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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN
DEPUTY WHIP

October 23, 2009

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20508

Dear President Obama and U.S. Trade Representative Kirk,

We firmly believe that the goals and objectives of the U.S. Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) initiative established in 2003 will improve U.S. relations across the Middle East, further the spread of democracy, stimulate economic development, and help foster environments that are more equipped to combat terrorism. We implore you to use these goals as a framework for your own Middle East trade policy to foster greater free trade between the U.S. and this region of the world.

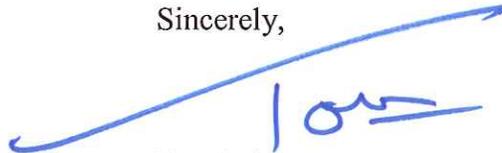
MEFTA was designed as a way to fight terrorism through free and fair trade. The six-step process to become part of MEFTA provides a framework for peaceful interaction with the Middle East and will help those nations increase economic stature and strength in the growing international market. Furthermore, free trade can be used as a tool to compel nations to abandon policies and practices that are antithetical to a free and democratic society. As emphasized by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission Report in 2004, MEFTA allows Muslim countries to "become full participants in the rules-based global trading system..." The Commission affirms MEFTA's goals in its recommendation that "A comprehensive U.S. strategy to counter terrorism should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and to enhance prospects for their children's future."

We understand labor violations, human rights concerns, and other issues are fundamental impediments to trade with many countries in the region. However, we also believe that cautiously increasing trade with countries that pledge to improve their status, and affirmatively and measurably address violations and concerns, will give impetus to other nations in the region to do the same.

President Obama, you have continuously stressed that the United States must seek a peaceful way to engage the nations of the Middle East, and argue that we must enter into

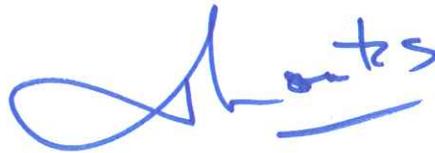
dialogue with nations to help persuade them to abandon their aggressive tactics when dealing with the United States. You recently stated in your remarks to the United Nations General Assembly that "...wealthy nations must open their markets to more goods and extend a hand to those with less..." You went further to say that, "Our goal is simple: a global economy in which growth is sustained, and opportunity is available to all." Free trade is a critical step in such a global economy. We look forward to working with you to continue our nation's history of advancing a free trade agenda and promoting liberty, growth, and opportunity around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Price", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Tom Price, M.D.

Republican Study Committee Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Price", with a large loop on the left and a horizontal flourish at the bottom.