

House Rules Committee Chairwoman Louise Slaughter this week called on President Obama to hold off on any effort to bring the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to Congress. In the letter, Slaughter and other the members called the Korea FTA as negotiated by President George W. Bush and carried along by President Obama, “another NAFTA-style FTA that we simply cannot support in its current form.” The letter charges that the FTA in present form would undermine the auto, beef, and textile sectors still emerging from the devastating effects of the recession.

Slaughter has been a staunch defender of the U.S. manufacturing base recently saying, “to try and advance the Korean FTA when so many workers are still struggling to find work would simply move our economy backward.”

Below is a copy of the letter. A [signed pdf](#) is available.

President Barack Obama

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write today to request a meeting with you to discuss your plan to bring the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to Congress for a vote next year. A meeting will allow us to discuss our specific concerns with you and to identify a way to unify the Democratic Party and all Americans

on the issue of trade.

The Korea FTA, as negotiated by President George W. Bush's administration, is another NAFTA-style FTA that we simply cannot support in its current form. We oppose specific provisions of the agreement in the financial services, investment, and labor chapters, because they benefit multi-national corporations at the expense of small businesses and workers. And we strongly object to the non-tariff barriers to the Korean market that numerous U.S. industries – including the auto, beef, and textile sectors – will continue to face even as their Korean counterparts receive virtually total access to the American market.

At a time when our economy is struggling to recover from the worst downturn since the Great Depression, it is unthinkable to consider moving forward with another job-killing FTA. We recognize, as you do, that done right, trade agreements can create jobs as they increase exports and help our economy recover. But done wrong, trade agreements send those same jobs off-shore, benefitting a narrow class of investors while leaving average Americans worse off. Americans believe that more NAFTA-style agreements will derail, not promote, our economic recovery.

Ratifying this pact without major changes to the text will exacerbate the U.S. trade deficit; further erode the U.S. manufacturing base; jeopardize our efforts to guard against another global economic meltdown; and make the U.S. government vulnerable to compensation demands in foreign tribunals raised by Korean companies doing business within our borders. Moreover, it is simply out of touch with what the overwhelming majority of American people want.

We ask for this meeting to discuss with you specific proposals to improve the Korea FTA and the overall U.S. trade model. We must take advantage of this unique and historic opportunity to unite the Democratic Party and all Americans behind a new trade policy that benefits big and small companies and blue and white collar workers alike.