

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 24, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write to express significant concerns about the clear abuse of power inherent in your recent threat to launch a trade war with Brazil. The United States and Brazil have legitimate trade issues that should be discussed and negotiated. However, your Administration's tariff threat is clearly not directed at that. Nor is it about a bilateral trade deficit, as the U.S. ran a \$7.4 billion goods trade surplus with Brazil in 2024, and has not run a trade deficit with Brazil since 2007.

Rather – as you state explicitly in your letter to Brazilian President Lula da Silva – the threat to impose 50 percent tariffs on all imports from Brazil and ordering the U.S. Trade Representative to launch an investigation under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974<sup>1</sup> are primarily intended to force Brazil's independent judicial system to stop the prosecution of Brazilian former President Jair Bolsonaro. Interfering in another sovereign nation's legal system sets a dangerous precedent, provokes an unnecessary trade war and puts American nationals and companies at risk of retribution.

Mr. Bolsonaro is a Brazilian national being prosecuted in Brazilian courts for alleged actions under their jurisdiction. He is accused of working to undermine the results of a democratic election in Brazil and plotting a coup d'état. Using the full weight of the American economy to interfere with these proceedings on behalf of a friend is a gross misuse of power, undermines America's influence in Brazil and could derail our broader interests in the region. Your Administration's announcement on July 18, 2025, of visa sanctions against Brazilian judiciary officials working on Mr. Bolsonaro's case indicates – once more – your Administration's willingness to prioritize your personal agenda over than the interests of the American people.

Your actions would increase costs for American families and businesses. Americans import more than \$40 billion annually from Brazil, including nearly \$2 billion worth of coffee. U.S.-Brazil trade supports nearly 130,000 jobs in the United States, which are put at risk through threats of steep tariffs. Brazil has also vowed to retaliate, and you have preemptively vowed to retaliate in kind – meaning that U.S. exporters will suffer and taxes on imports for Americans will rise beyond your threatened 50 percent level.

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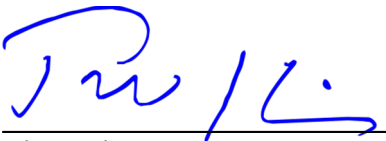
<sup>1</sup> 19 U.S. Code § 2411

A trade war with Brazil will also work to drive Brazil closer to the People's Republic of China (PRC) at a time when the U.S. needs to aggressively counter PRC influence in Latin America. Chinese state-owned and state-connected firms are investing heavily in Brazil, including multiple port projects underway, and recently the China State Railway Group entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to study a transcontinental railway project<sup>2</sup>.

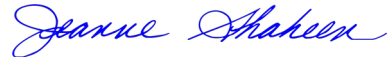
These considerations are not unique to Brazil. Throughout Latin America, the PRC is working to enhance its influence through its Belt and Road Initiative. We are concerned that your actions to undermine an independent judicial system will only enhance skepticism of American influence throughout the region and provide PRC officials and state-backed companies enhanced credibility for their agenda. The same trend is also occurring in East and Southeast Asia<sup>3</sup>.

The overriding goals of the U.S. in Latin America must be enhancing mutually beneficial economic relationships, promoting free and fair democratic elections and countering PRC influence. We urge you to reconsider your actions and prioritize the economic interests of Americans who want predictability, not another trade war.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



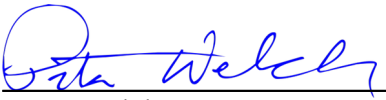
Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

<sup>2</sup> South China Morning Post, *Brazil and China to study South American transcontinental railway project* (July 9, 2025), <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3317462/brazil-and-china-study-south-american-transcontinental-railway-project>; Center for Strategic & International Studies, *No Safe Harbor: Evaluating the Risk of China's Port Projects in Latin America and the Caribbean* (June 26, 2025), <https://features.csis.org/no-safe-harbor-china-ports/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/13/business/economy/trump-tariffs-trade-deals.html>



Peter Welch  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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