

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 12, 2019

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

We write urging you to stand firm in the ongoing trade negotiations with China and sustain the necessary pressure to achieve meaningful concessions in the anticipated “phase one” deal. It is imperative that such an agreement goes beyond merely recalibrating the United States trade balance with China. Failure to secure commitments from the Chinese government to enact substantive, enforceable, and permanent structural reform will jeopardize American jobs and long-term economic prosperity.

Without a strong agreement in place, the Chinese government continues to employ an array of predatory trade tactics that severely undermine American workers and businesses. These practices, outlined in the Office of the United States Trade Representative’s Section 301 investigation report, include stealing U.S. intellectual property and trade secrets, coercing companies to engage in the transfer of technology, providing massive government subsidies to emerging industries in China, flooding the global market with cheap imports, and hindering the ability of American companies to fairly compete in China.

China’s discriminatory trade and industrial policies have cost U.S. innovators billions of dollars each year and put millions of American jobs at risk. At the same time, the Chinese government is strategically investing in critical domestic industries, such as technology and telecommunications, while China-based firms are further expanding into foreign markets. To remain competitive with China, American workers and businesses will increasingly rely on strong intellectual property protections and a level playing field upheld by rigorous enforcement from the U.S. government and its allies.

Year after year, the United States has failed to hold the Chinese government accountable for its abusive and unfair trade practices, and we commend your administration’s continued focus on this issue. However, this point in the U.S.-China negotiations marks a critical juncture for the U.S. government to secure concessions on major structural challenges that will only become more difficult to address, particularly if China does not face real consequences for shirking international rules and obligations. Strength is the only way to win with China, and the United States cannot afford to back down now.

Mr. President, last week you indicated that you do not have a deadline for reaching a trade deal with China. We are concerned that, if trade tensions worsen and necessary diplomatic pressure is not maintained, the United States will be left with a weak political agreement devoid of substantive reforms. Therefore, we ask that you provide Congress with assurances of a concrete plan to finalize negotiations with China and reassert the structural demands that the U.S. must see included in any “phase one” deal.

To be clear, your administration must stay strong against the Chinese government if fundamental concessions are not made. Anything short of a meaningful, enforceable, and lasting agreement would be a severe and unacceptable loss for the American people.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator