

November 19th, 2019
The Honorable Dick Durbin
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin,

As champions for the Illinois economy and as key members of the House Democratic Caucus, we strongly encourage you to move your caucus to a swift ratification vote of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

USMCA is widely seen as an improvement over NAFTA and its ratification by Congress will help create American jobs, cultivate innovation, and spur economic growth while also strengthening protections for workers and the environment.

While we appreciate that there is room for improvement in USMCA, particularly in terms of the labor and environmental enforcement provisions, these aspects can be addressed post-ratification through side agreements, including one being pushed by Senators Sherrod Brown and Ron Wyden. And further, Mexico has listened and have passed major labor reforms. One thing is certain, we do not have to reopen negotiations—nor is there time to reopen negotiations—in order to address concerning aspects of the agreement.

We are uncomfortable with the idea that the perfect will be the enemy of the good, particularly with the high economic stakes for Illinois and the United States that are involved. President Trump has threatened to withdraw the United States from NAFTA should USMCA fail – an eventuality that will have ill effects for our business and the entire Illinois/American economy. A Trade Partnership Worldwide study shows countrywide drops in employment exceeding one million in the first year, and the GDP hit to be in the range of \$119 and \$231 billion. Tariffs imposed on American goods by Canada and Mexico would rise. For some goods, tariffs could go as high as 150 percent. That would cause prices to spike, cut into company profits, and raise prices for consumers. A NAFTA withdrawal would also disrupt supply chains that have taken decades to establish and help us keep the costs of our goods competitive with other international markets. Trade wars with our closest trading partners are also likely. In short, with this unpredictability, USMCA offers our economy some needed certainty.

We are keenly aware of the political calendar and are very concerned that as we draw closer to the 2020 election cycle any substantive delays in a USMCA ratification vote will imperil Congress' ability to approve this necessary deal. Mexico has ratified USMCA and Canada is well on its way. We highly encourage you to work with your colleagues to quickly move our United States Congress in that direction as well. The opportunity window is small. Please accelerate ratification of USMCA so the American economy can have the certainty that it needs to thrive.

Sincerely,

CC: The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
524 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510