

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2013

Mike Ullman
Chief Executive Officer
J.C. Penney Company, Inc.
6501 Legacy Drive
Plano, TX 75024

Dear Mr. Ullman,

With the end of the rescue effort in Savar, Bangladesh, the immense consequences of the collapse of the Rana Plaza facility are now known. Over 1,100 people have perished, many of them young women and mothers working in the five garment factories that were housed in that facility. Regrettably, these deaths were entirely preventable. Rana Plaza was built in blatant violation of building codes that were never enforced and, at least one day before the collapse, Bangladeshi authorities were alerted to massive cracks in the structure of the building. Although shops and a bank branch in the building observed warnings from the authorities to evacuate, managers in the garment factories demanded that the workers – in one case, on threat of losing pay – go back to work. It is clear that, had these workers had a voice in the workplace with which to resist this unlawful pressure, they would likely still be alive today.

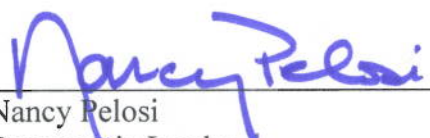
Equally clear is that the problems in Bangladesh's garment industry are deeply systemic, resulting in large measure from a large-scale race to the bottom as factories compete to provide American and European buyers rock-bottom prices that are lower today than they were two decades ago. Indeed, the Rana Plaza tragedy – one of the deadliest industrial accidents in history – has occurred on the heels of a long string of similar, deadly, and equally preventable tragedies in the Bangladeshi ready-made garment sector, including the Tazreen Garment factory fire in November 2012 that resulted in the death of 112 garment workers.

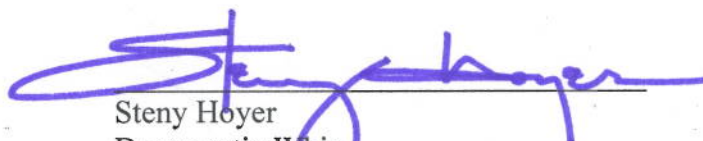
For any solution to be effective, all the key stakeholders – including companies like J.C. Penney that contract with factories in Bangladesh – need to be at the table. Part of the solution, in our view, has to be a fully enforceable agreement under which major U.S. and European brands commit to sourcing from Bangladesh under conditions that ensure that workers have basic health and safety protections.

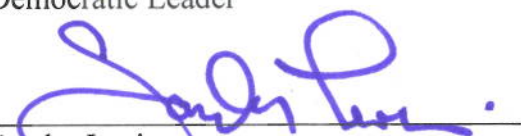
The May 12, 2013 Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, developed by the Worker Rights Consortium and a number of key stakeholders, is such an agreement. That accord has won the support of labor rights organizations and unions around the world, and it has gained significant momentum among buyers, with Ambercrombie & Fitch, Aldi, Benetton, C&A, Carrefour, El Corte Inglés, Esprit, G-Star, H&M, Helly Hansen, Hess Natur, Inditex, JCB, KIK, LIDL, Loblaws, Mango, Marks & Spencer, Mothercare, N. Brown group, New Look, Next, Primark, PVH, Rewe, Sainsbury's, Stockmann, Switcher, Tchibo, Tesco, and WE Group having signed on already. We call upon J.C. Penney to join this broadening global coalition. The effectiveness of the accord depends on the active participation of all major buyers.

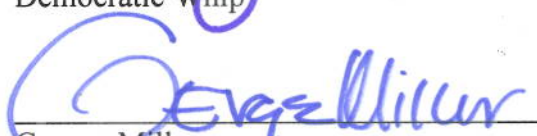
Circumstances are at a tipping point in Bangladesh, much as they were in the wake of the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist fire in New York over a century ago. J.C. Penney, and other U.S. and European buyers, are uniquely situated to help make this possibility of change become real in Bangladesh, as happened in the U.S. garment industry after the Triangle blaze. We urge you to seize this moment, and to help ensure that workers in Bangladesh do not needlessly lose their lives to produce the clothes we wear.

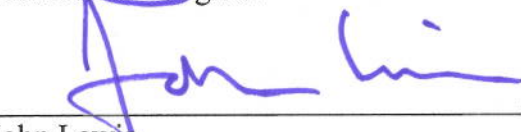
We look forward to working with you on this critical matter.

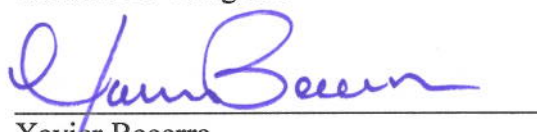

Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader


Steny Hoyer
Democratic Whip

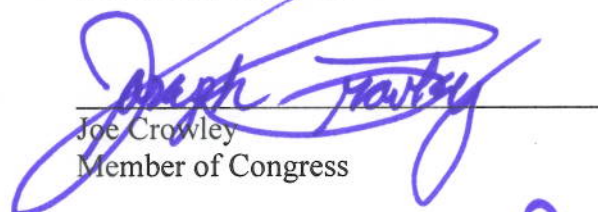

Sander Levin
Member of Congress

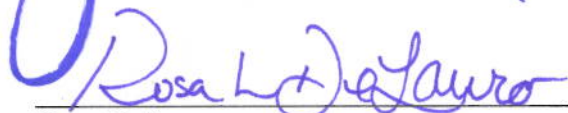

George Miller
Member of Congress

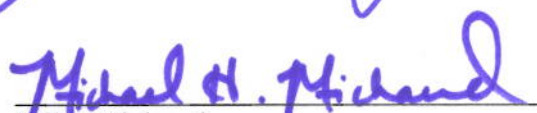

John Lewis
Member of Congress


Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress


Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Joe Crowley
Member of Congress


Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress


Mike Michaud
Member of Congress