



February 5, 2018

Senator Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of ACTION for Trade, a coalition of the nation's leading creative and innovative sectors, I am writing today to urge the Senate to swiftly confirm the pending nominees to the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR). To protect and promote our nation's economic interests abroad, our nation needs these positions filled.

From the innovators behind the latest advances in technology and breakthrough medicines to the creators of film, television, music, and the written word, the current and future American economy depends on the promotion of our most creative and innovative individuals and firms. The companies in these intellectual property-intensive sectors grow at faster rates, send more exports, and pay higher wages than their non-IP-intensive counterparts. In fact, these IP-intensive sectors account for two in five U.S. jobs.

Strong intellectual property protections abroad and a level international playing field are essential elements that allow U.S. creators and innovators to thrive here at home. Establishing and implementing those protections requires a full complement of personnel at the agencies responsible for carrying out U.S. trade policy.

Currently, there are three pending nominees before the Senate to serve as Deputy United States Trade Representatives and one pending nominee to serve as Chief Agricultural Negotiator for the USTR. These are key positions whose occupants can help fulfill the trade policy objectives laid out for the Executive branch by Congress in its most recent delegation of trade promotion authority. Moreover, with Senate-confirmed nominees in these positions, the United States can be fully represented at important international institutions and negotiations where the United States traditionally exercises a leadership role.

For example, USTR is leading several negotiations that are now entering a critical phase. The sixth round of talks to modernize the North American Free Trade Agreement came to an end on January 29. Likewise, negotiators are working on revisions to the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement with a reported target of completion by April. As these talks and others enter their final phases, the agency leading them should benefit from having a senior leadership team in place.

For these reasons, ACTION for Trade asks that the Senate act swiftly to confirm Jeffrey Gerrish, C.J. Mahoney, and Dennis Shea to be Deputy United States Trade Representatives and Gregory Doud to be Chief Agricultural Negotiator. Further, following the receipt of a nomination, we also strongly encourage lawmakers to move deliberately to consider the President's choice for Chief Innovation and Intellectual Property Negotiator in the Office of the USTR, a position established by Congress in 2015.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you on these and other matters to ensure that the United States is promoting its creators and innovators for a vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Pomper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Pomper" clearly distinguishable.

Brian Pomper  
Executive Director  
ACTION for Trade