

President-Elect Trump Names His Trade Representative

Tuesday morning, President-elect Donald Trump announced the nomination of Ambassador Robert Lighthizer as U.S. Trade Representative, one of the final four Cabinet-level positions he will need to fill to complete his administration.

Lighthizer served as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative under President Ronald Reagan, and played a leading role in developing trade policy by negotiating roughly two dozen bilateral international agreements on a variety of topics from steel to grain. The emphasis under President-elect Trump will be to repeat his success in the 1980s by significantly reducing the shipment of “unfairly traded” imports into the United States.

“Ambassador Lighthizer is going to do an outstanding job representing the United States as we fight for good trade deals that put the American worker first,” the president-elect said. “He has extensive experience striking agreements that protect some of the most important sectors of our economy, and has repeatedly fought in the private sector to prevent bad deals from hurting Americans. He will do an amazing job helping turn around the failed trade policies which have robbed so many Americans of prosperity.”

The Presidential Transition Team issued the following statement about Lighthizer:

In his new role, Ambassador Lighthizer will work in close coordination with Secretary of Commerce-designate Wilbur Ross and Peter Navarro, head of the newly created White House National Trade Council, to develop and implement policies that shrink our trade deficit, expand economic growth, strengthen our manufacturing base and help

stop the exodus of jobs from our shores.

Ambassador Lighthizer has long been a leader in U.S. trade policy, and has extensive experience in the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the private sector. Aside from his service in the Reagan administration, he was Chief of Staff of the United States Senate Committee of Finance when Congress passed the Reagan program of tax cuts and spending reductions, and also aided in the passage of legislation which implemented the Tokyo Round of trade negotiations. He has also represented the United States at meetings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and meetings related to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (the precursor to the World Trade Organization).

Ambassador Lighthizer headed up the international trade law practice at Skadden, Arps Slate, Meagher and Flom for over three decades. He has represented American manufacturers in many of the largest and most significant trade cases of the last 25 years, such as the steel safeguard case of the early 2000s—the last time any president granted global safeguard relief. He has worked on scores of successful cases that resulted in reducing unfair imports and helping thousands of American workers and numerous businesses.

Ambassador Lighthizer has also been an outspoken commentator on trade issues, giving speeches and writing articles for the New York Times and other publications, as well as providing testimony to key Congressional committees, the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, and other government agencies with responsibility for trade policy. He graduated from Georgetown University and the Georgetown University Law Center.

“It is a very high honor to represent our nation and to serve in President-elect Trump’s administration as the U.S. Trade Representative,” Lighthizer said. “I am fully committed to

President-elect Trump's mission to level the playing field for American workers and forge better trade policies which will benefit all Americans."