

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

December 9, 2025

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal:

On behalf of the 64 affiliates of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), representing 15 million working people across our economy, I write to urge the passage of a short-term reauthorization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). As the Committee considers legislation to reauthorize AGOA, we believe the proposed three-year extension is inappropriate given the need to modernize the program and the need to support U.S. workers injured by trade by reauthorizing the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program.

The AFL-CIO has long supported the AGOA program and its goal of incentivizing greater foreign direct investment in Sub-Saharan Africa to create decent work across the region. In particular, we recognize the success of the program in generating tens of thousands of formal sector jobs in the export apparel sector.

However, 25 years after its creation the AGOA program badly needs to be updated, including by strengthening the program's labor standards, rules of origin, and enforcement. Accordingly, we support a short-term extension to allow Congress the time to properly review and modernize the program before committing to a longer-term reauthorization.

As you evaluate AGOA, we also urge you to pair any renewal of our trade preference programs with a robust safety net for workers who have been injured by import competition. Reauthorizing Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is essential to ensuring that American workers have the training, income support, and reemployment services they need when trade policies result in job displacement. It would be irresponsible to extend or deepen trade preferences for foreign producers while leaving U.S. workers injured by trade without support to retrain and pursue new job opportunities.

The AFL-CIO and our affiliates work closely with labor and other civil society partners in sub-Saharan Africa and appreciate AGOA's importance in attracting investment and fostering long-term development. But a hastily passed three-year reauthorization without necessary reforms or support for workers in the United States is counterproductive and unacceptable. The AFL-CIO instead urges the committee to pass a short-term reauthorization of AGOA to preserve the space to work towards a comprehensive trade package that supports workers at home and abroad.

Sincerely,



Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs