

Statement of the Honorable Rep. Cedric Richmond
Hearing on *Supporting Economic Growth and Job Creation through Customs Trade
Modernization, Facilitation, and Enforcement*
House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Trade
May 17, 2012

I applaud the Chairman and Ranking Member for holding this hearing to explore customs operations and how this plays into the trade environment. It is critical that we give our federal officials the tools they need to fight unfair trade practices. As this Committee develops customs reauthorization legislation with a view to the future and to increased trade volumes, it is terribly important that it produce modern and effective reforms that promote free trade while punishing violators of international trade laws. International trade will be critically important to US economic growth going forward, especially in my district. I am especially concerned about protecting Louisiana and American firms from unfair trade practices pursued by foreign competitors.

That is why I was proud to be an original co-sponsor of H.R. 5078, the Preventing Recurring Trade Evasion and Circumvention Act, or PROTECT Act. This bill would provide tools to Customs and Border Protection officials to aid them in better enforcing our trade laws. I joined Rep. Boustany, a distinguished Member of this Committee, in this effort because we have a duty to protect our American businesses and workers against unfair trade practices that distort the market and promote anti-competitive behavior.

I urge the Committee to seriously consider this legislation in order to support a level playing field for American firms as they operate in an intensely competitive global market. It is imperative that we enforce our trade laws, so as to not promote illegal trade practices by firms that have access to American markets.

I look forward to working with Rep. Boustany, Chairman Brady, Ranking Member McDermott, Chairman Camp, Ranking Member Levin and the distinguished Members of this Committee to ensure that public officials are working in a concerted way to promote a robust and fair trade environment for American firms, in order to help them create jobs.