

March 26, 2020

Via Email

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Minority Leader Charles Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: USW opposes attempts to undermine existing trade enforcement authorities

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The 850,000 members of the United Steelworkers urge a rational approach to duty collection in this time of need. The efforts to contain the COVID-19 virus have led to unprecedented responses by lawmakers, but some corporate opportunists have seen a global pandemic as a method to advance an agenda of outsourcing American jobs. That is why the USW strongly urges Congress and the Administration to not undermine existing trade enforcement authorities such as 301, 232 or traditional anti-dumping and countervailing duty orders. Efforts to revoke or repeal such relief measures or delay duty collection could very well have a devastating impact on workers struggling to simply survive.

The USW urges Congress and the Administration to not delay duty collection during this COVID-19 crisis. This is a health and economic crisis not seen in modern times, but previous economic downturns have resulted in massive surges in U.S. imports during times of global crisis. Using steel as an example, U.S. imports of semi-finished and finished steel products spike when global industry enters a crisis period. These spikes confirm that the U.S. is the export market of choice when the global industry is saddled with excess capacity, as it is today.¹ Other countries see our market as a dumping ground for their production and an engine of opportunity for their companies and workers.

¹ <https://www.epi.org/publication/surgin-steel-imports/>

As a union that has participated in over a hundred trade enforcement actions over the last twenty years, our members have seen the importance that tariff relief can mean. Plants have restarted, businesses have reinvested and turned a profit, and American workers were able to bring home a living wage. American manufacturers are trying to respond to a global pandemic while some trade associations and ideologues would rather throw away strong evidence of material injury of unfairly traded imports and permit foreign manufacturers to export their unemployment to the U.S.

It is important to recall the headwinds that American manufacturers and their workers face. The China 301 trade case highlights corporate espionage, intellectual property theft, an aggressive outbound, often subsidized investment regime, and discriminatory licensing restrictions all done by just one government to put American businesses at a competitive disadvantage.² The steel and aluminum 232 tariffs highlight the national security importance of a domestic industry facing over 500 million tons of excess global overcapacity. Finally, over 500 AD/CVD orders are direct examples of companies and workers who were directly injured by illegal efforts to dump or subsidize products.

Importers and their trade associations want Congress to overlook the significant record of illegal acts conducted by foreign companies and states to hurt American jobs. Our union stands strongly against these measures.

Sincerely,


Thomas Conway
International President

cc: United States Senators
United States Representatives

²<https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/enforcement/301Investigations/301%20Draft%20Exec%20Summary%203.22.ustrfinal.pdf>