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POLITICO Pro Trade Whiteboard

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The president's choice for the next secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, has a track record of supporting efforts to open trade markets during his time representing Kansas.

Pompeo earned a "free trader" rating from the Cato Institute for votes on trade during his six years in Congress, from 2010 to 2016.

The announcement this morning that Rex Tillerson is out as secretary of state in favor of Pompeo, the administration's CIA director, was a sudden move, surprising some in Washington. But the appointment of Pompeo, if confirmed by the Senate, could help bolster efforts to bring down trade barriers. The secretary of state has little day-to-day involvement in trade negotiations, but can be an influential voice on trade policy depending on how much he or she has the president's ear.

Pompeo was a Tea Party conservative when in the House of Representatives. He voted for trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama in 2011 and for trade promotion authority in 2015 to allow former President Barack Obama to finish the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Trump ultimately withdrew from on his third day in office.

Pompeo also voted for legislation to establish permanent normal trade relations with Russia in 2012 and against a bill to reauthorize the U.S. Export-Import Bank in 2015.

Tillerson, who was CEO of Exxon Mobil before joining the Trump administration, is "a hugely competent, capable individual, but we also hear great things about Mr. Pompeo," said Jamie Dimon, chairman of the Business Roundtable and chairman and CEO of JP Morgan Chase. He spoke during a call with reporters about the business group's recent survey.