



April 20, 2015

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, and Chairman Ryan:

The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council (SBE Council) and our nationwide membership of 100,000 entrepreneurs and small business owners strongly support the “Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015,” or “TPA-2015.”

Make no mistake, reducing barriers to international trade is a critical small business issue, not just a concern for large firms. For example, consider that, according to International Trade Administration (ITA) data, 98 percent of U.S. companies exporting goods in 2012 were small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with less than 500 workers. Similarly, 95 percent of companies involved in both exporting and importing goods were SMEs, as were 97 percent of U.S. firms involved in importing.

For good measure, the ITA has reported that U.S. goods and services exports support 11.3 million American jobs, and that export-related jobs pay more than the average U.S. job, with an 18 percent pay premium in manufacturing, for example.

Free trade agreements that lower trade barriers and protect intellectual property expand opportunities for America’s entrepreneurs, and help boost economic growth and the

creation of high-paying jobs. Indeed, good old common sense tells us that reducing the costs of reaching 95 percent of the world's consumers who live outside the United States is a tangible and needed advantage for U.S. small businesses and their workforce.

TPA legislation is crucial to expanding opportunity for U.S. entrepreneurs by making free trade agreements possible. Granting the President trade promotion authority, which allows for an up-or-down vote in Congress on trade agreements, establishes clear rules for trade negotiations with and provides confidence to our trade partners.

The Office of the United States Trade Representative accurately sums up the benefits of granting the President trade promotion authority: "With Trade Promotion Authority, the United States will be able to pursue 21st century trade agreements that support and create U.S. jobs while helping American manufacturers, service providers, farmers and ranchers increase U.S. exports and compete in a highly competitive, globalized economy."

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue for America's entrepreneurs and their workforce. SBE Council looks forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Kerrigan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" and last name "Kerrigan" clearly distinguishable.

Karen Kerrigan
President & CEO

301 Maple Avenue West • Vienna, VA 22180 • sbecouncil.org • @SBECouncil

Protecting Small Business, Promoting Entrepreneurship