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Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing to Consider Trump Treasury, Trade Nominees

As Prepared for Delivery

Before I turn to today's nominees, let me say a few words about this committee's upcoming agenda.

Last week, the American people overwhelmingly rejected the status quo. Families are sick and tired of billionaires and corporations getting handouts and tax breaks while they struggle to pay rent and buy groceries. Affordability will be the top priority for this committee.

The American people want a tax code that delivers relief to their pocketbooks while requiring billionaires to pay their fair share.

The American people want a health care system that lowers costs, improves care, and loosens the corporate chokehold on Americans' health care.

The American people want a trade agenda that doesn't clobber them at the kitchen table.

That's the agenda ahead of us, and I will work with any member of this committee that wants to work in good faith to achieve those goals and make life more affordable for the American people.

Now on to today's nominees.

Robert Stebbins is nominated to be General Counsel at the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Mr. Stebbins worked as general counsel at the Securities and Exchange Commission during the first Trump administration. Mr. Stebbins is a Trump loyalist who has chosen to stick his head in the sand when it comes to Trump turning the Treasury Department into the epicenter of his corruption.

It seems to me that the only qualification needed to serve in this role in the Trump administration is to be someone that will help Trump and Scott Bessent continue to trample all over the law and use the Treasury Department as their own personal piggy bank.

It's up to Mr. Stebbins to show this committee that he has the independent judgement needed to rein in the lawlessness of Scott Bessent and Donald Trump.

Francis Browne is nominated to be Undersecretary of Domestic Finance at the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Mr. Browne has spent more than a decade working at Scott Bessent's side, a loyalist through and through. If confirmed, Mr. Browne would play a major role in how the federal government organizes its debt and handles key, sensitive Treasury data.

The same highly-sensitive data that the Trump Treasury Department handed over to Elon Musk and his DOGE henchmen as one of its first orders of business in early 2025.

Put me down as skeptical that Mr. Browne has the desire or ability to right the ship instead of following whatever illegal directives Bessent gives him.

Finally, Christopher Abbott is nominated to be Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Compliance at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Mr. Abbott is also an alum of the first Trump administration, where he served as Peter Navarro's second in command. He also played a key role in Navarro's corrupt Covid-era deals that went belly up and wasted hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.

If confirmed, Mr. Abbott will be responsible for overseeing key policies around tariffs and trade enforcement. The American people issued a clear directive last Tuesday: they are sick and tired of Trump's disastrous tariffs jacking up their cost of living.

Mr. Abbott has been serving in the Commerce Department since Day One of Trump's second term. He is nearly as entrenched in this administration's nightmarish trade agenda as Donald Trump himself. Nothing in Mr. Abbott's record should reassure the American people that he will restore consistency to Trump's trade policies and bring down costs.

There will be more to say in the coming days and weeks ahead, but for now I look forward to today's hearing.

A web version of this statement is here.

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