



June 9, 2009

VIA FAX

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

I write on behalf of the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers (USW) to ask that you co-sponsor the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act (TRADE ACT). The USW is the largest industrial union in North America and represents workers in all of the primary manufacturing sectors. The TRADE Act previously was introduced the 110th Session by Sherrod Brown and Mike Michaud with 80 members co-sponsoring.

The USW believes that trade agreements should promote sustainable and equitable growth and not promote exploitation of workers and the environment. Global trade should not come at the expense of the decimation of our manufacturing sector, wage depression, the public's health or the despoiling of the environment. The TRADE Act shifts the debate towards discussing a sustainable model for global growth where all have the opportunity to share in the benefits.

Past trade agreements and other trade policies advanced at the World Trade Organization (WTO) have disproportionately disadvantaged most industrial workers in the United States by making it much easier to off-shore production and to export those products back to the U.S. market. The result has been downward pressure on wages, a declining US industrial base and a decline in the middle class. Global producers have taken advantage of weak labor and environmental standards that have led in many cases, to near enslavement of workers and greater global greenhouse gas emissions by foreign polluters.

United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

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Free trade agreements now routinely go beyond the rights provided under the WTO in ways that make it even easier for capital and production to move off-shore and that result in the continued hollowing out of our manufacturing base. Likewise, trade agreements commonly provide access to our government procurement market, which nullifies the benefits of Buy America laws that require American-made goods to be procured by federal and state governments.

The USW is ready to support balanced trade agreements that create genuine opportunity for the export of goods made here in the United States but does not simply make it easier for multinational corporations to move production out of the United States to take advantage of non-existent or lax labor, environmental and health and safety enforcement in foreign countries. To become a cosponsor, please contact Kim Glas in Congressman Michaud's office (kim.glas@mail.house.gov)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holly R. Hart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H" and "H".

Holly R. Hart
Legislative Director

HRH/ctl