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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–4908

March 29, 2008

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Several decades ago, employees in England awoke to find they were working for foreign-owned corporations, the majority being from the United States. Today, American workers realize they are working for foreign owners, who have no reason to be loyal to the well being of our nation.

The British government believed it was not in their best interests to continue to allow the complete takeover of its entire industrial base. They knew England's national security was being threatened, and consequently, they formed a Competition Commission to begin to determine which, if any, of its remaining industries would be allowed to fall into foreign ownership and control. As we all understand, capitalism depends upon fair competition, and the British responded appropriately by creating a commission to re-establish its control of their future.

The highly topical issues of foreign ownership and fair competition apply to a great extent throughout the Western developed countries. These issues cover not only the long-term consequences of foreign ownership of domestic companies and assets generally, but also strategic investments in, and in many cases bailouts of, domestic businesses by sovereign states and State-owned funds. The other hotly debated and extremely controversial topics of competition from lowest cost and lowest pay countries also have a direct impact on our own domestic employment as well the health of our global climate.

There is no easy answer to the question whether it is desirable, or generally beneficial, to maintain an unconditionally free trade regime and free access to our domestic markets for goods and services, as well as unfettered ownership and/or control of our domestic companies, as is essentially the case currently, or whether our national interest may be better served by establishing some restrictions, and, if so, what they should be.

These timely and critical issues raise the question whether current trade and competition rules are sufficient to deal appropriately with national sovereignty and job security

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matters, or whether they should be reviewed – as I recommend here – to better maintain and balance our country's economic and environmental stability and social equality.

In my view, foreign states - and distant corporations - should not be allowed to control our economy, and they must not be permitted to determine or control the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we grow, the size and strength of our military, or the health of our environment and our people.

These are, indeed, complex matters, particularly against the backdrop of the current problems we see unfolding in the global banking and financial markets, and while they are beginning to be debated worldwide, it is time we act here at home to establish a bipartisan U.S. Competition Commission.

In the view of many, our nation's economic future is at a tipping-point, and it is in our best interests for the United States to form a Competition Commission to answer the questions: who should we allow to own United States assets and industries – or more simply - shall we own anything, make anything, or grow anything in America, and if so, what shall it be?

Mr. President, do you agree with me that local control and local ownership provides better stewardship of both our natural and human resources? After all, shouldn't citizens in Texas determine their own future, instead of far away foreign owners in Saudi Arabia, or Japan, or Communist China?

I look forward, sir, to hearing your response to this proposal and these critical questions, and to working together with you to establish the Competition Commission.

Let's work together to build a better and more secure future for all of us.

Sincerely,

Steve Kagen, M.D.
Member of Congress

CC: Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House

Honorable Barney Frank
Chairman House Banking Committee

Chairman John Dingell
Chairman House Energy & Commerce Committee