United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 21, 2008

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Recently, U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab has been urging business groups to lobby Congress to support the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement. We urge you to refocus your priorities on enforcing our current trade laws with repeat violators like South Korea and China, before pushing what would be the biggest trade agreement since NAFTA.

Our nation has the smallest trade enforcement office of any industrialized country. We have over 230 trade agreements to enforce, yet Ambassador Schwab has admitted that USTR devotes only about a quarter of its time and resources to monitoring and enforcement. Your administration continually looks for ways to increase the flow of foreign-made goods into the U.S. market, but refuses to make trade enforcement a priority. We are not holding countries like South Korea and China accountable for their repeated trade violations. Instead, American families are paying the price through lost manufacturing jobs, bankrupted family farms and unsafe products in their homes, from auto parts to children's toys.

South Korea has a long history of blocking American goods. Despite repeated Memoranda of Understanding with the United States, it has continued to use ever-changing standards to keep American products—from autos to apples to appliances—out of its markets. South Korea even refused to consider expanding American rice farmers' limited access to their market. Instead of insisting on measurable South Korean market access, your administration agreed to provisions in the trade agreement that will not achieve meaningful access to important sectors of South Korea's market. These policies have cost us millions of American jobs. Promises alone are not enough to ensure Americans will not suffer further harm.

Members of Congress cannot be expected to open our markets further while your administration pays scant attention to other countries' illegal trade practices. Before we implement the biggest trade agreement since NAFTA, we need our government to stand up for American families and make sure that countries like South Korea and China are playing by the rules. Weak agreements and endless dialogue are not enough when they come at the expense of American jobs and our families' health and safety. We simply cannot support another trade agreement ahead of enforcing our trade laws, improving product safety, and ensuring a level playing field for our businesses and workers.

Sincerely,

Senator Stabenow

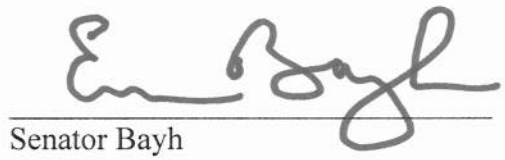
Senator Levin



Senator Brown



Senator Casey



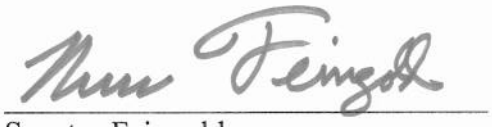
Senator Bayh



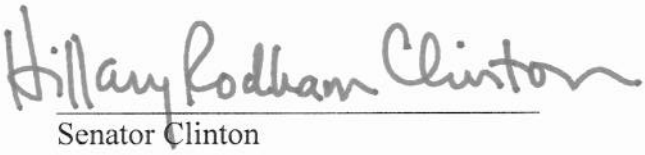
Senator Byrd



Senator Whitehouse



Senator Feingold



Senator Clinton



Senator Sanders



Senator Durbin



Senator Dorgan