



National Conference of State Legislatures

The Forum for America's Ideas

January 19, 2005

The Honorable Robert Zoellick
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20508

John Adams Hurson
*Chairman, Health & Government
Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
President, NCSL*

James E. Greenwalt
*Director, Senate Information
Systems and Administrative
Services
Minnesota
Staff Chair, NCSL*

William T. Pound
Executive Director

Dear Ambassador Zoellick:

In October, your office was invited to attend NCSL's recent Fall Forum in Savannah, Georgia. We were very sorry to learn that a representative from USTR could not attend. The Fall Forum included a session on December 9 regarding international trade and state government procurement which was heavily attended by state legislators and legislative staff representing three of our Standing Committees. In attendance that day were legislators and legislative staff from the Economic Development, Trade & Cultural Affairs Committee, the Environment & Natural Resources Committee and the Labor & Workforce Development Committee. NCSL policy positions and lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C. are set by the Standing Committees. Representatives from various interest groups including the AFL-CIO and Public Citizen made a point to attend. We fully realize and appreciate the time constraints placed upon you and your staff regarding the various activities and functions in which you are invited to participate. Nonetheless, our members consistently raised extremely detailed and pointed questions regarding the extent to which state laws are impacted by international trade agreements and particularly the GPA; questions that we feel your office is best fit to answer directly. USTR's absence was indeed noted and we find it extremely regrettable that state legislators myriad concerns were not addressed.

Questions concerning international trade agreements are generating a great deal of interest in and around state capitols. You were no doubt aware this past year of the extraordinary amount of state legislation introduced across the country seeking to limit the potential effects of offshore outsourcing as just one example of state legislators' reluctance to sit idly by while their constituents' jobs are lost to competition from overseas. Additionally, NCSL's January 2005 edition of *State Legislatures* magazine lists concerns regarding international trade law and trade agreements as one of the top 10 key policy priorities as 2005 legislative sessions begin around the country. We believe that it would only behoove you and your staff to take every available opportunity to participate in further discussions with NCSL on these and other important issues, especially as the Standing Committee on Economic Development, Trade & Cultural Affairs prepares to debate its Presidential Trade Promotion Authority and WTO Negotiations policies

which are up for renewal this summer. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to inform you that NCSL's Spring Forum will take place April 13-16 in Washington, D.C. We anticipate discussions surrounding international trade and state legislation to factor prominently in the Committees' and perhaps even the full Forum's agenda.

In the spirit of promoting more communication and cooperation with state legislatures, we again offer NCSL's services in providing contact information for all state legislative leaders so that they can be carbon copied on communication from your office to governors and their designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) representatives concerning state policies, positions on trade issues, or negotiations updates. Your letter to all governors dated September 1, 2003 asking each to voluntarily commit his or her state to be covered under the government procurement provisions of new and recently negotiated free trade agreements precipitated a flurry of legislative interest in the procurement issue and USTR's methods of communication. We encourage you to keep state legislators informed by way of carbon copy and NCSL stands ready to assist. We would appreciate a timely response from your office regarding this offer and instructions on how we can best provide this information to make it as useful as possible for your staff.

We very much look forward to working with you on these and other significant issues affecting state legislatures in the coming year. Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact Jeremy Meadows (202-624-8664; jeremy.meadows@ncsl.org), Michael Bird (202-624-8686; michael.bird@ncsl.org) or Nick Steidel (202-624-8673; nick.steidel@ncsl.org) in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

Representative Sheryl Allen
Utah House of Representatives
Chair, NCSL Standing Committee
on Economic Development, Trade &
Cultural Affairs

Delegate Jim Hubbard
Maryland House of Delegates
Chair, NCSL Standing Committee
on Environment & Natural Resources

cc: Senator Chuck Grassley, Chair, Finance Committee
Senator Max Baucus, Ranking Member, Finance Committee
Representatives Bill Thomas, Chair, Ways & Means Committee
Representative Charles B. Rangel, Ranking Member, Ways & Means Committee
Ms. Kay Alison Wilkie, Chair, Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee