

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2006

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write urging you to direct USTR to act expeditiously and accept the recently-filed petition by Representative Ben Cardin, Representative Christopher Smith, and the AFL-CIO challenging China's abuse of basic labor standards under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.

The petition charges that the Chinese government persistently and systematically denies workers' rights, harming U.S. workers and communities, while also preventing Chinese workers from exercising their internationally recognized rights in the workplace. Under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, such repression of workers' rights is considered an unfair trade practice, and, as President, grants you the authority to take the appropriate action to make sure that China ceases violating workers' rights and brings its laws and practices into accordance with basic labor standards.

Two years ago, the AFL-CIO filed a similar petition, which USTR refused to investigate. USTR did not dispute the evidence presented in the petition, but asserted that alternative actions by your administration would advance workers' rights in China. There have been no such effective actions, and workers in China and the U.S. continue to be negatively impacted.

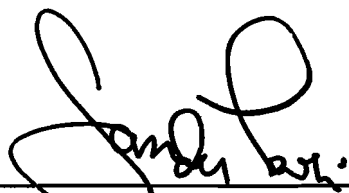
The new Section 301 petition, this time filed with bi-partisan Congressional support, again documents how the Chinese government and multinational corporations persistently violate the rights of China's factory workers and how no effective action has been taken since the first petition was rejected. The petition also details how China's abusive labor practices provide China a competitive advantage in trade and investment. According to economic models used in the petition, the United States has lost more than a million U.S. jobs to China as a result of China's repression of worker rights.

There is no doubt that China's persistent pattern of conduct violating basic, internationally-recognized labor standards has continued. In fact the 2003, 2004 and 2005 State Department Human Rights Reports have all concluded that the Chinese Government "continued to deny internationally recognized worker rights," and these reports contain vivid examples of violations, including the use of forced labor, a ban on independent trade unions, and arrests of labor leaders. Indeed, the most recent State Department report notes that regulations aimed at suppressing autonomous labor organizations grew even more harsh in 2005.

When Congress approved permanent normal trade relations with China, a major purpose was to bring China into the global rules-based trading regime, leading to political and economic reforms. But China has stalled in complying with its WTO obligations. Unless we hold China accountable for violations of basic workers rights, its leaders will conclude that they can get all the benefits of access to markets in the United States and other developed countries without adopting reforms. This would allow firms an ill-gotten competitive advantage over companies in the United States, and set back critical reform efforts.

The Section 301 process offers an opportunity for meaningful steps to be taken by the Administration to address China's abusive labor practices and help it come into compliance with basic international norms. The United States has a moral and legal obligation to stop these abuses by the Chinese government. We urge your administration to accept the petition and take action in accordance with the proposed WTO-consistent remedies to ensure that the Chinese government complies with its international workers' rights obligations.

Sincerely,

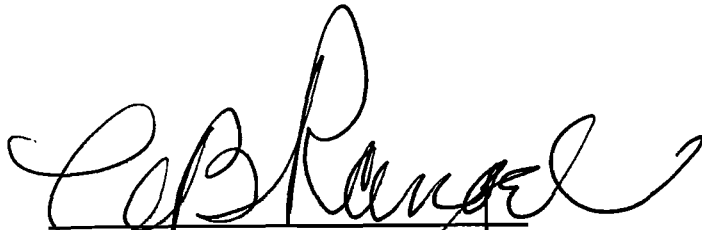


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BILL PASCRELL, JR.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


cc: The Honorable Susan Schwab, USTR




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MEMBER OF CONGRESS



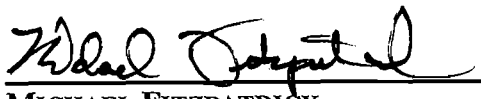
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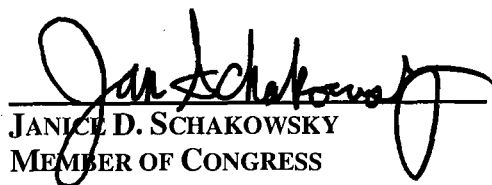
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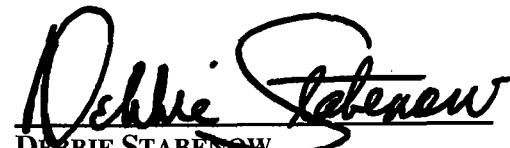
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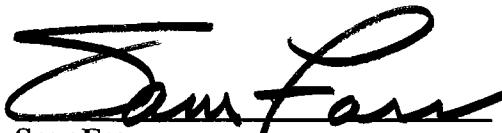
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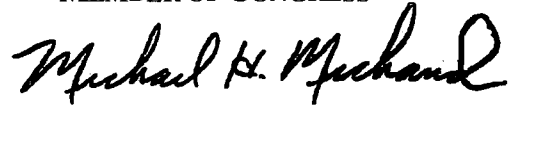

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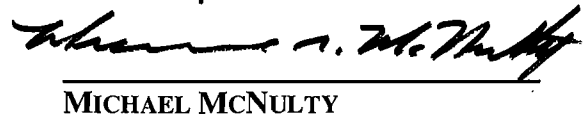

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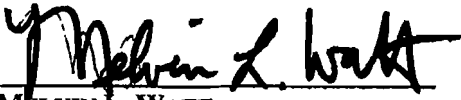

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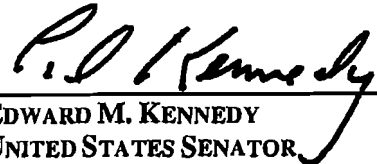

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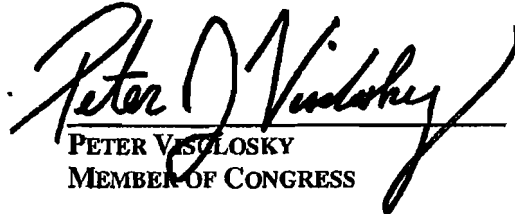

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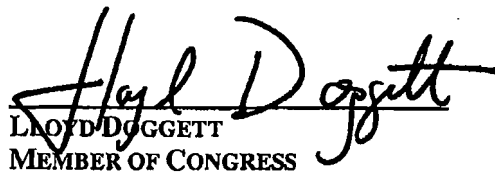

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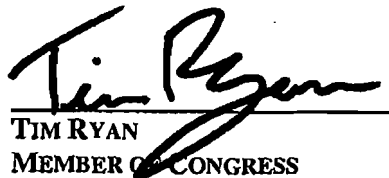

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