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One Hundred Twelfth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs

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September 9, 2011

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Chairman:

As the President stated so eloquently last night, we are confronted with an urgent need to create jobs for the millions of Americans who desperately are seeking work. The President set forth a series of proposals that will help our economy add new jobs – if the Congress acts boldly and quickly. For his part, Speaker Boehner called for bi-partisan action on employment policies and legislation.

As you know, the Foreign Affairs Committee has substantial jurisdiction over programs that can directly contribute to domestic employment. In particular our committee oversees export promotion programs operated by the International Trade Administration through the U.S. Commercial Service and by the Agriculture Department through the Foreign Agriculture Service. In addition, we have jurisdiction over the regulation of dual-use and munitions exports, which has a derivative employment impact. Moreover, our committee oversees the commercial diplomacy functions of the State Department that affects our competitiveness in world markets.

Our committee's jurisdiction over foreign assistance also has a domestic export-employment aspect, through USAID's development credit program, as well as through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

We can create jobs for American workers by strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. exports. Given the committee's broad jurisdiction over international commerce, we should support the effort that the President and Speaker Boehner have launched by immediately holding hearings on how to more effectively promote American exports and develop new markets abroad for goods Made in America. This is a top priority of mine which I am certain is shared by our colleagues on the committee. In this regard, I recommend that our committee examine, on an urgent basis, a range of legislative proposals within our committee's jurisdiction and act on those that we and our committee colleagues determine would be effective in job creation. Thank you for your consideration of my suggestion.

In the coming weeks I will be introducing two separate proposals designed to increase the export of American made goods and in turn create new jobs here at home at no additional cost to taxpayers. One would strengthen the overall coordination of our export promotion programs. The second would strengthen the promotion of American-made environmental technology products. I look forward to speaking with you further on the details of these proposals as I believe both could garner significant bipartisan support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Howard L. Berman".

HOWARD L. BERMAN  
Ranking Democratic Member