

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We, members of the Florida delegation, write to you with grave concern regarding the port strike that will halt a significant portion of international imports along the East and Gulf coasts. These ports amount to nearly 50% of all imports.

As you know, the United States is coming to grips with the largest inflation we have seen in nearly 50 years. On top of that, Hurricane Helene has caused some of the most significant damage that we have seen in a decade across the East coast, including Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. We mention this to say that a port strike will only lengthen the ability of victims to recover from the storm and result in supply shortages that will once again push up prices when we are finally starting to see inflation stabilize.

One supplier has informed us that their ability to try and reroute their goods to alternative ports has been nearly impossible due to the flooding in the middle of the country. Even more alarming, one of his imports is for drywall fasteners, which is exactly the items those trying to rebuild after Hurricane Helene imminently need. Sadly, these building supplies and many others risk being stuck on ships for days, weeks, or even months.

Obviously, a mutually beneficial agreement between the International Longshoremen's Association and the United States Maritime Alliance before the deadline is the most favorable outcome. However, this outcome has failed to materialize.

In 2002, President Bush ended an 11-day port worker strike and an agreement was eventually reached with a lessened impact on American families. At that time, the cost of the strike to the U.S. economy was estimated at \$2 billion a day. Today, economists suggest that the impending strike could cost the U.S. up to \$5 billion daily. We cannot let this happen.

Therefore, we call on you to use your authority via the Justice Department to petition for a temporary restraining order that will keep port workers on the job while contract negotiations continue.

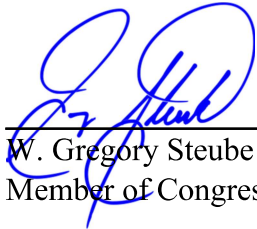
We understand and appreciate your comments that the government should not generally get involved in private negotiations. However, in this case, our country has a dire and compelling need to protect all its citizens from an impending crisis of nationwide supply shortages, increased prices, and rebuilding delays.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Aaron Bean
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress