements fight against countries constructing barriers to our manufactured goods and ag products, they must respond when countries block American-made, technologies, apps and social media services.

The U.S. cannot accept protectionist approaches to the internet, grounded in either mercantilism or authoritarianism. So no administration, now or in the future, should expect to have my support for any trade agreement that fails to include provisions that protect the internet as an open platform of commerce, speech, and the free exchange of ideas of all kinds. Mr. Chairman, I hope to discuss these and a host of other issues in a NAFTA-specific hearing before negotiations are launched.

But, today I also want to raise a couple of potential obstacles in the road ahead. Those obstacles are: (1) an artificial, accelerated timeline and (2) a lack of transparency.

First, it's been reported the administration hopes to conclude negotiations by the end of this year. I'm all for swift negotiations, but I'm also a firm believer that you get results before you set a cut-off date. There's a serious danger that an artificial deadline will push negotiators toward lower standard proposals they know the other side will accept. That is not a recipe for success.

Second, this administration has an abysmal track record on transparency. The Commerce Department has been conducting what seems to be the most opaque trade negotiation ever with China as part of the so-called 100-day plan. It's unclear what factors are guiding the administration in the process, and neither Congress nor the public knows what sort of trade-offs or commitments are being made. This pattern is being repeated in the national security reviews of steel and aluminum imports.

And I have real doubts that the administration will be able to hammer out a high-standard overhaul of NAFTA if it turns a deaf ear to Congressional and public input. Bottom line, failing on transparency is a sure way for an administration to deal a potentially fatal blow to its own trade agenda.

Ambassador Lighthizer, I want your trade agenda to be a success - I want more good-paying jobs in the United States across the country, in farming, in manufacturing, and in services for businesses large and small. That's only possible if everybody works together, Democrats and Republicans, Congress and the administration. So now that you're on the job, I hope and expect that you will work closely and communicate regularly with this committee.

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