

#DISRUPTJ20 TRADE JUSTICE BLOC

News Release

For Immediate Release
1/19/17

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Trade Justice Activists Protest at Inauguration Checkpoint Demand Just and Sustainable Alternatives to TPP Model, End to Scapegoating of Immigrant Victims of NAFTA

Washington, DC – Trade justice advocates representing labor, the environment, health care, food safety and more will protest the inauguration of president-elect Donald Trump as part of the Disrupt J20 events this Friday. They will meet at 6th and I Sts, NW at 8AM and march to the inaugural checkpoint at 7th and D Streets. Activists will chant and hold signs, including a 10 foot tall mesh banner. There will be video and photo opportunities.

Trade was a deciding factor in the 2016 presidential election, with strong opposition to the deal among both grassroots liberals and conservatives. “Workers across the country who are struggling from low wages and lack of bargaining power and families concerned about food safety, access to health care and the climate crisis recognized that it was Democrats like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama who betrayed them by pushing trade deals rigged to benefit multinational corporations and undermined the power of communities to protect themselves,” said Margaret Flowers co-director of Popular Resistance. “Trump made opposition to trade deals like NAFTA and TPP a central theme in his economic nationalist message, while Hillary Clinton failed to convince voters that her late TPP opposition was genuine.”

While Trump has promised to pull out of TPP, activists remain concerned that Trump's proposed “better deals” -- including a renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will still prioritize corporate profits over climate and environmental protection, food safety, global access to affordable medicines, labor rights, and other public interest concerns. Additionally, given his commitment to deregulation, activists are concerned that that Trump will continue negotiations for the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), a 50+ nation agreement that threatens to roll back critical public interest rules. While Trump has showed little enthusiasm for reviving the stalled talks for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, a proposed US-EU trade deal, he has expressed interest in a trade deal with a post-Brexit UK, already the US' largest European trading partner.

Fair trade advocates generally view Trump's nominee for US Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer as an improvement over current US Trade Representative Michael Froman, a former Citigroup executive who took a xx million golden parachute deal when he left Citi for his trade post – where he spent years negotiating sweetheart deals for Citi and other major corporations. But Trump has clarified that Commerce Secretary nominee Wilbur Ross, not Lighthizer, will be his lead on trade policy. According to a Reuters report released Tuesday, Ross has offshored 2,700 jobs since 2004. Ross originally supported TPP, but later reversed his position. At Ross' confirmation hearing Wednesday, two protesters were arrested for chanting holding a banner behind Ross that read “Ross Supported TPP and Offshored Jobs.”

Adam Weissman of the Trade Justice Alliance points out Trump's hypocrisy when he blames the victims of NAFTA for migrating to the United States. “NAFTA destroyed Mexico's economy, displaced millions of farmers, and created a bloody drug war, resulting in mass migration across the border by Mexicans fleeing violence and seeking to earn income to feed their families. Instead of building walls and deporting immigrants, Trump's planned NAFTA renegotiation plans should acknowledge NAFTA's devastating impact on Mexico and should advance an agenda that will allow Mexico to rebuild its agricultural base and economy rather than simply advancing export opportunities for US agribusiness corporations.”

According to Kevin Zeese, co-director of Popular Resistance, “A rising tide of populist frustration at global economic elites that have failed working people fueled the Sanders campaign on the left, the Trump campaign on the right, and the Brexit vote in England. We are fighting to channel that frustration into an agenda the fight for global justice rather than xenophobia, narrow nationalism, and more pro-corporate deals under the guise of a reform agenda.”

Additional info: <http://tradeforpeopleandplanet.org> * <http://tradejustice.net>