

## Michaud Statement on USTR Appointment

Friday, December 19 2008

WASHINGTON, DC &ndash; Today, Congressman Mike Michaud, co-founder of the House Trade Working Group, issued the following statement after the announcement that President-elect Obama has selected Ron Kirk to be United States Trade Representative. "The 2008 election created an historic opportunity to reform our country's failed, damaging trade policies. The public expects the Obama administration and Congress to deliver on the change we promised. President-elect Obama campaigned to change the trade agreements and policies that have cost millions of American jobs, suppressed wages, crippled industries across our nation, and flooded America with unsafe imports. President-elect Obama's commitments to review existing trade agreements and to oppose more of the same failed trade policies, including Bush's Colombia Free Trade Agreement, was a welcome change in direction. It is critical that the next USTR deliver on the changes promised by President-elect Obama so that we can work together to move forward with a fair trade agenda."

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I am deeply concerned about the choice of Ron Kirk because his past trade policy positions do not reflect the views of most Americans. They also do not reflect the reform agenda that President Obama has pledged to an American public clamoring for a new direction on trade. An examination of his track record shows that Mr. Kirk has touted NAFTA as a success, called for its expansion and supported PNTR with China &ndash; policies that have facilitated the demise of many of our domestic manufacturers and accompanied the loss of four million U.S. manufacturing jobs. In contrast, Mr. Kirk's vocal opposition to Fast Track during his 2002 U.S. Senate race is in synch with Congress's views and President-elect Obama's commitment to replace that Nixon-era negotiating and approval system with one that provides Congress a greater role to ensure trade pacts benefit most Americans.

While some of Mr. Kirk's past trade positions do not reflect President-elect Obama's promise to the American public that our nation's approach to trade will be different than that of the current administration, the major shifts in Congress's composition and President-elect Obama's trade reform pledges set the context moving forward. With trade reform playing a historic role in the 2006 and 2008 congressional election, 71 Representatives and Senators who campaigned on major trade reform have replaced those who had supported NAFTA, China PNTR and other past failed policies.

Given his previous trade policy positions, considerable scrutiny will accompany high expectations that Mr. Kirk will deliver on President-elect Obama's commitments to promote a new American trade agenda that serves the needs of working families, both here and abroad.

The House Trade Working Group, co-founded by Michaud and Congresswoman Linda Sanchez (CA-39), advocates for fair trade policies in the House of Representatives.

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