



June 4, 2008

VIA FAX

United States Senate
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Member of Congress:

The United Steelworkers (USW), in conjunction with over twenty organizations in the labor, faith, farm, environmental and consumer communities, urge you to join many of your colleagues in co-sponsoring the 2008 Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act (TRADE Act).

The TRADE Act provides a progressive blueprint that sets out what should be included in future trade agreements and renegotiated to remedy failures in existing agreements. Support for this bill will demonstrate to the public that we support responsible fair trade agreements that take account of the interests of workers, families, consumers, farmers and faith-based groups – the foundation of our democracy. Past trade agreements, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), have been long on promises but too short on job creation or growing our manufacturing base.

As we have learned, our current trading regime has been filled with false promises and a world of hurt for working families. The burdens workers and their families have had forced upon them under the current trade model have been staggering -- vast job losses, wage declines, shutdowns of plants, and other societal harms like environmental damage and toxic imports. Indeed, these burdens have become unbearable and entirely incompatible with our shared vision for America and the world. We should not lose sight of the fact that over three million jobs have been lost since 2000. We simply cannot continue blithely down a path that has been so destructive to workers, families and communities. While we are appreciative of the efforts made to improve the labor and environmental provisions of free trade agreements such as the Peru FTA, there is now an opportunity to require a much broader approach.

The bill will focus the debate on an improved set of trade and globalization rules that are critical if the rewards of the new global economy are to be shared broadly and

fairly. Essentially, it is a marker for where the debate should start when we take up trade issues after the November elections. It provides a roadmap for what a responsible progressive agreement would include and procedures needed to enact it.

The USW strongly encourages you to cosponsor this ground-breaking trade legislation. We must take action now to shape the future debate on trade. For more information about the bill, or to sign on as a cosponsor, please contact Kim Glas in Representative Michaud's office (kim.glas@mail.house.gov) or Chris Slevin in Senator Brown's office (Chris_Slevin@brown.senate.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly R. Hart".

Holly R. Hart
Legislative Director

HRH/pak