

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 31, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We were appalled by the October 13th front page article in the *New York Times* detailing efforts by some U.S.-based transnational corporations to undermine respect for fundamental, internationally-recognized worker rights by seeking to weaken provisions in the proposed new Chinese labor law.

China's "Draft Labor Contract Law" could provide minimal protections that are commonplace in many other countries throughout the world, such as enforceable labor contracts, severance pay regulations, and negotiations over workplace policies and procedures. Yet, the American Chamber of Commerce based in China – which represents such brand-name corporations as Goodyear, Dell, Ford, General Electric, Nike, and Microsoft – is waging an intense lobbying campaign to pressure the Chinese Government to weaken or abandon the draft law altogether.

This shameful American corporate lobbying campaign is inconsistent with our country's commitment to promote respect for fundamental worker rights everywhere in law and practice. It also discredits the long-professed claims of many U.S. corporate leaders that U.S. companies and investors in China de facto are leading by example to respect the basic human rights of all Chinese workers and improve their working conditions and living standards.

While the "Draft Labour Contract Law" does not cure all of China's labor abuses and much work remains to be done to achieve full compliance with core labor standards of the International Labor Organization, many of the proposed provisions constitute concrete improvements to workers' rights. Sadly, it is those very improvements that many U.S. corporations operating in China are actively opposing. What could be a step forward for both Chinese and American workers is now under attack by our own corporations.

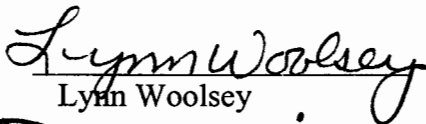
We call upon you to immediately take the following corrective measures:

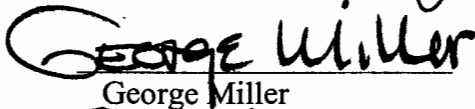
- Instruct the U.S. Ambassador to China and the U.S. Trade Representative to deliver letters of support for the workers' rights and protections provisions of the "Draft Labor Contract Law" forthwith to officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China, on behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people;

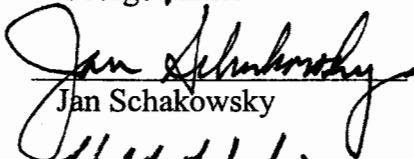
- Publicly repudiate the efforts of any U.S.-based corporations and their representative organizations doing business in China to weaken the workers' rights and protections provisions of the "Draft Labor Contract Law" of the People's Republic of China, if not sabotage them altogether; and
- Urge U.S.-based corporations and their representatives doing business in China to reverse their opposition to the workers' rights provisions and protections in the proposed new labor law and to make clear their commitment to the universal rights of all Chinese workers and to improve their working conditions and living standards.

It is in the mutual interest of the Chinese and American people and working people everywhere to promote universal respect and adherence to internationally-recognized worker rights.

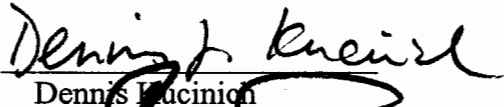
Sincerely,

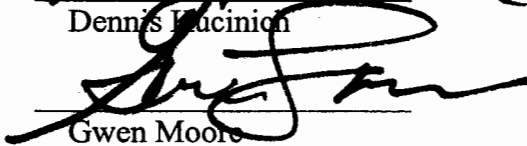

Lynn Woolsey

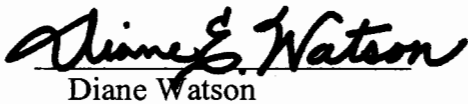

George Miller

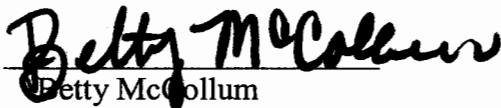

Jan Schakowsky

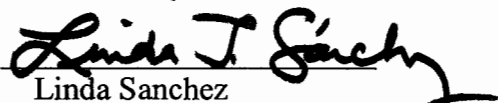

Hilda L. Solis

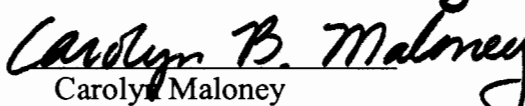

Dennis Kucinich


Gwen Moore

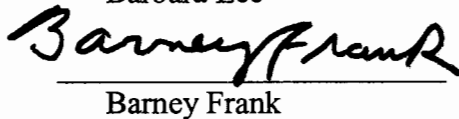

Diane Watson

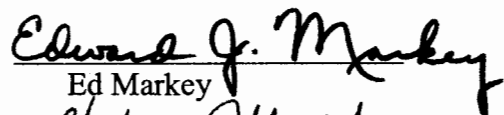

Betty McCollum

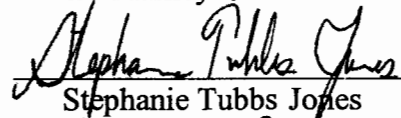

Linda Sanchez

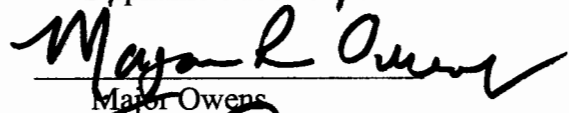

Carolyn B. Maloney

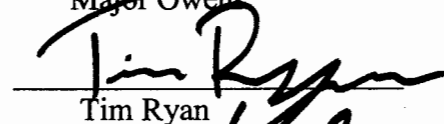

Barbara Lee

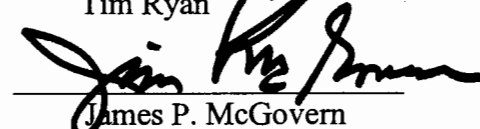

Barney Frank


Ed Markey

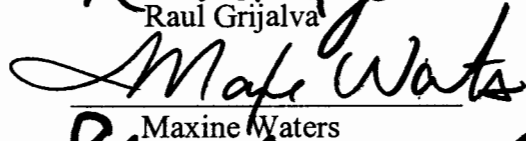

Stephanie Tubbs Jones

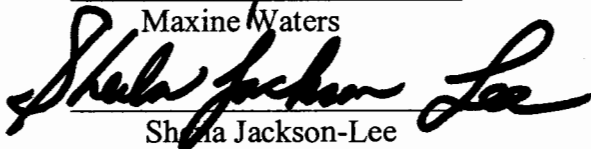

Major Owens


Tim Ryan


James P. McGovern


Raul Grijalva


Maxine Waters


Sheila Jackson-Lee

Bob Filner

Bob Filner

Peter DeFazio

Peter DeFazio

John Lewis

John Lewis

Michael Michaud

Michael Michaud

Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch

Donald M. Payne

Donald M. Payne

Maurice Hinchey

Maurice Hinchey