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May 6, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

I understand that you are planning a trip to Nike's headquarters on May 8 as part of your campaign to convince Americans that a massive new trade deal will be good for American workers. Given Nike's legacy of offshoring American jobs and exploiting low-wage workers, I would strongly encourage you to cancel this meeting.

Nike epitomizes why disastrous unfettered free trade policies during the past four decades have failed American workers, eroded our manufacturing base, and increased income and wealth inequality in this country. Nike does not employ a single manufacturing worker who makes shoes in the United States. 100 percent of the shoes that are sold by Nike are made overseas in low-wage countries.

Reuters reported on April 22, 2014, "When Nike was founded in 1964, just 4% of U.S. footwear was imported. Five decades later, that figure has skyrocketed to 98%, and Nike has likely played a role in driving it up."

According to a recent study by the Institute for Global Labor and Human Rights, more than 330,000 workers manufacture Nike's products in Vietnam where the minimum wage is about 56 cents an hour, independent labor unions are banned, and people are thrown in jail for expressing their political beliefs. Factories in Vietnam where Nike's shoes are manufactured have been cited by the Worker Rights Consortium for excessive overtime, wage theft and physical mistreatment of workers. It has been reported that in one factory where Converse shoes are manufactured, a supervisor glued a Vietnamese workers' hands together with super glue as punishment.

Back in 1998, Phil Knight, who was Nike's CEO at the time and is presently the chairman and largest shareholder of this corporation, said that Nike had "become synonymous with slave wages, forced overtime, and arbitrary abuse."

Today, Mr. Knight is one of the wealthiest people on this planet -- worth more than \$22 billion. While Mr. Knight's net worth has more than tripled since 1999, the average Vietnamese worker who makes Nike's shoes earns pennies an hour. If Nike can sell a pair of LeBron XII Elite iD

shoes online for \$320 in this country, it should be making these shoes and other products here, not in Vietnam or China.

It is no secret why Nike is supporting the TPP. The TPP would substantially reduce tariffs on the products it is making in Vietnam. This would increase the profits of Nike and increase the wealth of Mr. Knight, but it would do nothing to encourage Nike to create one manufacturing job in this country. It would simply make Nike more money and increase the compensation packages of its executives.

Since 2001, we have lost nearly sixty thousand factories in the United States. As you know, there are neighborhoods in America where more than 50 percent of its residents are unemployed. While manufacturing may not be the most glamorous job, I'm sure that there are workers all across America, from Baltimore to Los Angeles to Vermont to Ferguson who would be more than happy to be paid \$15-\$20 an hour to manufacture the Nike products they buy.

If you disregard my advice and happen to go to Nike headquarters, please ask Mr. Knight when they will begin manufacturing their footwear here in America, and not just in low-wage countries.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator