

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Press Statement

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Chamber Welcomes Bipartisan Deal to Move Trade Agenda Forward

WASHINGTON, DC--The United States Chamber of Commerce today welcomed the announcement by U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab and congressional trade leaders that they have reached an agreement to secure support for Congressional approval of pending trade agreements.

"We commend Secretary Paulson, Ambassador Schwab, Chairman Rangel, Ranking Member McCrery, Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Grassley and other key congressional trade leaders for all of their hard work over the last several months and we are anxious to review the details of the agreement," said Tom Donohue, Chamber president and CEO.

"Over the course of these negotiations, legitimate concerns have been expressed about how addressing labor issues in trade agreements could affect U.S. federal and state labor laws. However, we are encouraged by assurances that the labor provisions cannot be read to require compliance with ILO Conventions.

"We understand that this agreement is the result of negotiation and compromise and that certain provisions relating to intellectual property rights protections should be revisited when Congress and the Administration develop the structure for renewal of the President's trade negotiating authority. In light of changes to certain provisions under this agreement, we will continue to make the case in the Congress that America's innovative industries should receive the highest level of promotion and protection in our trade agreements," said Donohue.

"It is our hope that this deal can pave the way for a solid majority of Members to vote in favor of renewing trade promotion authority and passage of bilateral agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and Korea."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation, representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region.