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# Congress of the United States

## U.S. House of Representatives

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June 24, 2020

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer  
U.S. Trade Representative  
600 17th Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

I write regarding recent reports that employees at the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) may have acted inappropriately. The Committee on Ways and Means (Committee) respectfully requests additional information concerning these allegations.

Last week, news reports indicated that two USTR employees may have solicited future clients while working to implement the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). More specifically, it is reported that these employees planned to leave federal service and reached out to companies in the automotive industry to offer their assistance with provisions of the USMCA that they helped negotiate. As we both know, close collaboration between USTR employees and industry stakeholders is crucial to the process of negotiating a successful trade agreement; however, it is unseemly for current federal employees to take advantage of this close relationship and their intimate knowledge of the rules they helped to negotiate for personal gain.


The Committee is very proud of its close partnership with the USTR and of our joint efforts to bring the USMCA across the finish line. Accordingly, we want to ensure that the implementation of the USMCA proceeds with integrity and is not tarnished by the actions of a couple of employees. So that the Committee can better understand the allegations reported in the news, we respectfully request your assistance with this matter. Specifically, the Committee seeks information on the following issues:

1. In testimony before the Senate Committee on Finance last week, you noted that, though you were troubled by these reports, you were told that "career employees, as opposed to political employees, can do things like this." Further, you noted that the employees "went through the Ethics Office at USTR." Please provide the dates on which these employees consulted the Ethics Office, along with the advice that they were given.

2. Are these individuals still employed by the USTR or the federal government?
3. Is the USTR making any changes or updates to its ethics program, including updates to training materials or other guidance, in response to these events?

We would greatly appreciate a response by Wednesday, July 8, 2020. Thank you for your attention to this matter and, as always, thank you for being a close partner to the Committee on important trade issues.

Sincerely,



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Richard E. Neal  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways & Means  
United States House of Representatives