

JARED POLIS
2ND DISTRICT, COLORADO

1433 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0602
(202) 225-2161
(202) 226-7840 (FAX)

website and email:
<http://polis.house.gov>



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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February 18, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Levin:

In late January the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing to discuss the Administration's trade agenda, which included a discussion of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), which would set the terms for trade negotiations and Congressional consideration of trade agreements. As this legislation progresses further, it is imperative that it protects American jobs and creates and expands economic opportunity at home. For this reason, any bill that extends Trade Promotion Authority to the President must also include greater transparency through public and Congressional engagement and require an agreement that expands the middle class, protects worker's rights at home and abroad, creates opportunities for working families and keeps American businesses globally competitive.

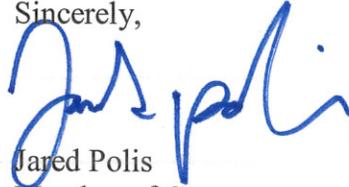
Congress lasted granted the executive branch Trade Promotion Authority with the Trade Act of 2002. The legislation being discussed is a great improvement over the Trade Act of 2002, but there is still a great deal of work to do in order to increase Congressional and public involvement and transparency regarding any issues related to trade agreements. American workers and families deserve, and must be provided the time to evaluate and assess legislation regarding such an impactful and important trade agreement. Only by ensuring this transparency and time for review before final Congressional consideration occurs do we earn the public's trust and protect and create economic opportunities for working families who deserve a fair wage and fear their jobs will be shipped overseas.

It is also important to take advantage of the opportunity trade policy and negotiations offer the U.S. to protect fundamental labor rights and acceptable working conditions. We must use various trade mechanisms to ensure labor rights are protected and labor standards must be binding and enforceable. If one of our trading partners is not enforcing these protections, the U.S. must have the ability to hold that country accountable, including but not limited to trade sanctions, similar to any other trade disputes.

In order to protect American jobs and workers, we also need to reauthorize the Trade Adjustment Assistance program to assist dislocated workers by making sure they get the skills and training needed. We must protect our American workforce and American innovation, our greatest asset.

My constituents have been explicitly clear in their concern that the trade agreement under discussion might send jobs overseas. That is why I urge you to only move legislation forward that sets a framework which will boost exports of American goods, not jobs. The primary goal of working with trade partners must be in order to advance American values and the U.S. economy, and give our innovative and tireless workforce a level playing field in the coming years and decades. Thank you for your attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jared Polis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jared Polis
Member of Congress