



A Union of Professionals

TELL CONGRESS:
Stop “Fast Track” and Say No to Unfair Trade Deals

BACKGROUND:

One of the biggest threats facing labor in 2015 will be congressional efforts to pass trade promotion authority, commonly referred to as “fast track.”

Fast track prevents Congress from amending any parts of a trade deal, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which limits our ability to have any real input on our nation’s trade policy.

Now is the time to weigh in with your senators and representative, as fast-track legislation may be introduced in both chambers as early as April.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Fast track enables international trade agreements to be finalized behind closed doors. These secret negotiations have cost workers their jobs, increased wage inequality and damaged our environment.
- Fast track undercuts the public’s voice on international trade agreements by limiting Congress’ constitutional powers. Under fast track:
 - Congress has limited ability to amend trade deals or hold significant public debate over them.
 - Congress cannot weigh in on how our trading partners are selected (and, in fact, some of the TPP partners are countries responsible for severe human rights violations).
 - Congress would have a limited 90-day window to vote on a trade deal that has essentially already been approved by the president, and with only a simple up-or-down vote.
- Fast track helped bring us both CAFTA and NAFTA, and we have seen how these trade deals have led to increased corporate profits at the expense of working families.
- Stopping fast track in Congress means preserving transparency and accountability in our democratic process. We must ensure that trade deals like the TPP are scrutinized by the public and our elected officials before they are signed.
- Trade agreements *could* have the potential to promote shared global prosperity if worker, environmental and consumer protections are prioritized.

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.6 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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- We need to join forces with our allies in the environmental, consumer protection and labor movements by participating in a grass-roots lobbying effort to urge our members of Congress to reject fast track and preserve Congress' constitutional powers.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR AFT MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE?

- The impact of trade policy goes far beyond factories and industry; a bad trade agreement has the potential to hurt communities by undermining public education and other public services.
- Public education and other public services, including healthcare, are the propeller of our nation's economy, an anchor of democracy, and a gateway to racial, social and economic justice.
- Unfortunately, the trade deals currently under negotiation—such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA)—appear to be following the same outdated and failed models of the past.
- Corporations want our trade deals to include secret tribunals, giving foreign investors the right to “due process for profits” at a time when teachers' due process rights are being attacked across the nation. Trade deals should not be used to protect education privatizers.
- If educational services are included in international trade deals, corporations like Pearson Education Services might be able to challenge regulations that impede their business practices.
- Pharmaceutical companies want to use trade deals to protect their profits, but we want to ensure that our patients and loved ones have access to affordable prescription drugs. Trade deals should not facilitate healthcare privatization.
- Trade deals should not undermine the ability of local and state governments, and the federal government, to make regulations to protect the public interest.
- The AFT and all our affiliates oppose fast track and demand a more transparent, democratic and participatory process to ensure that trade deals work for working people.
- Trade deals ought to lift up the standards of working people across this nation, and deals like the TPP, TTIP and TISA fail the test.
- Tell your federal representatives to oppose fast track and unfair trade deals that will lead to even more job loss due to offshoring while allowing companies to attack our labor, environmental and consumer safety standards.