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Kerry: Russian Trade Means Opportunities for Massachusetts Businesses

WASHINGTON – Following the Senate’s approval by a vote of 92-4 of a measure to normalize trade relations with Russia and remove prohibitive, antiquated trade barriers today, Senator John Kerry pointed towards new export opportunities for businesses in Massachusetts. In July, Kerry joined Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus in submitting an [op-ed](#) to *POLITICO* in which they argued for improved trade relations with Russia: “[W]e know that if U.S. workers and businesses are ‘first to market’ and can compete on a level playing field, we can win.” On Wednesday, Kerry made the case on the [Senate floor](#) that the trade deal with Russia was “one that promises billions of dollars in new U.S. exports and thousands of new jobs.”

The Russia and Moldova Jackson-Vanik Repeal and Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act establishes permanent normal trade relations for Russia and would require the identification and imposition of sanctions on people responsible for the detention, abuse, and death of Sergei Magnitsky and other gross violations of human rights.

“I’m very glad we finally got this done because it modernizes our trade relationship with a post-Cold War Russia, and it means new American jobs and exports as we enter this market. It’s a rare triumph over congressional dysfunction,” said Senator Kerry. “In Massachusetts, my home state, we exported \$120 million in goods to Russia last year, and now that number will climb. It means hundreds of jobs in Massachusetts. If we hadn’t acted now, Massachusetts jobs would’ve been endangered. For example, we exported \$18.5 million in medical equipment to Russia last year, but that trade would’ve been jeopardized without action to reduce tariffs – lower tariffs that countries like China currently enjoy with Russia and which Massachusetts doesn’t. This vote puts things right. It also sends a strong message about our commitment to human rights, not just by getting tough on the killers of Sergei Magnitsky, but by underscoring our expectations about the behavior of our trading partners.”

After joining the WTO this summer, Russia is lowering tariffs and opening up to new imports. U.S. exports to Russia currently total more than \$9 billion each year, but by normalizing trade relations, that figure is expected to double in the next five years.

The bill was passed by the House of Representatives last month and with Senate passage will be reported to President Barack Obama for his signature.

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