

# Portman, Durbin, Shaheen, and Senate Ukraine Caucus Reaffirm Commitment to Help Ukraine Take on Corruption

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**Washington, D.C.** – Today, U.S. Senators Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), co-chairs of the bipartisan Senate Ukraine Caucus, and Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on European Affairs spearheaded a letter expressing concern to Ukrainian President Poroshenko regarding the recent resignation of Minister of Economy Aivaras Abromavičius, who has alleged that corruption remains a dire challenge within the Ukrainian political system. In the letter, Portman, Durbin, and Shaheen said they recognized the challenges facing the Ukrainian government two years after the Maidan brought positive change to Ukraine. They also reaffirmed their commitment to help President Poroshenko confront the dual threat posed by Russian aggression in Ukraine as well as entrenched corruption in the government and to create a transparent and democratic government. The letter was also signed by Senators Ron Johnson (R-WI), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Mark Kirk (R-IL), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH).

“We recognize that your governing coalition faces not only endemic corruption left from decades of mismanagement and cronyism, but also an illegal armed seizure of territory by Russia and its proxies,” the senators wrote. “Tackling such obstacles to reforms amidst a war and the loss of much of southeastern Ukraine’s economic productivity is a formidable challenge -- one which we remain committed to helping you overcome.”

Full text of the letter can be found below.

Dear President Poroshenko,

As members of the U.S. Senate Ukraine Caucus and strong supporters of your government, we write to express our concern regarding the recent resignation of Minister of Economy Aivaras Abromavičius and his allegations of persistent corruption in the Ukrainian political system.

During the past year, Mr. Abromavičius and his team implemented tough but necessary economic reforms, worked to combat endemic corruption, and promoted more openness and transparency in government. He was known to many of us as a respected reformer and supporter of the Ukrainian

cause. Minister Abromavičius's allegations raise concerns about the enormous challenges that remain in your efforts to reform the corrupt system you inherited.

We recognize that your governing coalition faces not only endemic corruption left from decades of mismanagement and cronyism, but also an illegal armed seizure of territory by Russia and its proxies. Tackling such obstacles to reforms amidst a war and the loss of much of southeastern Ukraine's economic productivity is a formidable challenge -- one which we remain committed to helping you overcome.

Succeeding in these reforms will show Russian President Vladimir Putin that an independent, transparent, and democratic Ukraine can and will succeed. It also offers a stark alternative to the authoritarianism and oligarchic cronyism prevalent in Russia. As such, we respectfully ask that you address the serious concerns raised by Minister Abromavičius. We similarly urge you to press ahead with urgent reforms to the Prosecutor General's office and judiciary. The unanimous adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Basic Principles and Action Plan is a good step.

We very much appreciate your leadership and commitment to reform since the Ukrainian people demonstrated their resolve on the Maidan two years ago, and we look forward to continued cooperation in the future.

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