

October 5, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write in strong support of the U.S.-Republic of Korea alliance, and as you prepare for any meetings with Republic of Korea President Lee Myung-bak and for the APEC Summit this fall, we strongly urge you to prepare the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (“KORUS”) for Congressional consideration.

We understand that there are still some concerns with the agreement and we ask that your Administration engage in consultation with South Korea. Such action would be consistent with your Joint Vision Statement with President Lee from June 2009 in which you both “committed to working together to chart a way forward” for KORUS.

We applaud your recognition at the Pittsburgh G-20 meeting that trade liberalization is a precursor to global economic growth. We agree that trade, especially when fair and with a close trading partner, is integral to our economic recovery strategy. South Korea is the world’s 14th largest economy and is already our seventh largest trading partner. KORUS is the most economically beneficial trade agreement the United States has negotiated in fifteen years. The U.S. International Trade Commission projects that implementation of KORUS would increase U.S. GDP by \$10 to \$12 billion. Furthermore, preparing KORUS for Congressional consideration would continue our partnership with a democratic ally that has a strong record on labor rights and environmental protection. Moreover, KORUS can be an important part of the Administration’s effort to reengage Asia.

We also commend your joint efforts with President Lee Myung-bak to address the security challenges on the Korean peninsula. We believe KORUS will bolster those efforts and enhance our strategic alliance. Finally, we should consider the potential impact on U.S. competitiveness and jobs by not moving forward.

We support your efforts to deepen bilateral ties between the U.S. and South Korea, and encourage you, once again, to prepare KORUS for consideration by Congress.

Sincerely,

ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress

DAVE REICHERT
Member of Congress