

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-310, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies develops its Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations bill, we write to ask for your support in funding the Department of Labor (DOL)'s Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). We request no less than the Fiscal Year 2025 enacted level for ILAB to ensure that it can continue to carry out its congressionally mandated mission. We also urge you to encourage ILAB to continue allocating balanced funding for programs that address labor rights and promote freedom of association, as well as exploitative child labor and forced labor internationally.

As you know, ILAB's mission is to promote a fair global playing field for workers in the United States and around the world by enforcing trade commitments, strengthening labor standards, and combating international child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. ILAB works to ensure that fully enforceable labor standards are at the core of our trade agreements and programs, and that trade partners' laws and practices align with those commitments. The need to continue increasing these capacities across international supply chains and in workplaces around the world remains evident.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2014 found that limited resources have prevented DOL from more proactively monitoring trade partner compliance under 14 U.S. free trade agreements with 20 countries and monitoring of trade preference programs with about 120 countries (GAO 15-160). As a result, GAO found that DOL "systematically monitor[s] and enforce[s] compliance with FTA labor provisions for only a few priority countries." Moreover, GAO also found that ILAB lacks sufficient capacity to carry out the timely investigation of formal submissions regarding violations of trade agreements. The requested funding aims to continue to remedy the weaknesses identified by GAO and to address the historical imbalance in the allocation of ILAB programming activity.

We also want to stress our support for ILAB's work enforcing the USMCA. Through the novel Rapid Response Labor Mechanism (RRM), ILAB has taken labor enforcement actions and worked to ensure compliance of our USMCA partners, especially Mexico, with the commitments of the agreement. Further, ILAB's labor attaché program is crucial in monitoring working conditions on the ground and ensuring trading partners uphold internationally recognized labor rights and comply with labor-related trade obligations. We hope ILAB will continue to spend at least \$30 million annually of USMCA appropriated funds on worker organizing and union capacity building in Mexico.

USMCA's implementing legislation included \$180 million for ILAB over four years to support unprecedented reform of the labor justice system in Mexico, worker-focused capacity building, and other implementation efforts in addition to \$30 million over eight years for ILAB to monitor compliance with USMCA labor obligations. Given this four-year annual appropriation expired in December 2023 and the increased workload for ILAB expected with the upcoming 2026 USMCA review, we stress the importance of robust funding for ILAB.

We also reject attempts to cut ILAB's program funding and reaffirm the critical role that ILAB plays in ensuring our trade relationships strengthen and uphold worker rights around the world. Gutting ILAB does not put America first. It undermines American workers, distorts markets in favor of unscrupulous businesses and regimes, strips our trade and customs officials of critical enforcement tools, and accelerates a global race to the bottom on workers' rights. ILAB is one of the only U.S. government entities with the infrastructure, expertise, and on-the-ground partnerships necessary to effectively counter forced labor.

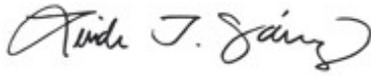
ILAB must continue to fulfill the various aspects of mission —enforcing our trade commitments, strengthening labor standards, and combating international child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. Accordingly, we request inclusion of the following language in the committee report that will accompany the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill:

*Of amounts appropriated to the International Labor Affairs Bureau (ILAB), the Secretary is directed that the amount allocated in grants to promote labor rights and freedom of association, and to build the capacity of independent trade unions and countries to enforce labor rights and to promote a more level playing field for U.S. workers shall be at least equal to the amount allocated in grant funding for combatting child labor. ILAB is directed to continue its work on three key reports including DOL's Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor; the List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor; and the List of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor.*

ILAB plays a critical role in helping U.S. workers compete in a global economy. No other U.S. government agency has the expertise and mandate to effectively carry out this mission. We urge you to provide no less than the FY25 enacted level for ILAB so the Bureau can continue its mission to improve the working conditions and rights of workers around the world.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



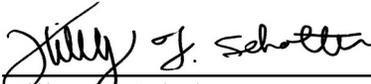
---

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



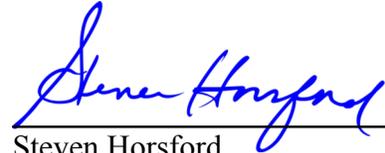
---

Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



---

Hillary J. Scholten  
Member of Congress



---

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



---

Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



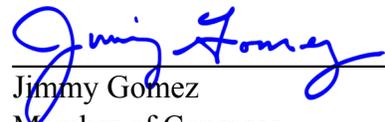
---

Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress



---

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



---

Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



---

Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



---

Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress



---

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



---

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



---

John W. Mannion  
Member of Congress



---

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



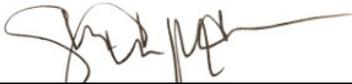
---

Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



---

Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



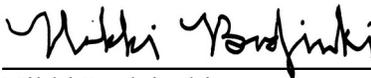
---

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress



---

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



---

Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



---

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



---

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



---

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



---

Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



---

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



---

Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

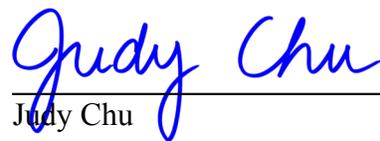


---

Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



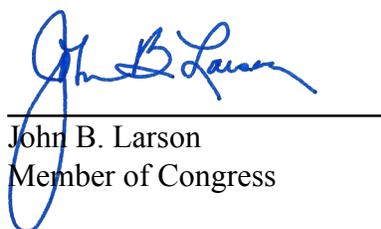
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



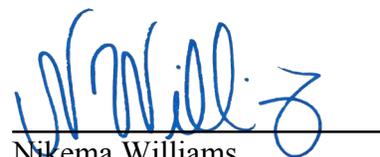
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



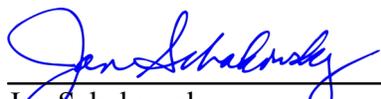
Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



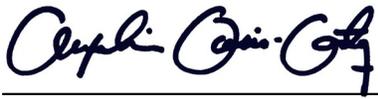
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



---

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress



---

Sarah McBride  
Member of Congress



---

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



---

Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



---

Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



---

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



---

Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress



---

Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



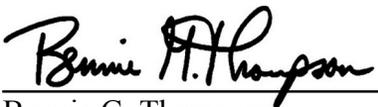
---

Yassamin Ansari  
Member of Congress



---

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



---

Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



---

LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



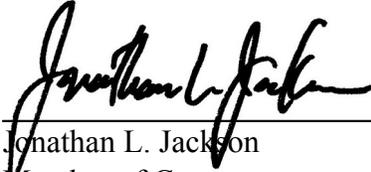
---

Greg Casar  
Member of Congress



---

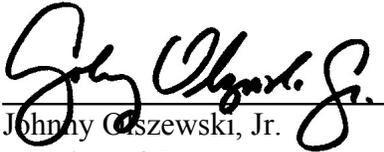
Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Johnny Ciszewski, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



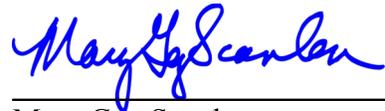
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo  
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress



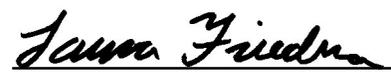
Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman  
Member of Congress



---

Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



---

André Carson  
Member of Congress



---

Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



---

Richard E. Neal  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Ways and Means