



Opening Statement

Chairman Steve Chabot

“Across Town, Across Oceans: Expanding the Role of Small Business in Global Commerce”

May 20, 2015

This hearing will come to order. Thank you all for joining us today for this timely and important discussion on trade.

Very often this Committee discusses ways to grow the economy; increase the number of jobs being created; and sell more goods stamped “Made in the U.S.A.” All of these goals would help the American workforce. And all of these goals are attainable with trade.

Simply put, trade means opportunity for small business. After all, 95 percent of the world’s consumers live outside of our borders. Yet, of the 28 million small businesses in America only 1 percent sell their goods internationally.

If we tear down trade barriers, we can make it easier for small business to participate in the global marketplace and unleash our nation’s most powerful economic force. One of the barriers facing small businesses looking to export is confusion about how to even do it, and a maze of federal resources only to add to the confusion. The Committee recognizes that challenge and is working on legislative solutions to better coordinate federal resources so they are more efficient, streamlined, and better able to help businesses navigate the export process.

Beyond that we need better trade agreements. Currently, we only have Free Trade Agreements with 20 countries and 47 percent of the goods exported from the United States went to those countries last year. Better trade agreements mean small businesses will be able to access new international customers and offer their products more easily and at a lower cost than ever before. It means that more products will be built and sold. When that happens, jobs are created, wages are lifted, and more opportunity is available to all.

That’s really what’s on the table with this debate: more opportunity for all Americans. We cannot get stronger trade agreements like TPP and T-TIP, without Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). *Without TPA*, American workers will be competing under the same unfair rules they do today. It will be the status quo. *With TPA*, we can create trade agreements that will level the playing field. We can remove barriers put up by foreign nations to make it more difficult for American business to sell their products.

Put an American worker against anyone in the world and I’ll take that bet every day of the week and twice on Sunday. But we can’t get there without TPA.

Trade is also an opportunity to spread American values of economic freedom and individual liberty—freedoms we understand as second nature. Without TPA—and subsequently, TPP—other nations will dictate the rules of the new economy – nations that do not respect the rule of law or the rights of the individual.

Trade is not a choice or luxury in our modern world. It is a *necessity*. It is the cornerstone of a strong, 21st Century economy.

Today, we will hear from small businesses who are directly impacted by whether we move forward on TPA and important trade agreements OR whether we bury our heads in the sand and wait, while China shapes the contours of the global marketplace.

Thanks again to all of our witnesses, and I now yield to the Ranking Member for opening remarks.