



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

June 20, 2012

Chairman Dave Camp
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Ranking Member Sander Levin
Committee on Ways and Means
1106 Longworth House Office
Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Camp and Ranking Member Levin,

We strongly believe it is time to grant permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status to Russia and modernize U.S.-Russia relations for the benefit of both countries. We applaud your decision to hold a hearing on this important matter and look forward to continued discussion in the weeks ahead.

We are proud to serve as co-chairs of the Russia Task Force at the Bipartisan Policy Center. We authored a report, released in January 2012, that calls on Congress to enact legislation that graduates Russia from Jackson-Vanik. As our report states in clear detail, we believe the United States must extend PNTR status to take full advantage of Russia's WTO membership. This will encourage economic recovery by significantly expanding U.S. exports to Russia, creating more U.S. jobs across a range of important economic sectors, and ensuring favorable market access for U.S. companies. With Russia embedded in the WTO's institutions and commercial laws, the United States will also have a stronger set of tools for protecting its investors and resolving trade disputes. Failing to grant PNTR status would permit Russia to discriminate against U.S. trade and businesses, thus hurting job creation and economic growth here at home. We agree the United States cannot afford to miss this opportunity. Congress must act in a timely fashion to graduate Russia from Jackson-Vanik.

We also support efforts to hold Russian officials accountable for human rights abuses, for the sake of the Russian people and its society, and because liberal values are the foundation of the United States. Furthermore, we recognize Congress has little appetite to graduate Russia from Jackson-Vanik without replacement legislation targeting human rights and the rule of law. Therefore, we believe Congress should enact legislation that promotes more effectively Russian human rights and civil society. Russia's WTO accession and graduation from Jackson-Vanik should be part of a comprehensive policy framework – crafted by the Executive and Legislative Branches together with outside stakeholders – that advances U.S. interests, builds a more constructive bilateral relationship with Russia and promotes Russian human rights, rule of law, democracy, transparency, civil society, and commercial engagements.

As you and your colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee debate this important issue on June 20 and beyond, we look forward to working with you on this bipartisan effort.

Very Truly Yours,

Secretary Donald L. Evans

Senator Charles S. Robb