

TRADEJUSTICE

New York Metro

CANDIDATES' PLEDGE AGAINST FAST TRACK TRADE AUTHORITY

If elected, I pledge to oppose any legislation, whether called “Fast Track”, “Smart Track” or anything else, that limits Congress’ influence on trade agreements and ability to carefully study and deliberate on these agreements by

- allowing the executive branch, rather than Congress, to choose the countries with whom the US will negotiate trade agreements
- empowering the executive branch to negotiate without Congressional involvement
- including non-binding, unenforceable, and easily ignored “negotiating objectives,” rather than binding directives.
- enabling the executive branch to sign trade agreements before a Congressional vote.
- enabling the executive branch to write implementing legislation without Congressional input.
- setting a deadline for House committees to discharge the executive-written legislation.
- setting a deadline for a House floor vote after the bill is discharged from committees.
- limiting the number of hours allowed for debate in each House.
- forbidding any amendments to the President’s implementing bill.
- eliminating floor procedures including Senate unanimous consent, normal debate and cloture rules, and the Senate filibuster.
- requiring only a simple majority vote in each House for enactment, violating the Article II treaty clause.

The Commerce Clause of Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution grants Congress the power to “to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations.” Yet since 1974, Fast Track legislation has repeatedly delegated this Congressional power to the executive branch, undermining Congress’s capacity to effectively represent the interests and values of the diverse regions and peoples of the United States— often with disastrous consequences.

In the 20 years since NAFTA was implemented under Fast Track, the agreement has resulted in a “staggering \$181 billion U.S. trade deficit with NAFTA partners Mexico and Canada and the related loss of 1 million net U.S. jobs under NAFTA; growing income inequality; displacement of more than one million Mexican *campesino* farmers and a doubling of desperate immigration from Mexico; and more than \$360 million paid to corporations after “investor-state” tribunal attacks on domestic public interest policies.”¹

¹Wallach, Lori. “NAFTA at 20: One Million U.S. Jobs Lost, Higher Income Inequality.” *World Post*. Huffington Post and Berggruen Institute on Governance, 6 Jan. 2014. Web. 20 June 2014. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lori-wallach/nafta-at-20-one-million-u_b_4550207.html>.

Recent trade agreements have continued this pattern. Marking the 2nd anniversary of Korea-US Free Trade Agreement implementation in March 2014, Public Citizen reported an “estimated, cumulative loss of more than \$9.2 billion in U.S. exports to Korea under the FTA’s first two years. Using the administration’s export-to-job ratio, this drop in net U.S. exports to Korea in the FTA’s first two years represents the loss of more than 46,600 U.S. jobs.”²

The administration is now seeking to reauthorize Fast Track for the first time since it expired in 2007, but the office of the US Trade Representative spent five years negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and last year initiated simultaneous negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) . Congress has largely been shut out of these negotiations. Requests to allow members of Congress to attend TPP negotiating rounds has have been denied and members of Congress have been granted highly restricted access to TPP negotiating texts. Meanwhile 600 trade advisers, mostly representing corporate interests, have access to TPP negotiating texts and have been using that access to wield undue influence on US negotiating positions. Requests to USTR to address key congressional concerns have apparently been ignored on issues like addressing currency manipulation and holding the line on a strong and enforceable environment chapter.

Unfortunately, the legislative branch’s first real opportunity to carefully study and influence these trade agreements will be when implementing legislation is sent to Congress. Thus, in order to adequately fulfil its responsibilities under Article 1, Section 8, Congress must retain its power to deliberate on TPP and TTIP on its own timeline, and amend the legislation as needed to better reflect US interests and values.

If elected, I will work to ensure that Congress retains its Constitutional authority regarding international trade in order to ensure outcomes that benefit, rather than harm, workers, consumers, the environment, and our economy.

Name_____

Date_____

Signature_____

Email completed pledge to ftpromise@tradejustice.net

² Beachy, Ben. *Korea FTA Outcomes on the Pact’s Second Anniversary: U.S. Exports to Korea Are Down, Imports from Korea Are Up, Auto and Meat Sectors Hit Particularly Hard*. Rep. Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, Mar. 2014. Web. 20 June 2014.
<<https://www.citizen.org/documents/Korea-FTA-outcomes.pdf>>.