



# PRIDE@WORK

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,  
and Transgender Labor and our Allies.

November 21, 2018

Ambassador Robert E. Lighthizer  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> St. NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

On behalf of Pride at Work's National Executive Board and our members across the country, I am writing to express my alarm at recent attempts to remove or weaken language that was included in the recently announced U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement that would establish an obligation to implement policies to protect workers against employment discrimination on the basis of sex, pregnancy, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, gender identity, and caregiving responsibilities.

As you likely know, employment discrimination continues to be a major problem facing LGBTQ workers. In a 2017 study, 1 in 5 LGBTQ people reported facing discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity in determination of pay or being considered for promotions. This dynamic is likely a significant cause of elevated poverty rates for LGBTQ Americans.

The purpose of our trade policy should be to create better jobs, strengthen communities, lower poverty, and build a stronger economy for all of us. Employment discrimination is a barrier toward equality of opportunity, it weakens communities, and it increases poverty. Therefore, Article 23.9 and Article 23.12(5)(l)(i) of the USMCA represent a step in the right direction to a better economy for all of us and should be maintained.

Progress remains necessary in areas including robust enforcement mechanisms for the Labor Chapter, including provisions related to employment discrimination, as the status quo system for enforcing labor provisions of trade agreements has proven to be a failure. But it would be a major mistake to remove Article 23.9 and Article 23.12(5)(l)(i) or weaken them in any way.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerame Davis  
Executive Director