

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Sends letter urging talks for U.S.-Taiwan trade agreement

Posted on Thursday, Oct 1, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON — Today, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (Wis.) joined 49 fellow senators, led by U.S. Sens. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) and Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho), in sending a letter urging U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to begin negotiating a comprehensive trade agreement with Taiwan.

The senators wrote: **“As we look to advance our initiative for a free and open Indo-Pacific, we believe that now is the time to establish trade agreements with like-minded countries in the region. Given their record as a longstanding economic partner and security ally, we highly encourage you to begin the formal process of negotiating a comprehensive trade agreement with Taiwan.”**

“We are confident that a U.S.-Taiwan trade agreement would promote security and economic growth for the United States, Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific as a whole,” The senators concluded. **“We urge the administration to prioritize a comprehensive trade agreement with Taiwan, and we look forward to working with you to secure this framework.”**

Senators joining in sending this letter included: Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), John Boozman (R-Ark.), Mike Braun (R-Ind.), Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.V.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Chris Coons (D-Del.), John Cornyn (R-Texas), Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Michael B. Enzi (R-Wyo.), Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), Cory Gardner (R-Colo.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), John Hoeven (R-N.D.), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss), Doug Jones (D-

Ala.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), John Kennedy (R-La.), James Lankford (R-Okla.), Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), Mike Lee (R-Utah), Joe Manchin D-(W.Va.), Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), Lisa Murkowski (R-Ala.), Rand Paul (R-Ky.), David Perdue (R-Ga.), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Mitt Romney (R-Utah), Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), Tim Scott (R-Fla.), Krysten Sinema (D-Ariz.), John Thune (R-S.D.), Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Todd Young (R-Ind.).

The full text of this letter can be viewed [here](#) and below.

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer,

As we look to advance our initiative for a free and open Indo-Pacific, we believe that now is the time to establish trade agreements with like-minded countries in the region. Given their record as a longstanding economic partner and security ally, we highly encourage you to begin the formal process of negotiating a comprehensive trade agreement with Taiwan.

As our 11th largest trading partner, with \$76 billion in total goods exchanged during 2018 and \$18.5 billion of trade in services, Taiwan has demonstrated their capacity to hold a strong economic partnership with the United States. Along with a robust trading profile of goods and services, Taiwan supports an estimated 208,000 American jobs – a number that will only increase with a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement.

In addition to supplementing U.S. goods and services, Taiwan is a reliable partner in many of our industries. This is not only critical for diversifying our supply chains, but essential to reducing our reliance on other countries such as China who seek to leverage supply chain inefficiencies in their path to regional and global dominance. This diversification of our supply chain is critical to our national security.

While there are challenges to establishing an agreement with Taiwan, such as reaching an agreement on agricultural standards, we are confident that progress can be made. Taiwan has already taken steps to further these conversations by announcing their intent to lift their restrictions on U.S. pork and beef products. Once implemented, this change will greatly increase accessibility for our farmers and ranchers to do business in Taiwan, and in light of this important development, we should now substantively move forward on negotiations for a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement with Taiwan.

A free and open Indo-Pacific is a goal that we need to actively work towards by countering China's use of unfair trading practices and other policies to advance its economic dominance in the region. An agreement with Taiwan would help us accomplish this goal by building a network of like-minded governments dedicated to fair competition and open markets free from government manipulation and would serve as a signal to other nations that Taiwan is a viable partner that is open for business.

We are confident that a U.S.-Taiwan trade agreement would promote security and economic growth for the United States, Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific as a whole. We urge the administration to prioritize a comprehensive trade agreement with Taiwan, and we look forward to working with you to secure this framework.