

**Business Council for International Understanding
Coalition of Services Industries
Council of the Americas
Emergency Committee for American Trade
National Association of Manufacturers
National Foreign Trade Council
United States Council on International Business
U.S. Chamber of Commerce**

January 25, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member, Senate Finance
Committee

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Baucus and Grassley:

On behalf of the more than 260,000 American exporters and companies doing business around the world, we write to ask your assistance in advancing the nomination of Francisco Sanchez, the president's nominee for Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade. We also ask the Senate leadership to schedule prompt floor consideration of three key economic nominees approved by the Finance Committee in December: Lael Brainard (Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs), Michael Punke (Deputy U.S. Trade Representative), and Isi Siddiqui (Chief Agricultural Negotiator, USTR).

Lael Brainard, Michael Punke, and Isi Siddiqui

We applaud the Finance Committee for taking up and approving the nominations of Lael Brainard, Michael Punke, and Isi Siddiqui in December. We urge prompt floor consideration of all three. It is imperative to our exporters that the United States move forward immediately with the Doha Round of WTO negotiations. Without the chief WTO and agricultural negotiators in place, our government cannot move forward in earnest. We urge the Senate leadership to take all appropriate steps to bring these key nominations to a vote.

Francisco Sanchez

Mr. Sanchez's nomination went up to the Senate on April 20, 2009. He was given a prompt hearing before the Banking Committee and was voted out unanimously on May 21, 2009. However, almost nine months after his nomination, he has not yet received a hearing before the Finance Committee.

American business exported \$1.8 trillion of goods and services last year, supporting millions of jobs across the country. The U.S. government is vital to opening markets abroad, ensuring level playing fields, preventing discrimination in favor of local interests, and ensuring transparency and fair competition in business dealings overseas. No arm of the U.S. government does more for export promotion and expansion than the Commerce Department, and the Under Secretary for International Trade is the leading advocate for exports at that department.

We applaud the role of the Senate in providing needed scrutiny of the president's nominees and our nation's representatives to foreign governments. This scrutiny yields better and stronger officeholders. But after nine months of scrutiny, we respectfully urge the committee to conclude its review and to offer Mr. Sanchez a hearing and a prompt vote. We ask that whatever questions remain be addressed quickly so that the process can move ahead.

Until this position is filled, American businesses will be at a distinct disadvantage in resolving commercial disputes with foreign governments or in benefiting from an improved export promotion effort.

Respectfully,

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