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[Letter to President from House of Representatives about Fast Track Proposal - October 21, 1997]
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**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.**

October 21, 1997

William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing with regard to your Fast Track proposal currently before Congress. We agree that trade is of the utmost importance to the future of our country, and that America's strong economy leaves the U.S. poised to lead the current global trade expansion into the 21st century. While we likewise concede that Fast Track authority may be helpful in this effort, we do not feel we can support the Fast Track language under consideration in Congress.

Our concern is that we do not believe we can allow our desire for expanded trade to subvert our values as a nation. Just as trade is vital to America's interests, we believe our country's leadership in advocating our principles and values in trade agreements is equally vital. As the sole superpower, we must continue to lead the free world's economic growth toward the realization of these shared principles and values.

One of these principles upon which the American experiment was founded, is the notion that human capital is equal to other types of capital such as intellectual property and financial investment. Our trade agreements must hold true to this conviction.

We must also ensure that nations with whom we trade uphold the fundamental value of the rule of law by, at a minimum, enforcing their own current laws. If Fast Track legislation does not require this, we endorse through silence, such un-American practices as child labor, sub-minimum wages and toxic waste dumping.

Spreading the benefits of economic growth is also fundamental to our way of life. America is the prime example of a society built by a strong middle class, having only four percent of the world's population, yet one quarter of the world's market. The growth of a middle class can be nurtured in the countries with whom we trade by encouraging them to embrace the approaches that have been successful in our democracy. We fear that if these approaches are not facilitated by our trade agreements, the result will be increased disparity between the incomes of the rich and the poor throughout the world.

We believe American principles and values must be included in American trade agreements, and we ask that you work with Congress to achieve trade agreements that meet this objective.

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