



April 15, 2016

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Brady and Chairman Hatch,

I write today in support of your efforts to reform the process of approving Miscellaneous Tariff Bills (MTBs) through recently introduced legislation, H.R. 4923 and S.2794, the American Manufacturing Competiveness Act of 2016.

Your proposed reforms to the MTB process, such as requiring local businesses to petition the independent International Trade Commission rather than a Member of Congress, eliminates all concerns linking MTBs to the unethical nature of earmarks. Additionally, allowing your committees to exclude products from the final proposal, but not add them, helps ensure this cannot serve as a vehicle for cronyism.

In fact, repealing a tariff is in no way comparable to creating an earmark. There is no such thing as a "tax earmark," since letting families and employers keep their own money is not government spending.

Rather than being a tool for wasteful, cronyist spending – as earmarks are -- MTBs serve to provide important relief for American manufacturers. While they are limited to being temporary in nature and must not exceed \$500,000 in lost tariff revenue, their benefits are substantial.

In fact, according to the National Association of Manufacturers, the last MTB package supported 90,000 U.S. jobs and increased GDP by \$3.5 billion. In addition, MTBs are only available for imports where there is no domestically made alternative, they are by definition non-controversial in nature.

The bottom line is that MTBs are a vital tool for American competitiveness. I applaud your work to reform this process to make clear that MTBs are a tax cut, not an earmark and urge your colleagues in the House and Senate to support these reforms.

Onward,

Grover G. Norquist
President, Americans for Tax Reform

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