

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 18, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We condemn your multiple and unprecedented attempts to undermine democracy in Brazil and your failed efforts to shield former Brazilian President Bolsonaro from being held accountable for attempting a coup.

Your tariffs on Brazil constitute an unlawful misuse of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). To justify your unlawfulness, you incorrectly asserted that your tariffs on Brazil would address an alleged “unsustainable trade deficit,”¹ despite the United States having a trade surplus with Brazil every year since 2008. Notably, Brazil was only one of the 25 countries to receive one of your tariff threat letters which has a positive trade balance with the United States.²

We also condemn your use of the tariffs to undermine Brazil’s democracy and judicial independence. In your letter to Brazilian President Lula, you explicitly noted that your tariffs were in response to Brazil’s alleged “attack on free elections” and you demanded that an alleged “Witch Hunt” trial against former President Jair Bolsonaro end “IMMEDIATELY”.³ The only attack on free elections has been your continued effort to protect your political ally and “great friend”,⁴ former Brazilian President Bolsonaro, from facing justice for his failed coup attempt in Brazil on January 8, 2023 — an effort that closely mirrors your own attempts to evade accountability for the January 6th insurrection in the United States. Further, you erroneously asserted the tariffs were needed to allegedly defend “free speech”⁵ in Brazil over Brazil’s attempts to regulate social media accounts spreading hate speech and anti-democratic misinformation, despite a Brazilian Supreme Court ruling finding these measures consistent with Brazil’s Constitution.⁶ Launching a trade war with Brazil to settle non-trade issues is unjustified and counterproductive.

¹ Trump, Donald J. “Letter from the President of the United States to the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, July 9 2025.”, as posted on X by the White House Rapid Response account (@RapidResponse 47), <https://x.com/RapidResponse47/status/1943043154946457812>.

² Cain, Geoffrey. “What’s Behind Trump’s 50 Percent Tariff for Brazil Despite Trade Surplus?” *Al Jazeera*, 10 July 2025, www.aljazeera.com/amp/economy/2025/7/10/whats-behind-trumps-50-percent-tariff-for-brazil-despite-trade-surplus.

³ Trump, Donald J. “Letter from the President of the United States to the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, July 9 2025.”, as posted on X by the White House Rapid Response account (@RapidResponse 47), <https://x.com/RapidResponse47/status/1943043154946457812>.

⁴ Loh, Matthew. “Trump lauds ‘great friend’ Jair Bolsonaro, as the Brazilian president has 9 criminal charges recommended against him”. *Business Insider*, Oct 27, 2021.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Fernandes, Leonardo. “Brazil’s Supreme Court Decides Platforms Must Be Held Accountable for User Content in Social Media.” **Brasil de Fato**, 27 June 2025.

www.brasildefato.com.br/2025/06/27/brazils-supreme-court-decides-platforms-must-be-held-accountable-for-user-content-in-social-media

We were also concerned that you announced a Section 301 investigation on Brazil in the same letter⁷ where you announced you would impose tariffs on Brazil based on a non-existent trade deficit, and Brazil's alleged attacks on free elections and free speech. While Section 301 investigations are an important tool to address legitimate unfair trade practices, your tariff threat letter to Brazil indicates you are misusing Section 301 authority to achieve political ends. It is a grave misuse of this tool to protect your political allies or to undermine other countries' sovereignty and judicial independence.

Although you have excluded certain Brazilian products from your tariffs, many Brazilian imports remain subject to the full 50% rate. Troublingly, some of your exclusions appear to benefit corporations with close ties to your administration, including the Brazilian meatpacking giant JBS, which made the single largest donation (\$5 million) to your inaugural committee,⁸ raising serious concerns that these exclusions may be granted as political payback.

In addition to abusing IEEPA and Section 301, your administration misused the Magnitsky Act to sanction and revoke the visas of Supreme Federal Court justices and their families in Brazil. We condemn this explicit attempt to unduly exert pressure on the independent judiciary of another democratic, sovereign nation. We were also deeply concerned to hear remarks from your press secretary implying that Brazil might be subjected to additional military or economic measures in response to the sentencing of former President Bolsonaro.⁹ Your weaponization of U.S.' military and economic power to protect your political allies, hold American businesses hostage, and undermine Brazil's democracy and judicial independence is unacceptable.

Your policies towards Brazil have only damaged U.S. leadership in the region. Since you imposed the Brazil tariffs, your administration has failed to provide any evidence that they would create American jobs or revive U.S. industries. Instead, in response to U.S. tariffs, Brazil — like many countries around the world — has accelerated efforts to distance itself from the United States, including by pushing for trade deals with Mexico, Vietnam, and others.¹⁰ China has quickly seized on the opportunity to strengthen its ties with Brazil, painting itself as a “defender” of the Global South against the United States, expanding BRICS cooperation, and turning to Brazil to provide key commodities.¹¹ For example, in September 2025, China's soybean imports from Brazil surged by nearly 30 percent,¹² displacing American farmers, who had long been China's top soybean suppliers.

Instead of employing a misguided and self-damaging punitive trade policy with Brazil, we urge you to work with Brazil to pursue a trade agenda that advances sustainable development, environmental protection, and workers' rights.

We believe that Brazil is an important partner for the United States in Latin America and we encourage you to deepen cooperation with Brazil, including in ongoing efforts to level the playing field for American and Brazilian workers. In 2023, the United States and Brazil launched the **Partnership for Workers' Rights**, committing to higher labor standards, inclusive economic growth, and sustainability. We urge you to build on this progress to

⁷ Trump, Donald J. “Letter from the President of the United States to the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, July 9 2025.”, as posted on X by the White House Rapid Response account (@RapidResponse 47), <https://x.com/RapidResponse47/status/1943043154946457812>.

⁸ Jones, Sydney, and Carole Mitchell. “Brazilian Meat Giant JBS Was Largest Donor to Trump's Inauguration.” *Mighty Earth*, 22 Apr. 2025.

⁹ Agência Brasil. “Foreign Ministry condemns US threat to use ‘military might’.” *Agência Brasil*, 10 Sept. 2025, [ebc.com.br/en/politica/noticia/2025/09/foreign-ministry-condemns-us-threat-use-military-might](https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/politica/noticia/2025/09/foreign-ministry-condemns-us-threat-use-military-might)

¹⁰ “MERCOSUR Concludes EFTA Free-Trade Deal; Targets EU Next.” *BNamericas*, 2 July 2025, www.bnamericas.com/en/features/mercosur-concludes-efta-free-trade-deal-targets-eu-next.

¹¹ Stephenson, Jack. “Trump Tariffs Backfiring in Brazil.” *Geopolitical Monitor*, 20 Aug. 2025, www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/trump-tariffs-backfiring-in-brazil/

¹² Cao, Ella, and Lewis Jackson. “China Imports No U.S. Soybeans in September for First Time in Seven Years.” *Reuters*, 20 Oct. 2025, www.reuters.com/world/china/china-imports-no-us-soybeans-september-first-time-seven-years-2025-10-20/

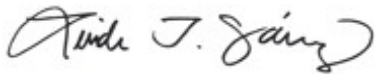
secure tangible outcomes that uplift workers in both countries and take tangible steps to address forced labor issues.

We further encourage cooperation with Brazil to support efforts to protect the Amazon rainforest and the region's indigenous peoples, many of which are active in supporting conservation, resource management, and other ecological efforts to defend the Amazon rainforest. Brazil has worked to help reduce deforestation in the Amazon, which has slowed by nearly half since 2023.¹³ This has been accomplished through enhancing monitoring and enforcement efforts, like seizing tens of millions of dollars in assets tied to environmental crimes.¹⁴ While we commend these efforts and the effects they have in leveling the playing field for U.S. workers who cannot compete with poor environmental standards abroad, we remain concerned that the Amazon remains at risk without stronger international cooperation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We were disappointed to learn that your administration failed to send an official delegation to Conference of Parties (COP) 30, marking the first time the United States was not officially represented at the annual climate Summit¹⁵ and missing a critical opportunity to advance American climate leadership.

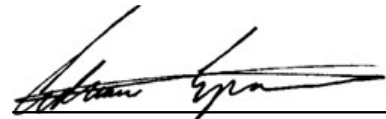
Our trade agenda with Brazil must be grounded in democratic norms and the rule of law, and should work to strengthen supply chains, bolster U.S. competitiveness, and support good-paying jobs for American and Brazilian workers.

We look forward to your response.

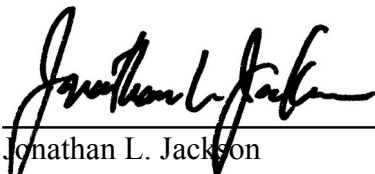
Sincerely,



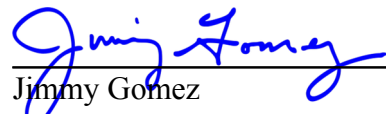
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

¹³ Maisonnave, Fabiano. "Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon Is Down by Almost Half Since 2023—But Savannah Is 'Sacrificed'." *Euronews*, 8 Aug. 2024, www.euronews.com/green/2024/08/08/deforestation-in-brazils-amazon-is-down-by-almost-half-since-2023-but-savannah-is-sacrificed.

¹⁴ Grattan, Steven. "Over 90 Arrests Made in Global Crackdown on Environmental Crime in the Amazon Basin." *Associated Press*, 10 July 2025, apnews.com/article/8361b6e0570a00ac14b40aab62937efc.

¹⁵ Jacobo, Julia. "The Trump Administration Didn't Send a Delegation to COP30. How the U.S. Is Maintaining a Presence at the Climate Summit." *ABC News*, 15 Nov. 2025, abcnews.go.com/US/trump-administration-send-delegation-cop30-us-maintaining-presence/story?id=127524096.



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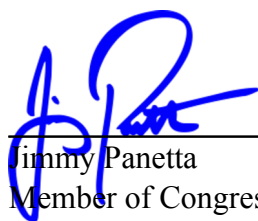
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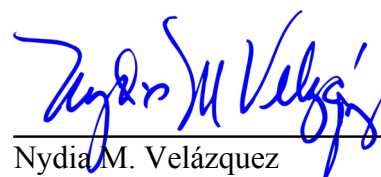
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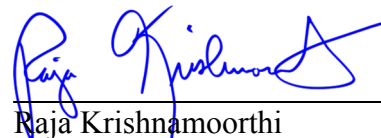
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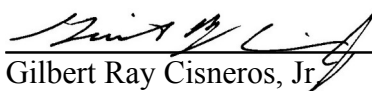
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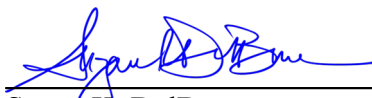
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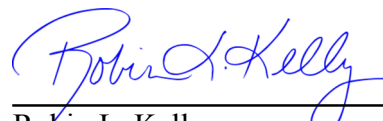
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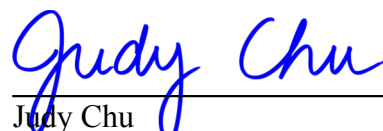
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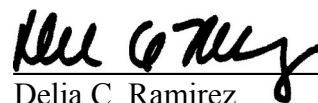
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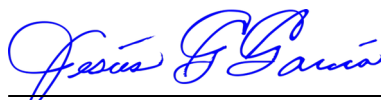
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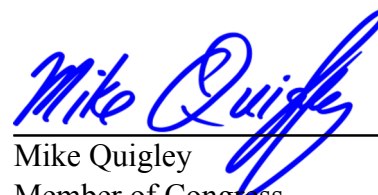
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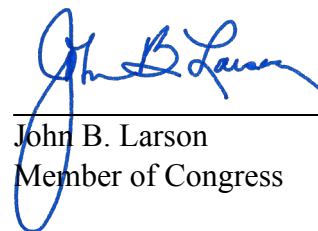
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