



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hearing Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Regarding Tax Court and International Trade Commission Nominations
As prepared for delivery

Winston Churchill once said, "All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope."

These principles guide our democracy, and while simple in concept, they require vigilance to maintain. These principles require experienced citizens willing to embrace public service. They require a fair and reasonable legal system. And they require public confidence in our government.

The nominees before us must be vigilant in honoring these principles. Between them they have decades of experience. If confirmed, they will play important roles in protecting the interests of millions of Americans.

Mr. Scott Kieff, you have been nominated by the President to serve as a Commissioner at the United States International Trade Commission, commonly referred to as the ITC.

The ITC enforces our nation's trade laws, including our trade remedy laws and section 337. This committee has jurisdiction over these matters and, if confirmed, we will look to you to fairly and objectively enforce those laws.

We will also call on you and the rest of the ITC to provide the committee with economic research on issues affecting global trade. The ITC has provided us thorough reports in the past on the barriers U.S. exporters and innovators face in foreign markets.

For example, Senator Grassley and I requested a ground-breaking ITC study on Chinese intellectual property theft. That study provided us with an independent, authoritative look at the impact of IP theft on U.S. jobs and our economy.

I assure you, Mr. Kieff, that we will keep you busy. The Finance Committee will continue to move forward with an ambitious trade agenda, and we will look to you for objective analysis when shaping this policy.

A graduate of MIT and the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. Kieff has spent his career working on issues related to international trade, in both the public and private sectors and in academia.

For the past 15 years, he has been teaching law at some of our nation's top universities, including George Washington, Chicago, Harvard, and at my alma mater, Stanford. I hope my colleagues on the committee don't hold that against you.

Also with us today are Judge Michael Thornton and Mr. Joseph Nega. You have both been nominated by President Obama to serve as judges on the United States Tax Court.

Judge Thornton, this is a return engagement for you. You appeared before this committee about 15 years ago after being first nominated to the U.S. Tax Court by President Clinton.

You cut your teeth as a tax counsel here on Capitol Hill for the Ways and Means Committee, then at the Treasury Department serving under Secretary Rubin.

Welcome back. You've done a great job at the Tax Court, rising up to become the chief judge. I am pleased that the President re-nominated you.

And finally, we will consider the nomination of Mr. Joseph Nega to the U.S. Tax Court. Mr. Nega has dedicated his entire career to public service. He began as a young staffer in the House and has served for the past 28 years on the Joint Committee on Taxation.

He now serves as the senior legislation counsel at JCT. I don't know what this committee — or this Congress — would do without the great team at JCT.

As you know, Judge Thornton, — and as you will soon learn Mr. Nega — you are taking on a great responsibility at the U.S. Tax Court.

The Tax Court provides Americans a forum to address tax issues. Approximately 30,000 cases are filed in the Court annually. If confirmed, you will be the arbiter on these cases, and you must ensure our tax laws are administered fairly.

In the wake of the IRS scandal, public confidence in our tax system is low. You must be thorough, and you must give our citizens a fair day in court. Your work can go a long way in restoring the public's confidence.

I thank all three of you for your willingness to serve. From the positions to which you've been nominated, you will have the complex task of protecting and maintaining freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy and hope — the great things of which Churchill spoke.

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