

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 30, 2010

Mr. Myron E. Ullman
CEO, JCPenney
6501 Legacy Dr
Plano, TX 75024-3612

Mr. W. Bruce Johnson
President & CEO, Sears/Kmart
3333 Beverly Road
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60179

Mr. Karl-Johan Persson
CEO, H & M
215 Park Ave. South, 15th floor
New York, N.Y. 10003

Mr. Mike Duke
President & CEO, Wal-Mart
702 SW 8th Street
Bentonville, Arkansas 72716

Mr. Scott Farmer
CEO, Cintas Corporation
PO Box 625737
Cincinnati, Ohio 45262

Mr. Eric Wiseman
President & CEO, VF Corporation
105 Corporate Center Blvd.
Greensboro, North Carolina 27408

Dear Business Leaders,

We are contacting you today about an urgent labor rights situation in Bangladesh. As you are aware, unrest in the garment industry has been growing steadily since June 2010. Discontent and protests escalated on July 30, 2010 when an announced wage increase for garment industry workers was significantly less than anticipated. The arrest of several workers and trade union leaders has brought this urgent issue to our attention. We wish to bring the severity of the situation to your attention and urge your company to use its influence as a major importer of clothing produced in Bangladesh to bring a just and peaceful solution to the situation.

The Bangladesh government responded to the unrest with hard rhetoric, calling labor leaders "provocateurs" and "saboteurs." In addition, many arrests were made and charges were filed against workers who participated in protests. In particular, we would like to call your attention to a pressing and noteworthy situation that is causing great alarm amongst many in Congress and throughout the U.S. Government. On August 13, 2010 Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS) leaders, Kalpona Akter and Babul Akhter were detained after warrants were issued for their arrests. As you know, BCWS is a very well respected and leading labor rights NGO based in Dhaka. We understand that two garment factory conglomerates in Bangladesh, the Nassa Group and the Envoy Group have played a major role in bringing about some of the false criminal charges that have resulted in the arrest of these BCWS leaders. The leaders of BCWS and their families have been subject to continual harassment from authorities and their employers for their alleged participation in labor rights organizing. Further, according to a recent report by the New York Times, international labor rights groups have reported that at

least one BCWS staff person was tortured in an effort to force him to give false evidence against himself and other BCWS leaders. We believe there is a fear for the physical safety of both the leaders of BCWS and their families and colleagues.

As a company with a significant purchasing operation in Bangladesh, we believe that your renewed commitment to upholding and honoring basic labor rights will bring stability and security to the garment industry and the nation as a whole. Specifically we request that you take the following steps:

- Make clear, in public, to your supply partners that the persecution of Bangladesh's labor rights advocates will adversely affect the industry and your future operations in Bangladesh.
- Suspend all current and future orders with the Nassa Group and the Envoy Group until the charges against the BCWS leaders have been rescinded.
- Contact the Bangladesh Government and express concern for the safety and well-being of labor leaders, urge the end of all persecution of labor leaders throughout the country and ask for the release of BCWS workers and the return of BCWS's NGO status.

It is crucial that the Bangladesh government understand that major American retailers will not be able to maintain the current level of business with Bangladesh unless the charges are dropped and persecution of labor leaders stops immediately. We hope that your company will speak out and play a serious role in reversing the ongoing injustices in the matter. We look forward to your timely response and to your demanding that the welfare and rights of workers and labor rights advocates be respected at all times.

Sincerely,



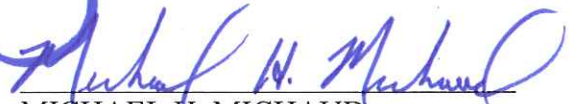
PHIL HARE
Member of Congress



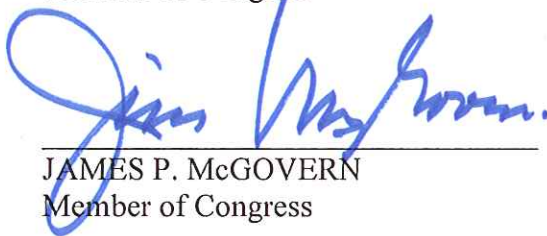
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Member of Congress



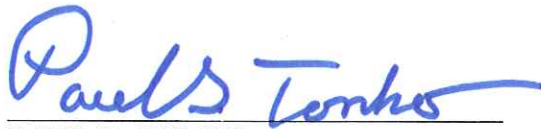
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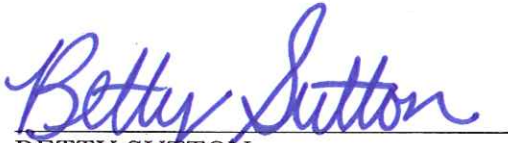
ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress



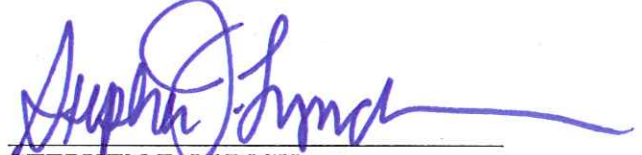
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS
Member of Congress



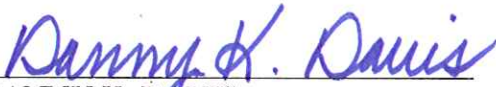
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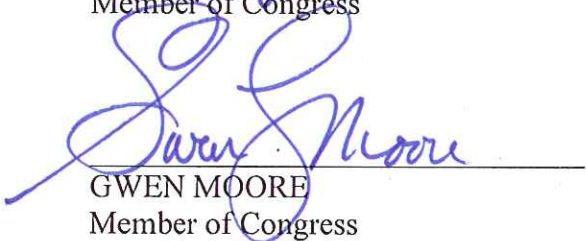
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Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress



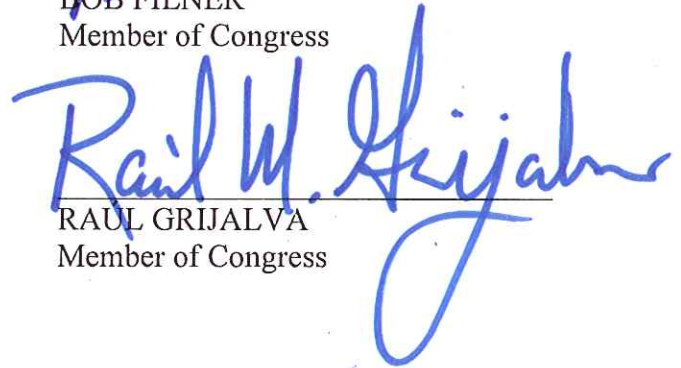
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Member of Congress



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