

## WNY Area Labor Federation and Rochester and Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation Give Stamp of Approval to Reciprocal Market Access Act Ahead of Labor Day Weekend

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) today garnered the endorsement of two prominent labor organizations for her legislation that would level the playing field for American workers by requiring that foreign countries open their markets to U.S. goods just as the U.S. opens its markets to foreign products.

The WNY Area Labor Federation and the Rochester and Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation both announced their strong support of the Reciprocal Market Access Act, H.R.1749, which Slaughter reintroduced earlier this year. This bipartisan bill instructs U.S. trade negotiators to eliminate foreign market barriers before reducing U.S. tariffs and provide enforcement authority to reinstate the tariff if the foreign government does not honor its commitment to remove its barriers.

"We must rebuild our manufacturing sector and must create more American jobs," said Slaughter. "On this Labor Day, let us remember that since 2000 we have lost 5.5 million manufacturing jobs. That is simply unacceptable. Since WWII we have been giving away our jobs as we open our markets to other countries. It's time to bring jobs home. We must have a level playing field if we are to ever regain our manufacturing base, and I'm so pleased to have the support of local labor in this endeavor."

"By correcting unfair trade imbalances, this legislation will create new manufacturing opportunities in the U.S.," said Angelo Vellake, President of the WNY Area Labor Federation. "It is clear that the U.S. cannot be a world power or positive economic model without the ability to make goods and provide good jobs to its citizenry."

The Reciprocal Market Access Act would also instruct the International Trade Commission to conduct an assessment of the impact of a prospective trade agreement on market opportunities and barriers for U.S. products or services that will be impacted by the trade agreement.

Nationally, the Reciprocal Market Access Act has been endorsed by:

- 40 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives
- American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition
- Coalition for a Prosperous America
- Corning, Inc.
- AFL-CIO
- United Auto Workers
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- United Steelworkers
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers

[For more on Slaughter's work to protect American workers and end unfair labor practices, click here.](#)

### **Background: Securing Reciprocal Market Access for U.S. Manufacturers**

The U.S. industry faces significant non-tariff barriers ("NTBs") in key markets, preventing fair market access. These NTBs (see below) deny U.S. manufacturers current and future export opportunities. Eliminating the U.S. tariffs without securing elimination of NTBs is equivalent to unilateral disarmament – giving full advantage to our competitors, while allowing them to protect their home markets.

Under the current Doha negotiation process, tariff and non-tariff barriers are largely separate and self-contained, meaning that tradeoffs are tariff-for-tariff and non-tariff-for-non-tariff. The tariff cutting negotiation process does not provide the United States Trade Representative (USTR) the flexibility needed to exclude sectors that do not receive mutually beneficial trade concessions. As a result, a tariff can be reduced or eliminated without securing the elimination of the real barrier or barriers that deny market access to U.S. manufacturers' exports. This compartmentalization can undermine the limited leverage the U.S. has to secure market

access. It is essential that we obtain meaningful market access in key markets. Without meaningful access, confidence in U.S. trade policy will continue to erode.

To enhance the tools available to our negotiators ensuring that the U.S. is able to achieve real reciprocity, the bipartisan Reciprocal Market Access Act was first introduced in 2007. It was reintroduced in the 111th Congress, and a companion bill, S.1766, was introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown and Kay R. Hagan. This legislation provides additional leverage for USTR and is designed to ensure that negotiations fully address the market access problems faced by U.S. producers.

### **Summary of the Reciprocal Market Access Act, H.R. 1749**

- The legislation is designed to ensure that our trade negotiations achieve real and meaningful market access for our producers.
- Authority to receive or eliminate tariffs in trade agreements is tied to achieving meaningful market access for U.S. domestic producers that have identified and worked with the U.S. government to address those barriers.
- To better ensure meaningful market access, the bill requires that the President provide a certification to the Congress in advance of agreeing to a modification of any existing duty on any product, that sectoral reciprocal market access has been obtained.
- This will enhance the partnership with Congress and achieve reciprocal market access.
- It gives the government the automatic negotiated right to revoke concessions to cut tariffs if our trading partners don't implement the commitments they made to open up their markets.
  
- This authority, known as "snap back" authority, could be triggered by a private sector or Congressional request. The goal – and the result – will be reciprocal market access for our nation's products.
- Instructs the International Trade Commission to conduct an assessment of the impact of a prospective trade agreement on market opportunities and barriers for U.S. products or services that will be impacted by the trade agreement. This report will be submitted to Congress, USTR, and the Commerce Department no later than 45 days prior to the beginning of negotiations.

[For the full text of the Reciprocal Market Access Act, click here.](#)