

# Full Committee Hearing on the Trump Administration's 2025 Trade Policy Agenda with United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer

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April 09, 2025

**Chair:** I now recognize Mr. Gomez from California for five minutes.

**Rep. Gomez:** Thank you so much. I want to just get to the point. I want to start off by making sure we're speaking the same language, Mr. Ambassador. Do you agree that tariffs are a tax—yes or no?

**Ambassador Greer:** They are a tax on foreign goods.

**Rep. Gomez:** Okay, so I'm glad you're here to say that, because economists also say that 98% of that tax is passed on to the American consumer, right?

**Witness:** Yes, 98 to 99% is passed on to the American consumer in the form of higher prices, and it's going to fall disproportionately, especially on working Americans.

**Rep. Gomez:** So, higher costs when it comes to food—40% of our produce is grown out of the country—cars, clothes, shoes, household goods, all of it. And yesterday, you said, quote, "There'll be some short-term pain." I want to know—and I think my constituents want to know—how long is "short-term pain" going to last? Is it 24 months?

**Ambassador Greer:** I don't think it's 24 months.

**Rep. Gomez:** Two years?

**Ambassador Greer:** I don't think it's two years.

**Rep. Gomez:** Three years? A month? Because here's the thing—you also said yesterday, the trade deficit grew over 30 years. It didn't happen overnight, so this problem's not going to be solved overnight. So, you're saying, on one hand, it's not going to be solved overnight, but then the long-term pain is going to be short-term pain. That doesn't compute. People don't believe it. And here's the thing—just yesterday, it was said that there's going to be a \$3,800-a-year increase falling on working families because of higher prices. That number increased to \$4,600—we had to actually cross that out because we made this board yesterday. What is the tax increase going to be tomorrow? \$5,200?

**Ambassador Greer:** That's possible.

**Rep. Gomez:** The reason why is that we have different definitions of "short-term pain." Let me ask—before being confirmed at USTR, where did you work?

**Witness:** I worked at King & Spalding.

**Rep. Gomez:** King & Spalding. How much does a partner make at King & Spalding?

**Ambassador Greer:** Well, it depends on a lot of different factors, but I don't—

**Rep. Gomez:** I can pull up your financial disclosure—I don't have it in front of me—but one of the things we're showing is that it's about \$1.5 million. My constituents don't make that. The average American consumer doesn't make that. The way we do it—every single month—we look at our budgets and see how much we spent and then actually have to decide: what do we have to pull back on? I grew up in a mobile home, working several jobs. I know what it means. Here's the thing: you also have a Cabinet of billionaires. You have Lucknick. You have Bescent. You have the President himself—Elon Musk—I mean Donald Trump, who has billions. So for them, \$4,600 doesn't mean anything. But for the average worker, it does. So this is where I say, you guys are out of touch when it comes to things. And I recognize—working a lot of different jobs—so I'm going to move on to ask a question. In your testimony, you said, in response to Ms. Sanchez, that you are the acting head of Special Counsel. Aren't you also the acting head of the Office of Government Ethics?

**Ambassador Greer:** I was recently assigned to that position, yes.

**Rep. Gomez:** So let me get this straight: you are the Chief USTR Representative, the acting Chief of Ethics, the Chief Whistleblower, and now you're leading negotiations with countries? So where's your priority? Those other jobs, or is it the trade agenda?

**Ambassador Greer:** Well, my first job is USTR. And we have staff at the other agencies.

**Rep. Gomez:** It doesn't seem right. Here's why: I've learned over the years—if you want to make somebody feel special, you give them more titles. In the end, who did Donald Trump say was actually running the trade agenda?

**Ambassador Greer:** Well, the Commerce Secretary, Lucknick.

**Rep. Gomez:** That's what he said. Here's another question: Are you using Signal to communicate with the Executive Branch—yes or no?

**Ambassador Greer:** We do some logistics from time to time.

**Rep. Gomez:** Okay, well make sure—as required by the Presidential Records Act and Federal Records Act—that you're submitting those for posterity.

**Ambassador Greer:** We'll talk to our general counsel, as required by law.

**Rep. Gomez:** Also, do you still stand by the formula that was used to assign the tariffs?

**Ambassador Greer:** Oh, yes. The White House economists—yeah, it's driven by the deficit.

**Rep. Gomez:** Because conservative economists have said that this formula has miscalculations. Some people are even saying that ChatGPT was used to come up with it.

**Ambassador Greer:** That's not true at all. That's completely false.

**Rep. Gomez:** Here's the problem—nobody has confidence in what you're doing. You're saying, "Trust us, trust us, it'll be short-term pain." But here's what we see: we see a plan that doesn't make any sense, a formula with flaws that people have torn apart. We see prices increasing, the stock market crashing, red lights blinking on a recession. You imposed tariffs on an island inhabited by penguins. Consumer confidence is plummeting—it's going down, down, down—and you guys are saying, "Trust us," that the Republicans, Donald Trump, Elon Musk—you guys know what you're doing. That doesn't pass the smell test. It doesn't make any sense. We've worked on other issues before, and I hope we can work on other issues moving forward. But you guys need to be straight on who's running the show, because this is going to fall and hurt the American worker.

With that, I yield back.