

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2023

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

As you engage in Russia's spheres of influence in your upcoming visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan, we urge the Biden Administration to support the repeal of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment for this critical partner in Central Asia. An outdated Soviet-era provision of the Trade Act of 1974, Jackson-Vanik needlessly denies Kazakhstan permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) with the United States. Freeing Kazakhstan of Jackson-Vanik's outdated requirements will bring it closer to the Western world and away from Russia and China.

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment was originally proposed to promote free movement in response to Soviet restrictions on Jewish emigration. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan has been subject to this requirement, which has been lifted for other former Soviet states, most notably, and ironically, Russia. In order to earn temporary normal trade relations, Jackson-Vanik requires the State Department to determine on a semi-annual basis that they are indeed allowing emigration, a determination that the Department has easily made for many years now.

Kazakhstan seeks closer ties with the United States, but Jackson-Vanik hinders bilateral trade and strains bilateral relations. Given the country's role in the region as a source of geopolitical stability, and its historic relationship with Russia, the United States should seek to support our relationship and encourage Kazakhstan to be a voice for democracy and freedom and a partner to our allies.

In 2015, Kazakhstan acceded to the World Trade Organization (WTO) following a nearly twenty-year accession process. The country is a member in good standing and was originally selected to host the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference. Kazakhstan has normalized trade relations with our trading partners all over the world, and it is time that we afford them the same treatment on a permanent basis.

In the spirit of your visit, and to support regional independence from Russia and China, we ask that you support our efforts to repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment and seek to strengthen ties with Kazakhstan and other nations in Central Asia.

Thank you for your consideration and your work in this critical region.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress