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Representative Dina Titus, co-chair of the Kazakhstan Caucus, introduced legislation today to take the necessary steps to provide permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status to Kazakhstan which will lead to greater economic opportunities for American workers and companies.

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment was adopted by Congress as Title IV of the broader Trade Act of 1974, which granted the President authority to negotiate trade agreements. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment further withheld favored trade status from “non-market” economies that restricted emigration. The principal target of the amendment was the Soviet Union, which had imposed severe restrictions on emigration of Jews and other religious minorities. The U.S. has previously granted PNTR status to Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Romania, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Russia.

More details here:

<https://titus.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3143>

The following statement is attributable to Yerzhan Ashikbayev, Kazakhstan’s Ambassador to the United States:

“Lawmakers today took a critical step in strengthening the bilateral trade relationship between our two countries. Their message is clear: Kazakhstan should no longer suffer the consequences of legislation that dates back almost 50 years and aimed at a government that no longer exists.

“The Kazakhstan of today is an independent country, Central Asia’s largest economy, and a strategic United States partner. We are home to iconic companies like Chevron and ExxonMobil. We have a long and historic relationship with the Jewish people, both here and abroad. And after twenty years of negotiations, we became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2015.

“All of this is because of the steps we have taken to build a strong, market-based economy, and the reforms we have made to attract businesses to invest. That work continues apace, yet we are still waiting for Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status that other WTO member nations enjoy.

“We urge Congress to move swiftly to pass the legislation, heeding bipartisan calls to encourage investment in Kazakhstan and providing United States companies with additional confidence to establish manufacturing in Kazakhstan.”