



What They Are Saying

Bipartisan Opposition to USTR's WTO Retreat

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative [announced](#) that it would no longer be supporting key digital trade rules at the World Trade Organization in the ongoing e-commerce negotiations. The reversal in U.S. policy has been met with bipartisan congressional opposition.

Senators Mike Crapo (R-ID), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), John Cornyn (R-TX), Tim Scott (R-SC), Steve Daines (R-MT), Todd Young (R-IN), John Barrasso (R-WY), Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) ([here](#)):

“We have warned for years that either the United States would write the rules for digital trade or China would. **Now, the Biden Administration has decided to give China the pen.** . . . Ambassador Tai makes clear in her speeches and through her actions that foreign countries are free to discriminate against U.S. companies and workers as long as these countries and USTR can concoct an excuse. **Failing to stand up for America and against foreign discrimination—particularly from China—is contrary to the USTR mission.**”

Representatives Darin LaHood (R-IL), Suzan DelBene (D-WA), Adian Smith (R-NE), Terri Sewell (D-IL), Vern Buchanan (R-FL), Donald Beyer Jr. (D-VA), Mike Kelly (R-PA), Bradley Schneider (D-IL), David Schweikert (R-AZ), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Brad Wenstrup (R-OH), Gregory Meeks (D-NY), Jodey Arrington (R-TX), Ami Bera (D-CA), Drew Ferguson (R-GA), Gerald Connolly (D-VA), Ron Estes (R-KS), Luis Correa (D-CA), Llyod Smucker (R-PA), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), Carol Miller (R-WV), Jim Himes (D-CT), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH), Claudia Tenney (R-NY), Rick Larsen (D-WA), Michelle Fischbach (R-MN), Mike Quigley (D-IL), Blake Moore (R-UT), Scott Peters (D-CA), Michelle Steel (R-CA), Stacey Plaskett (D-VI), Beth Van Duyne (R-TX), Kim Schrier (D-WA), Randy Feenstra (R-IA), Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), Mike Carey (R-OH), Eric Swalwell (D-CA) ([here](#)):

“These provisions maintain broad support in the United States, and we are troubled that USTR has abandoned these positions without meaningful consultations with Congress and without putting forth any alternative approaches to advance the key objectives we outline above. **The void created by this decision will harm American workers, companies, security, and innovation, while benefiting our largest competitors in the digital space.**”

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) ([here](#)):

“USTR’s decision to walk away from the negotiating table in Geneva is a win for China, plain and simple[.] In addition to abandoning our democratic allies in these negotiations, USTR is leaving a vacuum that China—an active participant in these negotiations--will be more than pleased to fill. . . . **USTR’s action today is a win for the Chinese government’s efforts to have unlimited access to U.S. data,** a win for Chinese tech giants who want to bully smaller countries into following the Chinese model of internet censorship, and a win for China’s Great Firewall, which locks out American companies and locks Chinese citizens into a repressive regime of government surveillance.”



Senator Tom Carper (D-DE) ([here](#)):

“The U.S. must lead the world in establishing the rules of the road for digital trade. Unfortunately, **today’s decision by USTR sets us back from the standards outlined by USMCA when we need to be leading global competition and innovation.**”

Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) ([here](#)):

“Digital trade rules ensuring the free flow of information and protecting proprietary technology serve to strengthen the global competitiveness of the U.S. economy and provide valuable guarantees for U.S. businesses in every industry. That’s why I’m so disappointed to see USTR abandoning those priorities in our trade negotiations, despite years of broad bipartisan support and their inclusion in trade agreements negotiated by presidents of both parties. **Important domestic debates on regulating technology should not hold us back from continuing to work with our allies to develop guardrails for the global digital economy that reflect our shared values.** If we are not at the negotiating table, we are giving China a free pass to set the rules of the road for the future of the global economy.”

Senator Todd Young (R-IN) ([here](#)):

“I agree with my colleague @RonWyden - @USTRTradeRep decision to walk away from the @wto negotiating table on digital trade is a win for China. **This is unacceptable and goes against Congress’ explicit direction.** We must hold @USTRTradeRep accountable.”

Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) ([here](#)):

“The Biden Administration’s decision to walk away from longstanding bipartisan positions on digital trade undermines American leadership and competitiveness, surrenders the playing field to the Chinese Communist Party, and abandons our closest trading partners. **There is absolutely nothing in the Biden Administration’s decision that will benefit American workers.**”

Representatives Suzan DelBene (D-WA) and Darin LaHood (R-IL), Co-Chairs of the Digital Trade Caucus ([here](#)):

“**USTR’s decision to abandon important, longstanding, and bipartisan U.S. digital trade priorities at the WTO runs contrary to American interests.** Instead of promoting policies that Congress set in the bipartisan U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement that protect against the forced transfer of American technology, enable the free flow of information across borders, and defend American industries, small businesses, and workers against discrimination, USTR has unilaterally decided to walk away from these important rules without the consent of Congress.”



Representative Tom Emmer (R-MN) ([here](#)):

“The Biden administration has announced plans to surrender our digital trade leadership, **which would help the Chinese Communist Party while hurting American workers and businesses.**”

Representative Adrian Smith (R-NE) ([here](#)):

“The Biden administration’s decision to withdraw its digital trade proposal without offering an alternative at the WTO’s Joint Statement Initiative on E-commerce is another in a long list of USTR failures to consult Congress and demonstrate leadership on global trade. This abdication tees up China to step into a leadership vacuum at the expense of American innovators, businesses, and consumers. **At the current geopolitical crossroads, relinquishing digital trade opportunities and leaving our democratic allies high and dry is unacceptable.**”

Representative David Schweikert (R-AZ) ([here](#)):

“The Biden admin’s reckless decision to circumvent Congress and **capitulate to China on digital trade rules** surrenders America’s competitive advantage while harming U.S. workers and businesses.”

Representative Carol Miller (R-WV) ([here](#)):

“The Biden Admin is abandoning U.S. trade interests to the benefit of the CCP. **Digital trade is an important avenue to build global relationships and surrendering our leadership gives China the upper hand.** Our digital trade provisions must be reinstated.”

Representative John Joyce (R-PA) ([here](#)):

“Misguided policies that seek to increase government bureaucracy surrounding digital trade would only hurt small businesses and consumers. By pushing failed trade policies, **President Biden and the USTR are forfeiting a strategic advantage to the Chinese Communist Party.**”

Representative Michelle Steel (R-CA) ([here](#)):

“I am troubled by the Biden Administration’s abdication of leadership at the WTO with respect to digital trade. **The President needs to step up and safeguard the rights of Americans participating in international ecommerce.**”



New Democrat Coalition ([here](#)):

“The international flow of digital goods, services, and information has become increasingly vital to American workers and businesses of all sizes, including countless small businesses. **We must safeguard the success of the U.S. in the digital economy by ensuring that American companies and workers face a fair and level playing field when competing in foreign markets.** It is critical that the U.S. leads in shaping the rules that govern the digital economy.

Advance digital trade policies that will grow American industries, ensure workers are treated fairly, protect consumers’ privacy, and give small businesses the digital tools they need to succeed in the 21st century economy. **These include policies that protect against the forced transfer of American technology, enable the free flow of information across borders, defend American workers and businesses of all sizes against unfair discrimination,** and maintain the longstanding ban on tariffs on digital goods and services at the World Trade Organization (WTO).”