Everything You Need to Know About...

"The T.R.A.D.E. Act"

Official Title: H.R. 3012 / S. 2821 Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act

Introduced: June 24, 2009 House, Dec. 1, 2009 Senate

Sponsors: Senate- Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) with 6 cosponsors, including one Independent, House- Mike Michaud (D-Maine) with 138 cosponsors, including one Republican

What It Would Do:

- Requires a review of existing trade pacts (including NAFTA, CAFTA, WTO, etc.)
- Replaces fast track approval for trade bills and instead grants more democratic control over bills by increasing congressional involvement in their approval
- Requires the Government Accountability Office to do a detailed review and report on the impacts of existing agreements
- Forbids trade pacts from requiring service sector deregulation and privatization and rejects special protection for pharmaceuticals seeking to impede the distribution of generic drugs
- Requires that food and product safety, environmental and labor standards, agricultural rules, currency anti-manipulation and trade remedy rules, and national security exceptions be included in all trade pacts
- Rejects bans on measures to protect local or national production, anti-sweatshop and environmental procurement policies

Why Some People Are For It:

1) It should decrease immigration to the US from Mexico and Central America as fewer farmers will be pushed off their farms by unfair competition from subsidized US agricultural products.
2) It will allow Congress more control over the negotiation of trade policies.
3) It will allow Congress to revisit old pacts and evaluate how they are doing and what should be altered.
4) It would allow for better environmental protections.
5) It would decrease the incentive structure for corporations to move manufacturing jobs out of the country.
6) It would open the possibility for Buy America campaigns and other more protectionist oriented stances.

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Activist Quick Sheet Continued

Why We're For It:

1) It will allow for democratic participation, accountability and transparency during trade negotiations.

2) It contains provisions that work to protect the dignified lives of small farmers, indigenous communities, women and otherwise vulnerable populations.The act gives countries the power to counteract the unfair competition of U.S.-subsidized agricultural products. This would help pork producers in Nicaragua and corn producers in Mexico. The TRADE Act allows countries to make their own decisions about sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty and not be forced to accept the entry of U.S. agribusinesses with their genetically modified seeds that require excessive use of water, fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides. The bill requires informed consent and benefit sharing for indigenous or traditional knowledge.

3) Text in the body of the agreements guarantees that core labor and environmental standards are strengthened, as defined by international law.

4) There would be space for national governments to pursue development strategies that support sustainable, locally-determined economic, social and environmental priorities.

5) This creates a framework that focuses finance and investment on productive, long-term development that ensures economic security and sustainable use of resources.

6) It guarantees that public services like health care, education and potable water will remain public and accessible to poor communities.

7) This would encourage international trade and investment systems that emphasize fundamental human rights, in order to eclipse violence and oppression.

8) Improve upon the transparency, fairness and strength of dispute resolution and enforcement, which might ultimately lead to stronger support for labor standards.

What You Can Do:

- Check that your representatives are already backing this bill by searching the bill number at www.govtrack.us.
- Contact your representative and tell them your reasons for supporting these bills. Find their information at www.contactingthecongress.org.
- We are also happy to work with other grassroots groups that would like to focus on this issue. If you would like to be part of our campaign to improve trade, please contact us at info@afgj.org.

Legislative Stage: Sent to committee

For More Information:

- On the language of the bill, a brief video about it, and Public Citizen's ongoing campaign, visti: www.citizen.org.
- For Alliance for Global Justice's extended analysis of the bill, please visit our Nicanet project web-site at: www.nicanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/158-trade-act.pdf, http://afgj.org/?p=191#
- Feel free to contact our organization with questions, comments, or to partner in this important opportunity to improve US trade policy.

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