

February 3, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510
The Honorable Dave Camp
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510
The Honorable Sander M. Levin
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives:

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers program will expire on February 12, 2011 unless Congress takes action, and we are writing to ask for your help. TAA has enjoyed bipartisan support for decades. We believe that Congress should enact a long-term extension of TAA before it expires.

Because the vehicle for such legislation must originate in the House, we ask that you quickly introduce and pass a long-term extension of TAA.

TAA is a critical part of our nation's competitiveness strategy. It ensures that the workers affected by trade receive the support and training necessary to transition into new jobs in emerging sectors of the economy.

In 2009, with bipartisan, bicameral support, Congress overhauled TAA and made important improvements to the program. Specifically, the reforms made service sector workers eligible for the program, expanded access for manufacturing and secondary workers, almost tripled training funding and promoted incumbent, part-time and longer-term training. These reforms also improved and expanded access to TAA's Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC), which helps certified workers to purchase private health insurance. Until these changes were made, the TAA program had not kept pace with our changing trade and employment landscape, at a time when other industrialized countries were investing more and more resources in labor market programs.

As we understand it, you and many members of the House support a long-term extension of TAA. Just six weeks ago, on December 15, 2010, the House passed an 18-month extension of TAA in the original version of H.R.6517. This extension passed the House by voice, indicating that it had broad bipartisan support, including the support of the leadership of both parties and the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The length of the extension in H.R.6517 was reduced in the Senate, but as we understand it, this was done not because of opposition to the TAA program, but rather because of a dispute over unrelated trade matters.

All told, the reforms to TAA in 2009 help hundreds of thousands of workers, in every state. Over 360,000 Americans have been certified for TAA assistance over the past two years, and over 40 percent of them were certified because of the improvements to TAA that were enacted in 2009. The 2009 improvements also help ensure TAA program accountability and results by requiring data on performance and worker outcomes, enabling Congress to identify where improvements are needed. It

is critical that we preserve all these improvements to TAA.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working with you on this bipartisan issue.

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown

Majority Leader Harry Reid

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow

U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman

U.S. Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden

U.S. Senator John Kerry

U.S. Senator Kay Hagan

U.S. Senator Tom Harkin

U.S. Senator Richard Durbin

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

U.S. Senator Carl Levin

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