

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216

(202) 225-6906
judiciary.house.gov

October 28, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Please learn this aspect of our constitutional order: only Congress can pass taxes and tariffs. Your job is to “Take care” to enforce the ones we pass and not make up your own. We in Congress have the power to regulate commerce at home and with other nations. You do not. Your tariffs, struck down by the Roberts Court, not only broke the law with your lawless war in Iran, they dramatically drove up the price of gas, diesel, groceries, and goods, and ruined lots of small businesses and family farms.

But I write you now because, in the midst of all these terrible and lawless policies, you took care to cut lots of sweetheart deals with corporations and industries that won carve-outs from your tariffs when you saw you could get something good in return. Brazilian beef tongues, Chinese smartphones, and Belgian blood diamonds all got sweetheart exemptions from your latest raft of tariffs. While tariffs are supposed to be a toll to combat unfair trade practices, in your hands they have become yet another tool for gift and self-enrichment.

From the outset of your second term, you have made clear that you view tariffs as a bludgeon to wield indiscriminately against America’s friends and foes alike. Declaring tariffs the “most beautiful word to me in the dictionary,”¹ you have publicly threatened to impose tariffs on countries for a host of ill-defined and inane reasons, including, “flooding” American markets with “bathroom vanities,”² failing to prevent wildfire smoke from blowing across the Canadian border,³ and refusing to support the nonconsensual sale of Greenland to the United States.⁴

¹ Rachel Treisman, *Word of the Week: Trump Calls Tariffs ‘The Most Beautiful Word.’ Here’s Its History*, NPR (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://www.knpr.org/npr/2025-04-09/word-of-the-week-trump-calls-tariffs-the-most-beautiful-word-heres-its-history>.

² Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (Sept. 25, 2025, at 7:10 p.m. ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115267459188661048>.

³ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (July 17, 2026, at 3:24 p.m. ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/116936952365066409>.

⁴ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (Jan. 17, 2026, at 11:19 a.m. ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115915851439933172>.

Your Administration initially relied on the International Economic Emergency Powers Act to impose tariffs on literally every country in the world—and to begin selling off exemptions.⁵ But even your handpicked Supreme Court Justices refused to countenance your blatantly unlawful power grab over foreign trade, an obstacle which we know has caused you some heartburn and regret.⁶ The Court struck down the tariffs and ordered your Administration to return the \$166 billion you illegally collected from American importers—though American consumers who paid the cost of these tariffs never got their money back.⁷ Undeterred, just hours after the decision, you claimed the Court’s decision actually made you “more powerful,” and vowed to levy tariffs under a different law.⁸ Just two weeks later, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) dutifully initiated 60 investigations purportedly relating to “goods produced with forced labor,”⁹ then quickly proposed and finalized a rule that imposed blanket tariffs on “all products” from more than 70 countries.¹⁰

One could be forgiven for doubting the sincerity of your Administration’s sudden concern for the victims of forced labor. After all, you have praised President Xi Jinping for forcibly enslaving China’s Uyghur population, calling the construction of concentration camps “exactly the right thing to do.”¹¹ Last year, one of your first acts as President was to lift sanctions imposed in 2022 on Dominican sugar producer Central Romana over their forced labor problem—despite evidence that the company’s workers still face abusive conditions, poverty wages, excessive overtime, intimidation, and threats.¹² The sanctions relief is particularly suspicious given Central Romana owner José Francisco “Pepe” Fanjul hosted a lavish \$50 million fundraiser for your 2024 presidential campaign and later donated untold millions to your White House gilded ballroom boondoggle.¹³ Your and Pepe’s mutual backscratching foreshadowed your Administration’s approach to economic policy, namely, that a “Trump Tariff Discount” is available to your political benefactors and sycophants when the price is right.

⁵ See, e.g. Marc Caputo, *How to Lobby Trump with Swiss Precision: Gifts, Gold and Gab*, AXIOS (Nov. 14, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/11/14/trump-swiss-gifts-gold-rolax>.

⁶ *Learning Resources v. Trump*, 607 U.S. ____ (2026), Docket No. 24-1287 (Feb. 20, 2026).

⁷ Tony Romm & Ana Swanson, *Trump Administration Takes Steps to Refund \$166 Billion in Tariffs*, N.Y. TIMES (updated Apr. 21, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/20/us/politics/trump-administration-tariff-refunds.html>.

⁸ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (Feb. 20, 2026, at 1:37 p.m. ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/116104407604484915>.

⁹ Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, *Notice of Determinations and Request for Comments Concerning Actions in Section 301 Investigations of Acts, Policies, and Practices of Various Economies Related to the Failure to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor*, 91 Fed. Reg. 34272 (June 5, 2026), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-06-05/pdf/2026-11296.pdf>.

¹⁰ Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, *Notice of Actions in Section 301 Investigations of Acts, Policies, and Practices of Various Economies Related to the Failure of Each Economy to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor*, 91 Fed. Reg. 47318 (July 28, 2026), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-07-28/pdf/2026-15181.pdf>.

¹¹ David Choi & Sonam Sheth, *Trump Told China’s President That Building Concentration Camps for Millions of Uighur Muslims Was ‘Exactly the Right Thing to Do,’ Former Adviser Says*, BUSINESS INSIDER (June 17, 2020), <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-china-detention-camp-xinjiang-2020-6>.

¹² Ana Swanson, *Sugar Importer with Trump Ties Said to Maintain Abusive Labor Practices*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 18, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/18/business/economy/trump-central-romana-sugar-forced-labor.html>.

¹³ Liz Landers & Joshua Barajas, *Who’s Paying for Trump’s \$300 Million Ballroom?*, PBS NEWS (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/whos-paying-for-trumps-300-million-ballroom>.

Consistent with your nakedly self-interested and transactional approach to government sanctions, the USTR's final rule contains conspicuous—and suspicious—carve-outs for a few industries. Ostensibly, those exemptions were reserved for cases when tariffs would make critical minerals unavailable or fail to contribute to the reduction of forced labor.¹⁴ In practice, many of the exemptions make little to no sense under the USTR's own criteria. They do, however, make sense when factoring in the now world famous Trump Tariff Discount. To highlight just a few representative cases:

Brazilian Meat. The USTR final rule includes exemptions for nearly 40 different categories of beef and bovine products. American cattle producers strongly objected to the blanket beef exemption, particularly from Brazil, highlighting the well-documented use of forced labor in the Brazilian cattle sector.¹⁵ In its final rule, the USTR acknowledged those concerns but made little effort to address them, simply stating it made the exemption “in accordance with the specific direction of the President.”¹⁶ It did not take long for your motives to become clear.

On August 20, 2026, you held a closed-door Oval Office meeting with Brazilian billionaire Joesley Batista, the co-owner of the world's largest meatpacking company, JBS S.A.¹⁷ Mr. Batista was in a bind after the European Union banned Brazilian beef imports over serious food safety concerns, leaving JBS with a large back stock of substandard beef in search of a buyer.¹⁸ Fortunately, Mr. Batista—who has already spent time in prison for bribing Brazilian politicians—had prepaid for the chance to get his very own Trump Tariff Discount.¹⁹ Coincidentally, JBS's U.S. subsidiary, Pilgrim's Pride, made a \$5 million donation to your 2024 inaugural fund, the largest donation of any single company! The day after the meeting, you announced that the U.S. would allow Brazilian beef imports to be sold at 25% below market prices.²⁰ Experts agree that this additional 660 million pounds of discount mystery meat is

¹⁴ Administration of Donald J. Trump, *Memorandum on Actions by the United States in the Investigations Under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 of the Acts, Policies, and Practices of 60 Economies Related to the Failure of Each Economy to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor*, 2026 Daily Comp. Pres. Doc. 488 (July 23, 2026), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD-202600488/pdf/DCPD-202600488.pdf>.

¹⁵ Justin Tupper, *Written Testimony for Public Hearing Concerning Actions in Section 301 Investigations of Acts, Policies, and Practices of Various Economies Related to the Failure to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor*, U.S. CATTLEMEN'S ASS'N (July 6, 2026), <https://comments.ustr.gov/s/commentdetails?rid=7XH676FBJX>.

¹⁶ 91 Fed. Reg. 47318, 47331.

¹⁷ Mary Whitfill Roeloffs, *Trump Confirms Tariff-Free Beef Is Coming from Brazil and Argentina Amid Quality Controversies*, FORBES (Sept. 5, 2026), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryroeloffs/2026/09/05/trump-confirms-tariff-free-beef-is-coming-from-brazil-and-argentina-amid-quality-controversies/>.

¹⁸ *EU to Suspend Brazilian Meat Imports from September 3, Citing Antimicrobial Rules*, REUTERS (Sept. 1, 2026), <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-suspend-brazilian-meat-imports-september-3-citing-antimicrobial-rules-2026-09-01>.

¹⁹ Patrick Thomas, et al., *How a Brazilian Billionaire Helped Shape Trump's Beef Import Plan*, WALL ST. J. (Aug. 31, 2026), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/how-a-brazilian-billionaire-helped-shape-trumps-beef-import-plan-9f969669>.

²⁰ *Id.*

unlikely to meaningfully reduce ground beef prices for U.S. consumers.²¹ It will, however, serve to further “crush” the market for American ranchers struggling with rising fuel and feed costs associated with your disastrous military and economic policies.²²

Diamonds. The USTR final rule includes exemptions for “nonindustrial diamonds”—otherwise known as diamond jewelry—imported from the European Union. The exemption is laughably indefensible under the USTR’s proposed criteria. The U.S. is currently producing lab-grown diamonds that are actively outcompeting the “natural” varieties.²³ The U.S. government also identifies diamonds as a good produced with forced or child labor.²⁴ Reducing demand for natural diamonds would thus almost assuredly contribute to the reduction of forced labor.

Naturally, the reason for the exemption appears to be that money—or to be more specific, sparkling luxury diamonds—changed hands. In June 2026, Belgium’s Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC), which handles most of the world’s diamonds, presented you with an “exclusive ring featuring 321 natural diamonds.”²⁵ AWDC’s press release explicitly tied this gift to U.S. trade policy, stating that this “masterpiece symbolizes [the] historic trade relationship with the United States.”²⁶ That “present” is blatantly unconstitutional under Article I, Section 9, and may indeed be criminal bribery. For your part, you sent a video thanking the Antwerp diamond sector for this beautiful unlawful present, and one month later, exempted their diamonds from tariffs altogether.²⁷ A diamond is truly the President’s best friend!

Smartphones. The USTR final rule includes an exemption for smartphones imported from China. Although abusive working conditions are a hallmark of smartphone manufacturing, including the Apple iPhone,²⁸ the USTR failed to explain its rationale for eliminating a tariff

²¹ Annie Gowen, *Ranchers’ Loyalty to Trump Wavers As Some Bristle Over Beef Imports*, WASH. POST (Sept. 12, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2026/09/12/ranchers-loyalty-trump-wavers-some-bristle-over-beef-imports/>.

²² *Id.*

²³ Jennifer Sor, *The Diamond Market Has Been Upended by the Lab-grown Craze. Some Fear It May Never Recover.*, BUSINESS INSIDER (July 4, 2026), <https://www.businessinsider.com/diamond-market-prices-record-low-lab-grown-stones-marquise-cut-2026-7>.

²⁴ *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS, https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods-print?items_per_page=10&combine=diamonds (last visited Oct. 14, 2026).

²⁵ Press Release, *Antwerp Diamond Sector Presents Exclusive Ring Featuring 321 Natural Diamonds to the United States in Honour of 250 Years of Independence*, ANTWERP WORLD DIAMOND CENTRE (June 29, 2026), <https://www.awdc.be/news/press/antwerp-diamond-sector-presents-exclusive-ring-featuring-321-natural-diamonds-united>.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Lily Becker & David Rohde, *Democrats Want Answers About 18-Karat Gold Ring Given to Trump*, MS NOW (Aug. 11, 2026), <https://www.ms.now/news/trump-diamond-ring-antwerp-belgium-tariffs>; Ana Swanson & Jeanna Smialek, *How Diamonds, Paprika and Fertilizer Won Relief from Trump’s Tariffs*, N.Y. TIMES (July 30, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/30/business/economy/trump-tariffs-exemptions.html>.

²⁸ See, e.g., Li Qiang, *Tim Cook’s Dark Legacy in China*, THE DIPLOMAT, (Aug. 29, 2026), <https://thediplomat.com/2026/08/tim-cooks-dark-legacy-in-china/>; Reed Albergotti, *Apple’s Longtime Supplier Accused of Using Forced Labor in China*, WASH. POST (Dec. 29, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/12/29/lens-technology-apple-uighur/>.

ostensibly targeted at ending forced labor. The rationale, of course, is simply the willingness to pay tribute for receipt of the Trump Tariff Discount.

Former Apple CEO Tim Cook spent the better part of two years currying your personal favor. Although Apple's aggressive groveling, bowing, and scraping are too profuse to detail in full here, the major lowlights include: (1) Mr. Cook donating \$1 million to your inaugural committee;²⁹ (2) Mr. Cook presenting you with a custom 24-karat gold plaque in the Oval Office;³⁰ (3) Apple donating \$25 million to your ballroom—tied for the largest donation of any individual or company;³¹ and (4) Apple assisting you in your desperate attempt to distract the public by changing the name of Lake Ontario on Apple Maps to “Lake America.”³² Indeed, Mr. Cook's eagerness to placate you was so craven and obsequious that it received your mocking praise. In April 2026, you bragged about the various times that Mr. Cook came calling to “kiss my ass” in exchange for “BIG HELPS.”³³ The Truth Social tribute leaves painfully little to the imagination about how exactly Apple secured an exemption for its products.

The exemptions above only scratch the surface of your profound corruption. A close inspection of the USTR's final rule reveals a host of other exemptions that benefit your billionaire friends, including exemptions for “fancy” reptile leather, 200-year-old mosaics, and rare postage collectibles.³⁴ The final rule also includes special carve-outs to protect “AI data centers,” which you and your sons are reportedly heavily invested in.³⁵ Critically, while you have protected your personal investments and crocodile skin connoisseurs from the giant bite of your tariffs, the American people are suffering. Independent analysts expect that your latest round of tariffs will cost an average of \$820 per U.S. household this year.³⁶ That is \$820 on top of the \$847 a year that American households are already paying in additional gasoline costs—and the hundreds more they will be paying in heating costs this winter—due to your ongoing, self-inflicted humiliation in the Strait of Hormuz.³⁷

²⁹ Mike Allen, *Scoop: Apple CEO Tim Cook Donates \$1 Million to Trump Inauguration*, AXIOS (Jan. 3, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/01/03/tim-cook-apple-donate-1-million-trump-inauguration>.

³⁰ Kinsey Crowley, *Tim Cook Appeals to Trump's Love of Gold with a 24-Karat Base for Apple Plaque*, USA TODAY (Aug. 7, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/08/07/tim-cook-trump-gift/85555805007/>.

³¹ Jonathan O'Connell, et al., *Secret Documents Reveal Donors Behind \$330 Million for Trump's Ballroom*, WASH. POST (Oct. 15, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2026/10/15/secret-documents-reveal-donors-behind-330-million-trumps-ballroom/>.

³² David Shepardson & Stephen Nellis, *Apple Maps Changes Name of Lake Ontario to 'Lake America'*, REUTERS (Sept. 1, 2026), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/apple-maps-changes-name-lake-ontario-lake-america-2026-09-01/>.

³³ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), TRUTH SOCIAL (Apr. 21, 2026, at 6:42 a.m. ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/116442276577696798>.

³⁴ 91 Fed. Reg., 47332, 47334.

³⁵ Cat Zakrzewski & Shira Ovide, *Trump and Sons Invest Heavily in AI Economy As He Resists Calls for Slowdown*, WASH. POST (Sept. 20, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/09/20/trump-family-large-ai-related-investments-create-possible-conflicts/>.

³⁶ Erica York & Alex Durante, *Tracking the Impact of the Trump Tariffs & Trade War*, TAX FOUNDATION (Sept. 10, 2026), <https://taxfoundation.org/research/federal-tax/trump-tariffs-trade-war/>.

³⁷ Urooba Jamal, *Iran War Has Cost the US \$38bn: How Will It Impact US Economy, Politics?*, AL JAZEERA (Sept. 16, 2026), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/9/16/iran-war-has-cost-the-us-38bn-how-is-it-impacting-us->

These chaotic and abusive tariffs, like the ones before them, hurt the American people. As the Trump Tariff Discounts plainly reveal, your arbitrary flexing of your tariff authority was never about delivering wins for American businesses and consumers. It was about handing you levers of power that you could maliciously pull to extract exciting concessions for yourself.

Accordingly, pursuant to the House Judiciary Committee's jurisdiction over corruption, conflicts of interest, and effective enforcement of criminal and civil laws, I ask that you please provide the following documents no later than 5:00 P.M. on November 11, 2026:

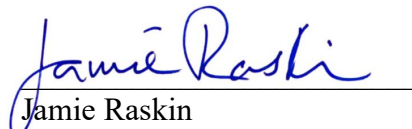
1. All communications between the White House, including the President and White House staff, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) concerning or relating to any exemption, exclusion, exception, modification, suspension, reduction, waiver, or other form of tariff relief ("Tariff Relief") for beef; diamonds; smartphones; paprika; lithium hexafluorophosphate; avocados; semiconductor manufacturing equipment; art, antiques, and collectibles; sugar and sugar-containing products; ammonia; vanadium oxides and hydroxides; gold and gold products; silver and silver products; or animal hides, skins, leather, and leather products.
2. All communications between the White House or USTR and private-sector representatives concerning or relating to requests for, advocacy concerning, or discussions of Tariff Relief for any of the foregoing products or industries, including communications with companies, executives, trade associations, lobbyists, attorneys, or other representatives. This request includes, but is not limited to, communications involving Tim Cook or Apple; Pepe Fanjul or Central Romana; Jean-Frédéric Dufour or Rolex; Joesley Batista or JBS; the Antwerp World Diamond Centre; and any person or entity advocating for Tariff Relief benefiting the specified products or industries.
3. All records reflecting meetings, calls, visits, or other contacts between the President, White House personnel, USTR personnel, or other Executive Office of the President officials and representatives of the foregoing industries or entities concerning or relating to Tariff Relief, including visitor logs, call logs, telephone records, calendars, appointment records, meeting records, access logs, and scheduling records. This request includes contacts with the individuals and entities identified above, as well as their lobbyists, attorneys, consultants, trade associations, and other representatives.
4. All records concerning gifts, donations, contributions, pledges, or other financial support involving any individual or entity seeking, advocating for, or discussing Tariff Relief for the specified products or industries, including records concerning contributions to President Trump's presidential campaign or election efforts,

inaugural activities, the proposed White House ballroom project, or other political, nonprofit, or White House-related causes or projects. This request includes internal memoranda, spreadsheets, trackers, emails, notes, or other records reflecting whether or how such gifts, contributions, or financial relationships were considered in connection with requests for Tariff Relief.

The applicable period for the foregoing requests is January 20, 2025, to the present. Please preserve all communications related to this request.³⁸

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Very truly yours,


Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman

³⁸ Specifically, we ask that you, your staff, and any agents or advisors acting on your behalf, preserve all communications related to exemptions from the Harmonized Tariff Schedule, including, but not limited to, any communications occurring over encrypted messaging apps, such as Signal, Telegram, WhatsApp, or X.