

Statement of Robert E. Lighthizer
Before The
United States Senate Committee on Finance
March 14, 2017

Chairman Hatch, Ranking member Wyden, members of the committee. It is a great honor for me to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be The United States Trade Representative.

I am particularly pleased to be in this hearing room where I have so many fond memories and to be here with my former boss. It is fair to say that I had my formation working for Senator Dole and this committee in the late 1970's and early 1980's. I was able to work for truly exemplary United States Senators on matters of great importance. In addition to trade I assisted on tax policy, Social Security reform, budget cuts, welfare bills and much more. I would be remiss if in addition to Senators Dole and Grassley, I didn't mention Senators Long and Moynihan. All truly great men.

After I left here I became Deputy United States Trade Representative. I worked for President Reagan and Senator Bill Brock, another wonderful boss. I have often thought how lucky I am to have such mentors and role models.

While at USTR I worked on agricultural issues, industrial issues, services and trade policy. I negotiated several trade agreements – yes mostly, they were bi-lateral. Those also were exciting times.

For the last many years I have practiced international trade law. The vast, vast majority of my work has been representing U.S. manufacturing companies opposing unfair trade in this market and opposing the noneconomic expansion of production capacity around the world. As many of you know, I have written and talked often about the challenges facing U.S. companies and workers and have espoused strong enforcement of our trade laws. I have also worked to preserve U.S. policies at the WTO and the OECD.

I agree with President Trump that we should have an America first trade policy and that we can do better in negotiating our trade agreements and stronger in enforcing our trade laws. I further believe we need an international trade system that functions the way it was negotiated and that the United States must be ready to work with like-minded trading partners to ensure fair trade and to encourage market efficiency.

If confirmed, I hope to work with this committee, the Ways and Means Committee, others in Congress, President Trump and those in the Administration, and all stakeholders to develop and implement a policy that increases trade, grows the economy and makes trade freer and fairer but, most importantly, that improves the economic wellbeing of our workers, farmers, ranchers and businesses large, medium and small. If confirmed, I hope in the end to be judged by whether I aided all of you in accomplishing this goal.

Thank you.