

# COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

May 24, 2018

The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
1011 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Brady:

We ask you with urgency to convene hearings on U.S.-China trade with Administration representatives.

Over the last month, the Administration has engaged with China in two sets of high-level, high-profile trade discussions, with more undoubtedly on the horizon. As Members of the Committee on Ways and Means, with constitutional authority over matters of foreign commerce and oversight over trade policy, we have had to rely on press reports to determine or speculate about the substance of these engagements and their development.

This is unacceptable for basic constitutional and Congressional institutional reasons. It is also unacceptable because press reports indicate an increasingly baffling set of circumstances and developments. For instance:

- On Sunday morning, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced on Fox News that U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports are “on hold.” On Sunday evening, the Wall Street Journal reported that U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said that tariffs remain an important tool to protect U.S. technology.
- In the same Sunday morning appearance, Sec. Mnuchin also said that the Administration had reached an agreement with China on a framework for addressing trade imbalances in the future. Amb. Lighthizer, on the other hand, described the framework as one “to address the very serious issues raised in the Section 301 report” on China’s forced transfer of U.S. technology and theft of U.S. intellectual property.
- On Monday, Sec. Mnuchin told CNBC that the Administration has already made “meaningful progress” with China on trade issues and that the talks have yielded tangible benefits. On Tuesday afternoon, however, the President said that he is “not satisfied” with the talks and that the Administration still has “a long way to go.”

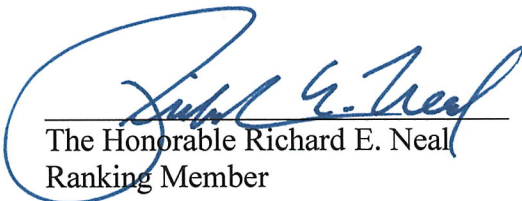
- Also on Tuesday, the President confirmed that he is considering commuting the export ban imposed on Chinese telecom giant ZTE in favor of fines and changes to the company's management. Sec. Mnuchin said that there is no "quid pro quo" involved in the Administration's review of ZTE penalties. In the meantime, also on Tuesday, China announced, without explanation, a series of unilateral MFN tariff reductions on its imports of autos and auto parts.


Separately, we also wonder why the Treasury Secretary is leading trade negotiations with China and why the Commerce Secretary is being dispatched to Beijing to negotiate trade packages on agriculture and energy. Section 141 of the Trade Act of 1974 designates the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) as the chief representative of the United States for international trade negotiations and requires the USTR to report directly to the President and to Congress.

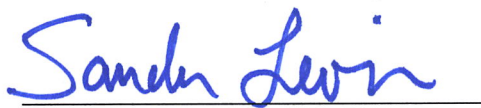
As you know, last week, China's Vice Premier Liu He brought his delegation of Chinese negotiators to a meeting with a small group of Ways and Means Committee Members. Vice Premier Liu began the meeting by acknowledging the importance of Congress and expressing his interest in listening to our views. Isn't it time for this Committee to bring in representatives of the U.S. administration so that we can hear from them directly, and so that they can listen to our views?

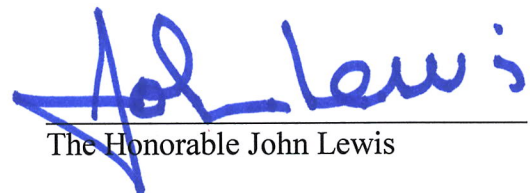
We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

  
The Honorable Richard E. Neal  
Ranking Member

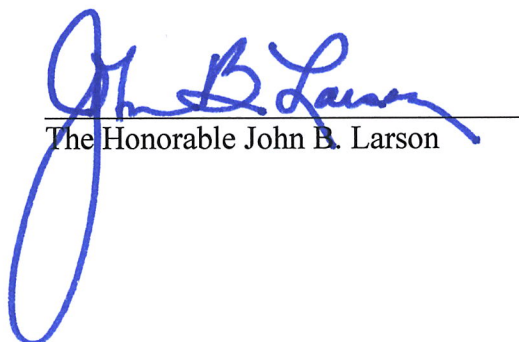
  
The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Trade

  
The Honorable Sander M. Levin


  
The Honorable John Lewis

  
The Honorable Lloyd Doggett

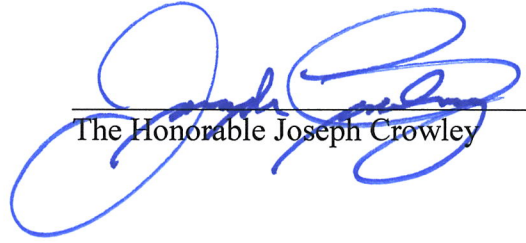
  
The Honorable Mike Thompson

  
The Honorable John B. Larson

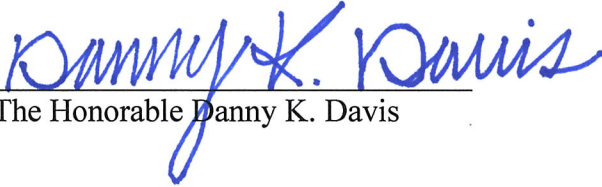
  
The Honorable Earl Blumenauer



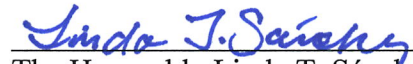
The Honorable Ron Kind



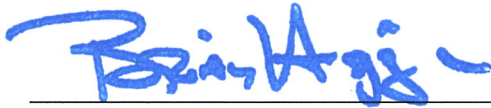
The Honorable Joseph Crowley



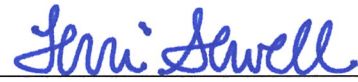
The Honorable Danny K. Davis



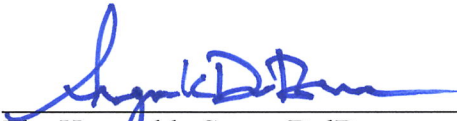
The Honorable Linda T. Sánchez



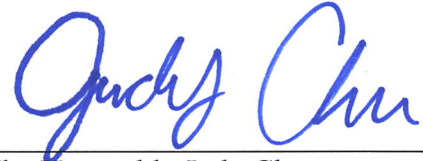
The Honorable Brian Higgins



The Honorable Terri Sewell



The Honorable Suzan DelBene



The Honorable Judy Chu