

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 3, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama
President-Elect
c/o Presidential Transition Team
Washington, DC 20270

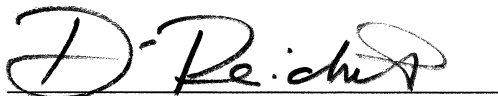
Dear President-Elect Obama:

As you select individuals to serve in your Administration's cabinet, we urge you to make the nomination of your United States Trade Representative (USTR) one of your first priorities. Current USTR Susan Schwab has done an admirable job balancing a complex trade agenda involving pending trade agreements, WTO disputes, and the difficult Doha Round negotiations; to ensure a smooth transition, your appointee must have the maximum amount of time to work with her on these and other issues. It is our expectation that you will nominate a qualified individual committed to swiftly enacting pending free trade agreements and opening new markets, and ask that you encourage Senate leadership to promptly advance the confirmation of this individual.

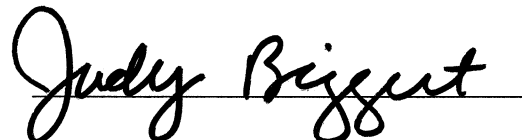
Opening new markets to trade is vital to economic growth and job creation, and is increasingly important in this time of economic crisis. Delaying the nomination and confirmation of the USTR will place our nation at a significant disadvantage while global competitors like China and the European Union continue to aggressively pursue new markets for their goods and services. Pending agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Korea have already languished for far too long as a result of political games in the House designed to appease special interests. We cannot afford to suspend our nation's ongoing trade agenda simply because of delays or neglect in your cabinet appointments.

Free trade dovetails with your stated pledges to promote economic growth and strengthen diplomatic ties with strategic partners, and we expect that opening new markets will be a cornerstone of your Administration's economic agenda. We stand ready to work with you to enact pending agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Korea and to facilitate the passage of new free trade agreements with other key allies. That work begins with the swift nomination of a USTR. This nomination is an early chance to demonstrate your commitment to opening new markets and creating new jobs and economic opportunities for all Americans.

Sincerely,



D. Reich



Judy Biggert

Dan Bunt

Jo Hensault

Hy B

Tim Johnson

Alan Kirk