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*Michael Froman
Nominee for United States Trade Representative
Opening Statement
Senate Finance Committee
Confirmation Hearing
June 6, 2013*

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Hatch and Members of the Committee, thank you for your generous introduction. I am humbled by the confidence President Obama has placed in me in nominating me to be the U.S. Trade Representative, and I am deeply honored to be considered by this Committee.

I'd like to begin by recognizing my wife, Nancy, and my children Benjamin and Sarah, who are here today. I want to thank all of them, and particularly Nancy, for the love and support which has made it possible for me to serve.

I also want to thank my parents and recognize how important they've been to me. My mother was an elementary school teacher, a Cub Scout den leader and an active member of our PTA. My father was an immigrant who fled Hitler's Germany, grew up in Israel, and came to the United States to go to college without much English and just a hundred dollars in his pocket. But he built a small business, was president of his Rotary Club, and continues to be an important source of guidance and support.

My parents taught me the value of hard work and education, the importance of giving back to the community and the privilege to serve and work to improve the wider world. I would not be who I am, nor would I be here today, without them.

In recent weeks, I have enjoyed candid, substantive discussions with you about trade and America's broader economic challenges. There is a long tradition of partnership between the Finance Committee and USTR. It is a tradition I plan to continue if I am confirmed.

As President Obama has made clear, our number one goal must be to promote growth, create jobs and strengthen the middle class. I see USTR's role in contributing to this effort to be threefold.

First, by opening markets around the world so that we can expand our exports. Second, by leveling the playing field so that our people can compete and win in the global economy. And third, by ensuring that the rights and trade laws we have fought so hard for are fully implemented and enforced.

I first had the opportunity to work with USTR as a White House Fellow under President George H.W. Bush, then under President Clinton and over the past four years as President Obama's adviser on international economic affairs. It is clear that USTR is a very special place.

USTR professionals exemplify the finest traditions of public service. They work hard, they're nimble, they bring intellectual rigor to their mission, and they get things done. If confirmed, it would be an honor to lead them.

As we speak, USTR staff are busy negotiating the groundbreaking Trans Pacific Partnership. They are consulting with you on the upcoming negotiations for an unprecedented Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. And, in Geneva, they are working to energize trade liberalization, including on trade facilitation, information technology and services.

All of these negotiations are designed to strengthen the multilateral, rules-based trading system and press it to achieve the highest possible aspirations.

If we can conclude these agreements – and let me be clear, my view is that it is better to accept no agreement than a bad agreement – we will have positioned the United States at the center of a network of agreements creating free trade with 65 percent of the global economy. It is among the most ambitious trade agendas in history.

Trade is also a powerful tool for development. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to renew GSP and AGOA and to finding innovative ways to facilitate trade and regional integration across the developing world.

Trade policy can only work, however, if it is fair. We are committed to opening markets, and we are equally committed to enforcing our trade rights and trade laws and to helping displaced workers obtain the skills and jobs they need.

American workers are the most productive in the world. They deserve to compete on a level playing field. This Administration has made enforcement a top priority: 18 cases to date and the creation of the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center to enhance the depth and reach of our enforcement efforts.

As with so many things, that could not have happened without your support. Trade policy only fulfills its full potential when it reflects close consultations between the Administration, Congress and a wide range of stakeholders.

In that regard, if confirmed, I will engage with you to renew Trade Promotion Authority. TPA is a critical tool. I look forward to working with you to craft a bill that achieves our shared goals.

Let me conclude by making clear that, if I am given the honor of serving as U.S. Trade Representative, I will do everything in my ability to promote the interests of our workers, farmers and ranchers; our manufacturers and service providers; our innovators, investors and consumers.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I am happy to answer your questions.

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