Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our strong support for the immediate enactment of a five year reauthorization of the 2009 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) reforms.

The Trade Expansion Act of 1962 created the Trade Adjustment Assistance program to assist workers laid off as a result of international trade by helping them retrain and acquire skills needed to compete in the global environment. In 2009, Congress enacted the Trade and Globalization Adjustment Assistance Act of 2009, making significant improvements to the TAA for Workers program as well as the other TAA programs – Firms, Farmers, and Communities.

The 2009 reforms had the full support of the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committee. Underscoring the bipartisanship, bicameral support for the 2009 reforms, Congressman Camp, who was then the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Ways and Means stated, "[t]his important package provides a coherent, rational, accountable, and cost-effective system for training trade-affected workers and putting them back to work quickly and at better jobs". Similarly, Senator Grassley, the Ranking Member on the Senate Finance Committee stated, "today's achievement…is the culmination of years of effort, and I am confident that the result will serve to benefit American workers in Iowa and across the United States for years to come".

The 2009 TAA reforms dramatically improved the TAA for Workers program. Specifically, the legislation made service sector workers eligible for the program, expanded access for manufacturing workers, significantly increased training funding and promoted on-the-job, part-time and longer-term training. Critically, it also increased the TAA for Workers Health Coverage Tax Credit subsidy to 80 percent and made several important changes to the existing credit. These changes were designed to minimize gaps in coverage and assure access to insurance policies that meet the health and medical needs of eligible individuals and their families. The 2009 legislation also made important reforms to the TAA for Firms program and tripled its authorization, improved the TAA for Farmers program, and created the TAA for Communities program.

Since the reforms were implemented in May 2009, more than 185,000 additional trade-impacted workers who may not have been certified under the "old" 2002 TAA for Workers program have become eligible for training opportunities and benefits. In total, more than 435,000 workers

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were certified as eligible for TAA support in that timeframe. In FY2010 alone, more than 227,000 workers took advantage of TAA and participated in the program, receiving case management, training and/or income support.

The 2009 TAA reforms expired on February 12, 2011, and just last week, the Department of Labor denied the first three petitions filed by groups of workers seeking TAA assistance under pre-2009 TAA rules. The reason for the denial: they were service workers, and now that the 2009 reforms have lapsed, service workers are not eligible for TAA. Inevitably, the inability of these laid off workers to obtain TAA support and training, as well as the more limited benefits available to those workers whose TAA petitions are approved, will impede their efforts to obtain new jobs in growth sectors like health, information technology and precision manufacturing and contribute to the economic recovery.

The denial of these service workers' petitions for TAA assistance demonstrates the real consequences for working families associated with the failure to reauthorize TAA. The 2009 program should never have been allowed to lapse, and it is imperative that it is re-started immediately before additional workers are harmed. We therefore support the immediate passage of a five-year reauthorization of the 2009 TAA reforms and look forward to working with the Administration to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Jim McDermott

The Honorable John Lewis

The Honorable Xavier Becerra

The Honorable Adam Smith

The Honorable Michael H. Michaud

The Honorable Sander M. Levin

The Honorable John D. Dingell

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel

The Honorable Fortney Pete Stark

The Honorable George Miller

The Honorable Edward J. Markey

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman

The Honorable Dale E. Kildee

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer

The Honorable Barney Frank

The Honorable Howard L. Berman

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur

The Honorable Edolphus Towns

The Honorable Gary L. Ackerman

The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio

The Honorable Jerry F. Costello

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.

The Honorable Richard E. Neal

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel

The Honorable David E. Price

The Honorable Robert E. Andrews

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey

The Honorable Donald M. Payne

The Honorable James P. Moran

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler

The Honorable Jim Cooper

The Honorable Sam Farr

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard

The Honorable Lynn C. Woolsey

The Honorable Gene Green

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney

The Honorable Bob Filner

The Honorable Tim Holden

The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings

The Honorable Maurice D. Hinchey

The Honorable Corrine Brown

The Honorable James E. Clyburn

The Honorable Luis V. Gutierrez

The Honorable Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings

The Honorable Michael F. Doyle

The Honorable Chaka Fattah

The Honorable Barbara Lee

The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.

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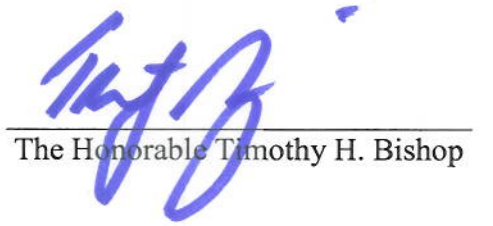
The Honorable Brad Miller

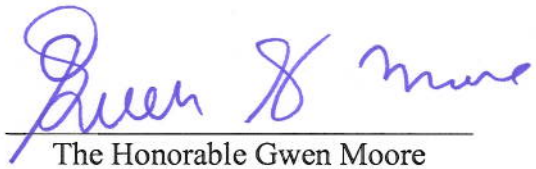
The Honorable Linda T. Sánchez



The Honorable Timothy H. Bishop

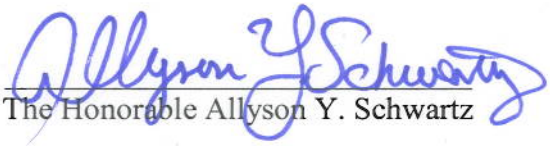
The Honorable C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger

The Honorable David Scott



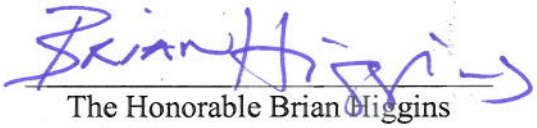
The Honorable Gwen Moore

The Honorable Albio Sires



The Honorable Allyson Y. Schwartz

The Honorable Daniel Lipinski



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