

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce strongly supports, and urges you to cosponsor, the “Trade Security Act,” a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators Rob Portman and Doug Jones and Representatives Ron Kind and Jackie Walorski. If enacted, this legislation would help restore the proper constitutional role of Congress in tariff policy by providing for Congressional disapproval of prospective tariffs designated under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

This legislation would allow Congress to respond to the Administration’s threat to impose a 25% tariff on all imported automobiles and auto parts and avert the enormous harm to the U.S. economy such action would inflict. The U.S. auto industry — the nation’s largest manufacturing sector — and many downstream industries would be inflicted with soaring costs and sweeping retaliatory tariffs, as would sectors such as agriculture and chemical manufacturing. All told, \$700 billion of imports and exports could potentially be affected by this action, which is reportedly under serious consideration.

Earlier application of Sec. 232 tariffs has inflicted substantial harm on U.S. industry and consumers in every state, as detailed at www.TheWrongApproach.com. The imposition of these tariffs on many of America’s closest allies — ostensibly in the name of national security — has also undermined U.S. efforts to build an international coalition of like-minded countries to combat the use of unfair trade practices.

Article I of the Constitution vests the Congress with the exclusive authority to regulate foreign trade and levy taxes. The Congress used this power to delegate to the President the authority to impose tariffs in the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, but the executive’s recent and threatened application of tariffs as leverage in trade negotiations is unlawful given the statute’s narrow focus on national security.

This bill is not the first legislation to restore the proper constitutional role of Congress in tariff policy that the Chamber has endorsed. Above all, we urge legislators to craft a consensus bill that can win broader support and meet the general objectives identified by the authors of this legislation as described above.

The Chamber supports the “Trade Security Act” and urges Congress to support American jobs and restore Congress’ constitutional authority over trade policy.

Sincerely,



Neil L. Bradley