

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 27, 2021

The Honorable Cathy Russell
Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Personnel
The White House
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Director Russell:

I write to respectfully request that President Biden fill the currently-unoccupied position of Chief Innovation and Intellectual Property Negotiator at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The intellectual property-intensive industries are extraordinarily important to the U.S. economy. The Department of Commerce has reported that IP-intensive industries account for about 30 percent of all U.S. employment, pay almost 50 percent more than the average wage, and produce over 38 percent of U.S. GDP. IP-intensive industries are particularly important for U.S. trade—accounting for over 50 percent of all U.S. merchandise exports, 18 percent of U.S. services exports, and more than half of the U.S. digital trade surplus.

Realizing the significance of IP to the United States, Congress in 2016 created at USTR the position of Chief Innovation and Intellectual Property Negotiator. The position was intended to be parallel to the role of Chief Agriculture Negotiator—a position with the rank of Ambassador, confirmed by the Senate, with responsibility for negotiating IP issues across all trade agreements and ensuring robust enforcement of IP and innovation-related obligations under those agreements.

Unfortunately, the position has never been filled. Given the importance of IP to the U.S. economy and U.S. trade, I believe it is vital to have someone in this critical position who, as the statute requires, “shall be a vigorous advocate on behalf of United States innovation and intellectual property interests.” Notably, trade and IP rights are key elements to the flow of pharmaceuticals and other medical products worldwide as we confront the impacts of the pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress

cc: Ms. Maria Pagan, Acting United States Trade Representative