

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.”