

United States Senate

June 20, 2018

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, HOUSING,
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
BUDGET
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write today to express my deep concern about the implementation of steel and aluminum tariffs recently imposed by the president under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

These tariffs already are disrupting and damaging numerous American businesses and will continue to have real world effects, including the possibility that many Americans could lose their jobs as businesses face increased costs.

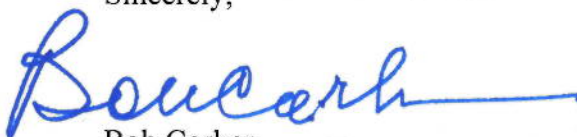
As you know, the Department of Commerce has established a process for U.S. businesses injured by these tariffs to request an exclusion. According to the interim rule published on March 19, an exclusion may be granted if you determine the steel or aluminum product for which the exclusion is requested is not produced in the United States in a sufficient or reasonably available amount or of a satisfactory quality. You may also grant an exclusion for "specific national security" considerations.

This exclusion process, while purporting to establish fair procedures, instead opens the door for the president, through his Commerce Secretary, to pick economic winners and losers. Not only has the administration abused the Section 232 authority delegated to it by Congress under the guise of national security, but now is in a position to grant exclusions to favored companies or withhold benefits from political opponents.

The Constitution clearly gives Congress the power to collect duties and regulate foreign commerce. By subverting Section 232 and seizing unilateral power to impose or reduce tariffs at will, the administration has upset the long-standing laws and traditions of our country and shifted the balance of power within our government.

In order to allay these concerns, I request further details regarding the process for granting exclusions and seek assurances that your department will make decisions free of political interference or persuasion.

Sincerely,



Bob Corker
United States Senator