

the USTR are calling for a full 30-day investigation of facts raised in that meeting. I urge the USTR to heed the advice of other agency officials calling for a full investigation.

As Appropriators and as Representatives in the people's House, we face enormous pressure to cut the federal budget. Republicans and Democrats have to give a little to get our deficit under control and balance our budget. This bill does not fulfill all of Long Island's coastal and environmental needs, but it is a good bill and I hope that as we go to Conference my colleagues will keep these priorities in mind.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MILITARY
RETIREE HEALTH CARE TASK
FORCE ACT

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to introduce the Military Retiree Health Care Task Force Act of 1998. This legislation will establish a Task Force that will look into all of the health care promises and representations made to members of the Uniformed Services by Department of Defense personnel and Department literature. The Task Force will submit a comprehensive report to Congress which will contain a detailed statement of its findings and conclusions. This report will include legislative remedies to correct the great injustices that have occurred to those men and women who served their country in good faith.

Let us not forget why we are blessed with freedom and democracy in this country. The sacrifices made by those who served in the military are something that must never be overlooked. Promises were made to those who served in the Uniformed Services. They were told that their health care would be taken care of for life if they served a minimum of twenty years of active federal service.

Well, those military retirees served their time and expected the government to hold up its end of the bargain. They are now realizing that these were nothing more than empty promises.

Those who served in the military did not let their country down in its time of need and we should not let military retirees down in theirs. It's time military retirees get what was promised to them and that's why I am introducing this legislation.

PRAYER FOR ROBERT JOHNSON

HON. JAMES H. MALONEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues in the House of Representatives a most unfortunate accident that occurred two weeks ago and severely injured a young man in my Connecticut congressional district. Robert Johnson, a bright, energetic and very talented young man from Oxford, Connecticut was thrown from a pick-up truck as it struck

an abandoned car that was left on the road in the darkness of night. Head injuries led to a coma that continues today.

We are all too familiar with accidents such as this that inflict injury upon the innocent, and the tremendous upheaval that results in the lives of not only those injured, but of course the families and friends of those injured, as well. We pray for the speedy recovery of Robert Johnson and that the strain of this accident be lifted from his family and friends.

As terrible as this situation is, it has also come to underscore the importance of the Family and Medical Leave Act, passed by the 103rd Congress and signed into law by President Clinton. Because of this law, Robert Johnson's immediate family are free to take unpaid leave from their jobs in order to comfort their son without the threat of losing their employment. We pass laws here with the hope they will work as we intend. The Johnson tragedy has brought home just how important the Family and Medical Leave Act is for American families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that every concerned individual keep Robert Johnson in their prayers.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDI-
CIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4276) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Chairman, I am inserting into the RECORD letters of support for the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276, an amendment to deny funds for federal preemption of state and local laws on the grounds that they are inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements. These letters reflect the widely held conviction in meaningful, democratic government and the laws it can produce.

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS,
STEPHEN WISE CONGRESS HOUSE,
New York, NY, July 27, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS J. KUCINICH,
*United States House of Representatives, Wash-
ington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH: On behalf of the American Jewish Congress, I am writing to express our strong support for the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill, which would protect the rights of various cities to sanction Swiss banks that continue to delay settlement of claims by Holocaust survivors.

The actions of the Swiss banks and government in dealing with Holocaust assets have been unconscionable, and if local authorities want to respond in ways they deem appropriate, they should be given the opportunity to do so. If the World Trade Organization were to rule against such sanctions by American cities, the fact that the United States

government would be obligated to litigate against the cities invoking the sanctions merely adds insult to injury.

Under the United States Constitution, states and cities have rights that cannot be abridged by the federal government, and this includes the right to punish Swiss banks as long as those banks remain recalcitrant in making appropriate restitution. Your amendment denying taxpayer funds for litigation against American cities is clearly necessary to protect the rights of cities to impose such sanctions.

Thank you for your leadership in proposing this amendment.

Sincerely,

PHIL BAUM,
Executive Director.

ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY,
Lincoln, MA, July 21, 1998.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH: The Alliance for Democracy voices its strong support for the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill which prevents U.S. government agencies from taking legal action against states or communities found by the WTO to be in non-compliance with international trade and investment agreements.

We support this amendment because it helps to preserve the right of communities and states to take a stand in support of democracy and human rights. We do not believe taxpayers dollars should be used to emasculate our democracy at the local or state level or to prevent citizens from taking a stand in support of democracy abroad.

Sincerely,

RUTH CAPLAN.

THE AMERICAN CAUSE.

Re: Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to HR 4276
To: Members of Congress

From: Pat Buchanan and Bay Buchanan
We strongly support Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276.

The amendment provides critical protection for state and local sovereignty from decisions made by the World Trade Organization. Dozens of categories of law passed or being considered by the legislatures of every state and many cities in the nation are vulnerable to being deemed "WTO-illegal." Those laws include "buy local" requirements in state procurement, and health and safety inspections of imported foods. State and local legislatures are permitted by the Constitution to make policy on these matters. Why should we allow the WTO to trump them?

Passing the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276 will protect state and local sovereignty. We hope that you will support it.

August 3, 1998.

Dear Representative, American Lands representing grassroots environmental groups across the country urges you to support of the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276, the Commerce, State and Justice Appropriations bill.

Kucinich-Sanders would bar the use of federal funds to challenge state and local laws on the grounds that the laws violate international trade and investment agreements such as NAFTA, GATT and the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

One of industry's interests in global trade agreements is to prevent governments at the national, state, and local levels from putting conditions on trade. But what the industry

calls "barriers to trade" we may see as important safeguards to protect the environment, human rights, or other social values.

A New York City Council proposal to require the city to buy only sustainable produced tropical timber has been stalled after the timber industry argued that such selective purchasing legislation is a violation of US trade policy. State restrictions on log exports are another example of laws that might be subject to challenge.

The Kucinich-Sanders amendment would ensure that U.S. tax dollars are not used to undermine legitimate efforts by states and localities to protect the environment.

Please support the Kucinich-Sanders amendment to H.R. 4276.

B'NAI B'RITH,
July 23, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS J. KUCINICH,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: As the Executive Vice President of B'nai B'rith, which is one of the founding members of the World Jewish Restitution Organization, I was pleased to learn that you and a number of your colleagues, including Congressman Sanders, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, Congressman DeFazio and Congressman Stearns have offered an Amendment to H.R. 4276.

I am writing to support your proposed amendment that would protect sanctions laws that are currently under consideration in a number of jurisdictions around the United States. Without such an amendment, I am concerned that these legislative initiatives will be placed in jeopardy should the World Trade Organization consider them illegal.

Thank you for your interest in this important matter.

Sincerely,

SIDNEY M. CLEARFIELD.

CITIZENS FOR PARTICIPATION
IN POLITICAL ACTION,
July 21, 1998.

Representative DENNIS KUCINICH,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH: We at Citizens for Participation in Political Action (CPPAX), a Massachusetts statewide 4,000 member citizens lobby, would like to offer our support in favor of the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations bill.

Dedicated to state sovereignty and local democracy, CPPAX played a pivotal role in the passage of the Massachusetts Burma Selective Purchasing Law in 1996 and continues to support laws in defense of democracy and human rights in Nigeria, East Timor and Tibet. We firmly believe in selective purchasing laws as a means to uphold the rights of citizens to decide how and where to spend their tax-dollars. Accordingly, we strongly support your effort to defend these laws from legal challenges that arise from their inconsistencies with the World Trade Organization's International trade and investment agreements.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. Please keep us updated as to actions that we may take to continue to support your efforts on this cause.

Sincerely,

Laurie Wainberg,
Organizing and Policy Director.
Andleeb Dawood,
Intern at CPPAX.

CITIZENS' ALLIANCE OF SANTA BARBARA,
Santa Barbara, CA, August 4, 1998.

Representative LOIS CAPPS,

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CAPPS: We are writing to urge you to support the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill.

The Citizens' Alliance of Santa Barbara (the Santa Barbara Chapter of the Alliance for Democracy), has been concerned for some time about the effects of "Free Trade" and investment deregulation agreements on our democracy and on the economic future of our communities, our businesses and our families. At our meeting this weekend, we voted unanimously to ask your support for the Kucinich, et al. amendment. We understand that this amendment would deny funds for federal legal challenges to state or local laws that the World Trade Organization decides violate international trade or investment agreements, thus preventing the administration from taking states or communities to court to enforce WTO rulings unless Congress consents. We feel that this would provide a very important safeguard for shielding local democracy from the rule of international institutions that are undemocratic and unaccountable to the American public. A recent quote in the Journal of Commerce offers an excellent perspective on the issues involved: "Trade and investment should not short-circuit democracy. And if it does, something's wrong."

We hope that you will support the Kucinich, et al. amendment and protect the right of states and communities to retain some democratic control over our own economic affairs.

Sincerely,

RON ROWE,

Chair, Citizens' Alliance of Santa Barbara.

Joining me in this letter are the following concerned Santa Barbara residents: Ellis Englesberg; Dr. Frank Gordon; Dan Hankey; Ann Kobsa; Tonia Jauch; Ann Marshall; Maureen Parker; and Steve Shafarman.

CITIZENS TRADE CAMPAIGN,
Washington, DC, July 27, 1998.

Vote Yes on Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-Stearns Amendment to Commerce, Justice, State Approps

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Citizens Trade Campaign urges you to support the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-Stearns Amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill.

Citizens Trade Campaign (CTC) is the national coalition of labor, consumer, environmental, religious, family farm, and other U.S. citizens groups fighting for fair trade. CTC has local chapters in 30 U.S. States.

This amendment stops the use of taxpayer money to impose on states and localities the threats and rulings of international trade and investment tribunals, such as those of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The State Department has become a frequent voice in state legislators trying to influence local elected officials to pass WTO-consistent laws and not to laws the Administration claims may conflict with World Trade Organization dictates. It's unacceptable for our tax dollars to be spent to pressure Maryland legislators not to pass laws concerning Nigeria's dictatorship or to pressure Massachusetts to weaken a law castigating the Burmese dictatorship.

The evidence builds monthly of how international trade and investment agreements are resulting in challenges and threats against our democratically-passed laws.

The Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-Stearns amendment ensures that U.S. tax dollars are not used to assist these unaccountable international bureaucracies attack U.S. democracy.

The insistence of international trade and investment tribunals that U.S. federal, state and local laws must be conformed to their orders is the strongest argument that the international bodies, not U.S. laws, that must be changed. So far the executive branch refuses to take accountability for this threat to our sovereignty and instead works to help impose the pacts' undemocratic dictates. This must stop.

This amendment would end the use of federal tax dollars to impose the ruling and threats of anti-democratic international tribunals.

Please vote in favor of the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-Stearns amendment.

CO-OP AMERICA

To: Members of Congress

From: Co-op America

Date: July 23, 1998

Co-op America, a national nonprofit consumer organization working for social and environmental justice, represents 55,000 individual members and 2,000 business members nationwide.

On behalf of the members and staff of Co-op America, I am writing to express our strong support for the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill (HR 4276) that would deprive the Administration of funds to bring legal challenges to any state and local laws that the WTO finds inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH ELLIOTT MCGEVERAN,
Managing Director.

FREE BURMA COALITION,
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-
MILWAUKEE,

Milwaukee WI, July 21, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS KUCINICH,
U.S. House of Representatives, VIA FAX

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH: I write to thank you for the tri-partisan Kucinich-Sanders-Stearns-Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce/State/Justice Appropriations Bill. The amendment would deprive the Administration of funds needed to bring legal challenges against any state or local laws that the World Trade Organization finds inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements.

This amendment is necessary, because multinational corporations have begun an organized and serious assault on human rights, by opposing local selective purchasing laws designed to protect taxpayers from supporting corrupt and violent governments abroad.

During apartheid's reign in South Africa, a student-led and inspired movement swept across America, through the enactment of local "selective purchasing" laws, which prohibited individual localities from doing business with South Africa. This strategy brought about a federal statute prohibiting American companies from doing business with South Africa, international sanctions against South Africa, and eventually led to the downfall of apartheid.

The strategy is being used again by activists concerned about human rights, environmental, workplace, and other serious abuses in countries such as Burma, Nigeria, and Indonesia. Rather than confront the charges of oppression head-on, multinational corporations that support tyranny are attempting to work around the people, and use the WTO to fight local selective purchasing laws.

Ultimately, this means that local taxpayers will be deprived of the right to decide how their local dollars are spent.

The Kucinich amendment would ensure that no federal monies would be used to fight

the rights and desires of local taxpayers, while supporting local laws that support human rights.

I look forward to the passage of this crucial amendment, and to your response.

Sincerely,

SACHIN CHHEDA.

FREE BURMA,
BERKELEY, CA,
July 22, 1998.

Representative NANCY PELOSI,
Via fax: 202-225-8259.

DEAR REP. PELOSI: I would like to ask you to support the DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill. The amendment would deprive the Administration of funds to bring legal challenges to any state and local laws that the WTO finds inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements.

As an organization that works to promote democracy in Burma, we have been supportive of the US trade sanctions against Burma's junta and selective purchasing legislation. Trade sanctions are condoned by Burma's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and she has US companies to not do business with the current repressive regime.

Sanctions are never passed lightly on another country, the reasons for their implementation are mostly due to preventing the support of extremely repressive regimes. The WTO fight against sanctions is not based on looking at human rights abuses but simply to prevent obstacles to free trade. Free trade should not happen with out fair trade and respect for human rights. This amendment would prevent this kind of blind challenge to trade restrictions based on the promotion of human rights world wide.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

PAMELA WELLNER,
Campaign Coordinator.

INDEPENDENT VOTERS OF ILLINOIS—
INDEPENDENT PRECINCT ORGANIZATION
July 27, 1998.

Re: Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns Appropriations Amendment

The Independent Voters of Illinois-Independent Precinct Organization (IVI-IPO) joins with other grassroots groups in supporting adoption of the amendment to protect human rights laws from challenge under the World Trade Organization's rules. It is the proper role of Congress to withhold funds from policies that are injurious. This will put our federal government where we believe it ought to be: defending local initiatives in support of our values against attack by corporations and banks that see those initiatives only as barriers to trade.

Over the past decade or so, U.S. citizens have persuaded a number of cooperations to withdraw business from countries held to be violators of human rights, such as Burma, Nigeria, Indonesia, and apartheid South Africa. Citizens have also persuaded state and local governments, as well as universities, to refuse to do business with such countries. Are they wrong to use what leverage they have in support of almost universally accepted standards of decency?

In 1994, Congress was debating legislation to implement the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, leading to the creation of the WTO. Opponents claimed then that the new trade regime would threaten many local, state, and national initiatives. Other countries would be able to sue on behalf of corporations, contending that certain laws amounted to disguised trade barriers. And that is exactly what they have done.

At the time of the debate, Illinois State Representative Janice Schakowsky (now a Democratic nominee for Congress) was trying to find cosponsors for a food labeling bill. She said she was told, "Oh, that will never hold up under the World Trade Organization."

The test began more than two years ago, when Venezuela won a case involving export of oil that did not meet U.S. standards. The U.S. agreed not to enforce the Clean Air Act, rather than pay the penalty. Now, in 1998, we find human rights laws at risk.

We believe that every country that is party to the WTO has values worth defending, and should have the right not to be forced to sacrifice them to mere profit for the few. Governments must assert their role of balancing the rights of all, and not act on behalf of only the powerful. The majority world needs effective and responsible representatives to protect their interests in an increasingly globalized economy. There must be far more winners than losers.

The Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment puts humane values above financial gain. It is a step toward blocking the threat to local initiative represented by the World Trade Organization and its rules. We ask our representatives to support all such measures.

Sincerely,

CONSTANCE HALL,
Chair, National Affairs Committee.

Re: Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment

To: Members of Congress

From: Ralph Nader

Date: July 22, 1998

I support the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to the Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bills.

Central to the anti-democratic agenda of the corporate globalizers is to repeal or at least freeze local initiative in the consumer, health, safety, environmental, labor and other realms. Through the autocratic World Trade Organization, the method is to have foreign nations challenge or threaten to challenge U.S. states, localities or tribal law; and then to have the federal government turn against the states, localities or tribes and sue them to repeal their existing, long-standing laws. Moreover, even the threat of potential WTO challenges now converts the the State Department and other federal agencies into opponents of innovative legislative proposals in the states and elsewhere. In Maryland, for example, State Department officials lobbied against a Nigeria selective purchasing bill.

The amendment would halt the WTO-enabled encroachment on local, state and tribal sovereignty, providing an opportunity for the country to revisit the GATT folly. Do we really want to subvert our democratic processes and health and safety standards to the autocratic WTO?

I urge you to support the amendment.

OBLATE CONFERENCE,
Silver Spring, MD, July 29, 1998.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH: As Executive Director of the Oblate Conference, a religious organization with over 500 members in the United States at present, I am writing to express my organization's support for the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Bill.

The bill would deprive the Administration of funds to bring legal challenges to any state and local laws that the WTO finds inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements. The Oblate Conference

supports local government resolutions such as the Massachusetts Burma Law, and we believe it is the proper role of Congress, not the Administration, to pre-empt state legislation.

Respectfully Yours,
SEAMUS P. FINN, OMI.

PEN AMERICAN CENTER,
July 22, 1998.

JARON BOURKE,
Legislative Assistant, Congressman Dennis Kucinich.

On behalf of PEN American Center, a fellowship of writers dedicated to defending free expression and advancing the cause of literature, I write to express our support for the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill. The amendment would deprive the Administration of funds to bring legal challenges to any state and local laws that the WTO finds inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements.

Sincerely,

DIANA AYTON-SHENKER,
Director, Freedom-to-Write.

PENINSULA PEACE AND JUSTICE CENTER,
Palo Alto, CA, July 29, 1998.

Re Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen Amendment to the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Bill

HON. ANNA ESHOO,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN ESHOO: I am writing to urge you to support the above-referenced amendment to the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Bill. This amendment would deny funds for the Administration for any attempt to sue to bring local statutes into compliance with World Trade Organization regulations.

As you are no doubt aware, the city of Palo Alto has a law which may be challenged under WTO regulations. This law prohibits the city from making any substantial purchases from companies doing business in Burma. The law was passed after nearly a year of effort by local activists and is aimed at addressing the terrible human rights situation in Burma. Many other such laws around the country are threatened by WTO regulations.

I look forward to hearing that you have supported this amendment. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

PAUL GEORGE,
Director.

PREAMBLE CENTER,
Washington, DC.

Hon. DENNIS KUCINICH,
U.S. House of Representatives.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH: We write in support of the Kucinich-Sanders-DeFazio-Ros-Lehtinen-Stearns amendment to the Appropriation for the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State, which would prevent taxpayer dollars from being used by the federal government to overturn state and local laws which are allegedly not in compliance with international trade and investment agreements.

Our research on the impact of such international agreements on state and local sovereignty shows that, increasingly, corporations and foreign governments which seek to undermine local sovereignty and democracy in the United States are turning to the enforcement of such agreements as the WTO to overturn public policies that they could not

defeat at the ballot box. Recent examples include the campaign by European and the Japanese governments, together with transnational corporations, to overturn the sanctions of Massachusetts against the brutal regime in Burma; and attacks by the Swiss government and Swiss banks against states and cities in the U.S. which have sought to limit their business ties with banks that may have knowingly profited from the Holocaust and now refuse to pay adequate compensation.

Public awareness of the impacts of international trade and investment agreements is increasing, and yet unfortunately it is still the case that not only are many citizens unaware of how local democracy in the United States is being undermined by these agreements; many local and state legislators are similarly unaware. Indeed, many legislators only become aware of these restrictions when they have passed or are on the verge of passing laws which are perceived by foreign governments and their corporate allies to be in violation of international trade and investment agreements. Then they may be contacted by officials from USTR, who insist that legislators repeal or vote against pending legislation on the basis of obscure provisions of international trade and investment agreements that the local legislators were previously unaware that they were party to or bound by. Under these agreements, if state legislators refuse the entreaties of federal officials, the U.S. government is required to sue state and local governments to force repeal. We support your efforts to block funding for such lawsuits via this amendment.

It is surely a shameful state of affairs when the executive branch of our federal government becomes an advocate for foreign governments and corporations against local democracy and sovereignty in the United States. We applaud your efforts to put a stop to this dangerous erosion of democracy in the United States.

ROBERT NAIMAN,
Preamble Center for Public Policy.

July 26, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS KUCINICH,
United States Congress.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH: As director of Project Maje, an independent information project on Burma's human rights issues, I am writing in support of your bill to protect state and local sanctions.

The Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns Bill is a crucial item of legislation to protect our American birthright of opposing injustice and oppression through our own lawful processes.

Protecting human rights is our duty as Americans, and state and local sanctions are a legitimate and honorable way to address that task. State and local governments have every right to deny their business to companies which fund dictatorships involved in horrendous acts of abuse.

I am very happy that the bill is co-sponsored by Rep. DeFazio, from Oregon. Here in Portland, earlier this month, the City Council passed a selective purchasing resolution regarding the brutal Burmese junta. Your bill will go far to protect our right to take such firm and effective actions.

Thank you very much for your continued concern about Burma and for all you have done for worldwide human rights. Your commitment to the cause of justice and freedom is most admirable.

Sincerely,

EDITH T. MIRANTE,
Project Maje.

PUBLIC CITIZEN,
Washington, DC, July 26, 1998.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Public Citizen, on behalf of its members nationwide, urges you to support the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-Stearns Amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill. The vote on this amendment is expected Tuesday morning.

This important measure ensures that taxpayer money will not be expended to impose on states and localities the rulings of international trade and investment tribunals.

In recent months, State Department staff have been sent to pressure state legislatures not to pass laws the Administration claims may conflict with World Trade Organization dictates. It's unacceptable for our tax dollars to be spent to pressure Maryland legislators not to pass laws concerning Nigeria's dictatorship or to pressure Massachusetts to weaken a law castigating the Burmese dictatorship.

Just this week, the newest trade agreement threat became reality as the Canadian government was bullied into paying \$14 million in legal fees and damages after the Ethyl Corporation used NAFTA provisions to directly sue the Canadian government. The case provides the latest evidence that international trade and investment agreements are creating an epidemic of costly government legal efforts to avoid or defend trade challenges and threats against our democratically-passed laws.

The Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-Stearns amendment ensures that U.S. tax dollars are not used to assist these unaccountable international bureaucracies attack U.S. democracy.

Ethyl's challenge to the Canadian law was the first suit under NAFTA provisions that allow corporations in one country to directly sue the government of another country for cash damages, but it won't be the last. Remarkably, the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) includes a yet more expansive version of the NAFTA provisions Ethyl employed.

The executive branch continues to deny that recent trade agreements are undermining our sovereignty while they help impose the pacts' undemocratic dictates.

This amendment can't stop such false representations. But, it can stop the use of federal tax dollars to impose the ruling and threats of anti-democratic international tribunals.

Please vote in favor of the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros-Lehtinen-Stearns amendment.

Sincerely,

LORI WALLACH.

RESEARCH AND POLICY REFORM
CENTER, INC.
21 July, 1998.

Congressman DENNIS KUCINICH,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: I am writing to express my utmost support of the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen Amendment. As Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi implored recently, we must use our freedom to promote Burma's.

It is with great thanks for your sponsorship of the amendment that I send you my letter of support.

Sincerely,

MAUREEN AUNG-THWIN,
Director, Burma Policy, RPR.

SACRAMENTANS FOR
INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS,
Sacramento, CA, August 3, 1998.

Hon. ROBERT MATSUI,
650 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE MATSUI: We are writing to state our support for the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill that would deprive the Administration of funds to bring legal challenges to any state and local laws that the WTO finds inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements. Please join us in supporting this amendment.

Sincerely yours,

HEIDI MCLEAN,
Legislation Coordinator.

SEATTLE BURMA ROUNDTABLE,
Seattle, WA, July 28, 1998.

Representative DENNIS KUCINICH,
1730 LHOB

DEAR REP. KUCINICH: It is with gratitude that our organization offers its support to your amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill that would halt funding for Administration legal challenges to local laws that the WTO doesn't like.

Local autonomy in making purchasing decisions is a key American freedom that is under attack by a very small group of corporate extremists and some unaccountable bureaucrats from the WTO. If our elected officials make these types of decisions, they are accountable to us, their constituents, and to no one else.

We must never forget that local sanctions laws were incredibly important in accomplishing peaceful political change in South Africa. Similarly, the current campaign to put economic pressure on Burma's military dictatorship, called for by Burma's elected leaders, is working well. Now is not the time to try to tell Americans that such campaigns are somehow illegal.

We will be sending letters of support to our representatives, including Adam Smith, Linda Smith, Jennifer Dunne, Jim McDermott, Rick White, Jack Metcalf, Doc Hastings and George Nethercutt.

Thanks again for efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,

LARRY DOHRS,
Chairman.

SIERRA CLUB,
Washington, DC, July 28, 1998.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the Sierra's Club more than half-million members, I urge you to support an amendment to the Commerce, Justice, and State Department Appropriations Act (HR 4276) sponsored by Reps. Kucinich, Sanders, Ros-Lehtinen, DeFazio, and Stearns ("The Kucinich Amendment"). The Kucinich Amendment would prevent the Executive Branch from using federal funds to sue state and local governments to force compliance with international trade agreements.

Approval of the Kucinich Amendment is urgently needed. State and local law is already under imminent threat under international trade rules:

In April 1998, the State Department pressured the Maryland state legislature into rejecting legislation to sanction the government of Nigeria for environmental and human rights abuses. Similar state and local sanctions helped to topple South Africa's Apartheid regime in the 1980s, but are now considered "illegal trade barriers."

In March 1998, a timber industry representative lobbied the New York City Council to reject legislation requiring the City to buy only sustainably harvested tropical timber,

charging that local selective purchasing legislation violates US trade policy. That legislation has now stalled in the City Council.

Earlier this month, the government of Venezuela threatened to complain to the World Trade Organization unless the state of Florida lifted a ban on Orimulsion, a highly-polluting fossil fuel produced by Venezuela's state oil company.

By adopting the Kucinich Amendment, Congress can take immediate action to ensure that state, local, and tribal governments can set their own environmental and health standards, free of unnecessary interference by international trade rules. Yet, the Executive would still be free to pursue state preemption on important matters where Congress first made a specific appropriation. Please vote "yes" to the Kucinich Amendment to HR 4276.

Sincerely,

CARL POPE,
Executive Director.

SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER,
MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE,
July 27, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS J. KUCINICH,

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: The Simon Wiesenthal Center is grateful for Congressman Kucinich's leadership in proposing Amendment H.R. 4276, which will have the effect of forcing the Swiss Banks who have profited from stolen Nazi loot to promptly return to the negotiating table with representatives of the Holocaust survivors and the Jewish community.

Please let us know if the amendment becomes law.

Once again, on behalf of the 400,000 constituent families of the Simon Wiesenthal Center we commend you and your colleagues on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

RABBI ABRAHAM COOPER,
Associate Dean.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SERVICE COMMITTEE,
Cambridge MA, July 29, 1998.

Hon. DENNIS KUCINICH,

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KUCINICH, I applaud your leadership in sponsoring the Kucinich, Sanders, DeFazio, Stearns, Ros-Lehtinen amendment to the Commerce, Justice and State Department Appropriations bill that would deprive the Administration of funds to bring legal challenges to any state and local laws based on the contention that the WTO finds these laws inconsistent with international trade and investment agreements.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has been involved in efforts to focus public attention on the need to end repression and foster democracy and human rights in Burma since 1995. As you probably know Burma's repressive military junta established a totalitarian state in that nation in 1988. The military crackdown begun at that time has resulted in the deaths of over 10,000 people. This regime has brought Burma, renamed Myanmar by the military, the dubious distinction of having one of the world's worst human rights records. One very effective way to focus public attention on the human rights crisis in Burma is to enact selective purchase legislation at the state or local level that bars government agencies from purchasing goods produced by companies that do business there. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and several cities, towns and counties have passed such legislation. However, unfortunately federal government officials have tried to pressure many of these governments and their legisla-

tive officials to repeal or modify that legislation because of objections raised to it by the WTO.

The amendment you have proposed would end this type of interference. After all, how Massachusetts—or any state or city decides to spend its tax dollars is a matter for the citizens of Massachusetts or any other state or city to decide. I wish you every success in passing this important amendment.

Sincerely,

JEFF SIEFERT,
Acting Director.

TRANSAFRICA
Re: Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276
To: Members of Congress
From: Randall Robinson

I write in strong support for the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276, the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriation.

This amendment will provide necessary protection to state and local initiatives that promote human rights and justice. Earlier this year, the State of Maryland was considering passing a selective purchase law to promote human rights and correct environmental abuses in Nigeria. The Federal government lobbied in Annapolis to preempt this state action. An official from the State Department said to the Maryland lawmakers that the law would be WTO-illegal. The threat of a federal lawsuit stood behind the State Department official's warning. Maryland backed down.

With the threat of WTO decrees and consequent federal lawsuits, what state or local legislature will be able to pass important procurement laws like the Nigeria selective purchase law? Had the states been bound by such trade rules during our struggle to free South Africa, Nelson Mandela might still be imprisoned.

I hope you will support the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to H.R. 4276.

U.S. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY COUNCIL,
July 29, 1998.

Re: The Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment to HR 4276
To: Republican Members of Congress

From: Kevin L. Kearns, President, USBIC

On behalf of the more than 1,000 member companies of the United States Business and Industry Council (USBIC), I strongly urge you to support the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns Amendment to HR 4276, the Commerce, Justice, State appropriation bill.

This amendment, which would deny the use of taxpayer funds for federal government challenges to state, local, and tribal laws deemed inconsistent with America's NAFTA and World Trade Organization obligations, will serve as a vital bulwark in the defense of American sovereignty.

As an organization that for more than 60 years has promoted policies to serve the broad national interest, USBIC does not believe in general that sub-national authorities should have the right to make their own trade and foreign policies. The Constitution reserves these powers for the federal government, and USBIC believes that this arrangement has served the nation well.

Yet the ultimate fate of these sub-national policies should be decided by the American political system—which, after all, is the only political system on earth that places first and foremost the interests of the American people and the only one that is fully accountable to them. Foreign governments and international bureaucracies should play no official or formal role whatever in these decisions.

For more than 200 years, the American people have looked to their own elected leaders to safeguard national security and manage their international economic affairs. They have never voted to delegate these responsibilities to foreign bodies, or give such bodies binding oversight. The American political system has all the legitimacy it needs to act on their behalf. This legitimacy—along with the power to enforce the decisions made by the system—is the sine qua non of U.S. sovereignty.

Using taxpayer money to finance U.S. federal government court challenges ordered by an international organization to overturn political decisions made by legitimate American officials and legislators at the state or local level betrays more than two centuries of struggle and sacrifice for American independence and freedom. It's bad enough that President Clinton and his multilateralist advisors have meekly acquiesced in the creeping power grab being engineered by the World Trade Organization. If Republicans and conservatives don't stand up to them, who will? I strongly urge you to vote for the Kucinich-Sanders-Ros Lehtinen-DeFazio-Stearns amendment.

If you should have any question about the amendment or the sovereignty issue in general, please feel free to contact either myself or USBIC Educational Foundation Research Fellow Alan Tonelson at 202-628-2211.

INTRODUCTION OF THE YEAR 2000 READINESS DISCLOSURE ACT

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 7, 1998

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, today my colleague, Representative DREIER and I introduced the "Year 2000 Readiness Disclosure Act." Its purpose is to help solve the Year 2000 computer problem. Billions of computer chips are in devices from telephones to oil rig valves, and billions of lines of software code now run computer systems we rely on for issuing paychecks to operating traffic signals. Now we are faced with the threat these devices and systems may not operate because they cannot read the number 2000 as a year.

The challenge to solve the so-called "Y2K" problem is an incredibly complex process in our interconnected world. Each of us has a stake in all of us succeeding. After all, if a business that issues paychecks or another that operates our elevators fixes its Y2K problems, what will be accomplished if the electricity needed by those businesses cannot be delivered or transit systems cannot provide transportation for the employees of those businesses?

Solving this problem means that every company must make available as much information as is possible, as soon as possible, so that others can use it to meet the threat present in the Y2K problem. Unfortunately, current law provides an opportunity to file frivolous lawsuits against those providing this information and subject them to costly litigation. Consequently, these Y2K "Good Samaritans" are reluctant to provide vital information because of the litigation they may have to endure.

This bill will give companies the freedom to disclose Year 2000 readiness information to