

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As Members of the House New Democrat Coalition (NDC), we applaud the release of your Trade Policy Agenda and look forward to working with you to help restore America's economic strength through a balanced, proactive trade agenda. We are committed to partnering with you to bolster America's economy, not only in recovering from the current crisis, but also in making the investments to make American workers and businesses more competitive in the global economy.

A key part of improving our economy is ensuring that America maintains its leadership role in global trade. As you know, trade represents over 30 percent of our gross domestic product and we continue to lead the world in total exports. Considering the significant gains from trade we garner as a country, we would face a real threat should we choose to reduce our engagement on trade. Therefore, we were pleased to hear your strong words in opposition to protectionism during the recovery package debate. It is clear from past mistakes that a retreat into protectionism would invite retaliatory measures from our trading partners that would only exacerbate the current global economic slowdown.

The NDC stands ready to work with you to find a new comprehensive approach to trade so we meet the challenges posed by globalization in the 21st Century, especially during the poor economic climate. In May of 2007 we were proud to join House and Senate Leadership in announcing a new trade policy for America that will ensure enforceable labor and environmental standards as part of our trade policy moving forward. We look forward to working with you to expand on the May 2007 agreement and pursue smart trade policies for the United States.

We believe smart trade policies begin by enforcing our current trading rules by cracking down on those that violate them. Balanced trade enforcement will begin to help Americans better understand the benefits of participating in a rules-based trading system.

Additionally, we support your call for a modified trade promotion authority, working to find a path forward on the remaining Free Trade Agreements, and harmonizing and expanding trade preference and trade capacity programs for developing countries. We can also complement these efforts through harmonization of our regulatory regimes, especially for financial markets, and from a consolidated position in international trade discussions.

Finally, while trade creates millions of American jobs, there are instances when trade has negative effects. As longtime supporters of expanding and improving the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program we were pleased to see the expanded and beefed up TAA included in the recovery package.

We are hopeful that with your leadership America will pursue a proactive trade agenda that expands the pool of beneficiaries of trade and ensures that the U.S. maintains its engagement and competitive edge in global commerce. Only through active American leadership – including on trade – can we can confront the current and long-term economic challenges facing Americans and the world.

Again, we thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you and our colleagues in Congress on an active trade and economic competitiveness agenda.

Sincerely,



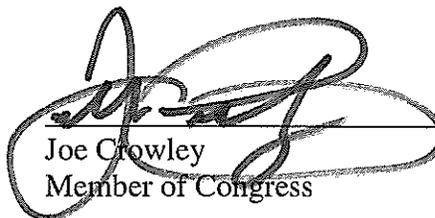
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Ellen Tauscher
Member of Congress



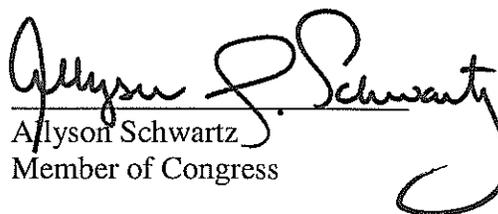
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Joe Crowley
Member of Congress



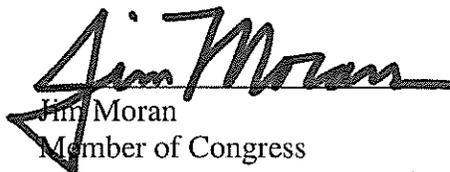
Melissa Bean
Member of Congress



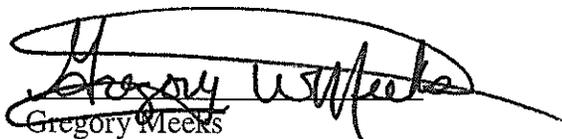
Allyson Schwartz
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