

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

December 17, 2019

Dear Representative:

I am writing in support of the renegotiated United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA), that the House of Representatives will be voting on this week.

Over the past two years, the labor movement, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her allies on the USMCA working group pushed to remedy numerous shortcomings contained in the original USMCA text. The end result is a vast improvement over both the original NAFTA and the agreement negotiated by President Trump last year.

The revised USMCA includes a first-of-its-kind facility-specific enforcement mechanism with rapid timelines and meaningful penalties. Developed by Senators Brown and Wyden, this rapid response mechanism will allow complaints to be brought against facilities for violating the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining, including on-site verifications that must be resolved in a timely manner where violations are found.

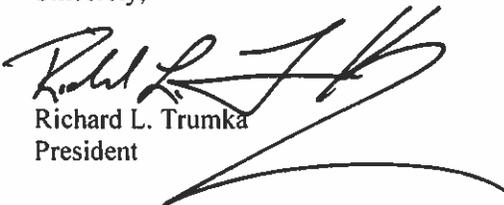
The new USMCA also improves enforcement by eliminating the provision that would allow any party to block the formation of a dispute resolution panel when state-to-state conflicts arise; it severely limits Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS); it removes unreasonable barriers to trade complaints by making clear there is a presumption that labor violations are trade-related; it removes troubling language on violence against workers; and it bans trade in goods made with forced labor. Importantly, the revised USMCA also eliminates the giveaway to Big Pharma in the administration's initial proposal.

The USMCA is far from perfect. It alone will not solve the problems of outsourcing, inequality or climate change. Successfully tackling these issues requires a full-court press of economic policies that empower workers, including the repeal of tax cuts which reward companies for shipping our jobs overseas. In addition, there remain areas in the agreement such as the copyright safe harbor provision (Article 20.89), that should not be used as a model in the future.

Finally, much hard work will need to be done to ensure that Mexico complies with its labor law changes and obligations; and that the United States aggressively utilizes the monitoring and enforcement tools contained within the agreement. The updated USMCA means trade in America will now be fairer because of our hard work and perseverance.

While USMCA is not a new template, it does provide a new standard from which to improve upon in future trade negotiations. Rejecting it would leave the deeply flawed existing NAFTA in place for the foreseeable future. For this reason, we urge you to vote for the USMCA when the House considers it later this week.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Trumka
President