



National Association of Letter Carriers

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Fredric V. Rolando, President

April 30, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 277,000 members of the National Association of Letter Carriers who live and work in every Congressional district in America, I write to express our strong opposition to the "Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015," (H.R. 1890), currently before the House of Representatives. Leaving aside the absurdity of legislating negotiation objectives for the Trans-Pacific-Partnership (TPP) after the agreement is all-but completed, this legislation to grant the executive branch trade promotion authority for the next several years continues the undemocratic practice of allowing the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to negotiate trade and investment deals in secret and forcing Congress to vote up or down with no chance of amendment.

As you may recall, Fast Track authority paved the way for enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and for China's entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO). These agreements have since depressed wages in America and have devastated our manufacturing sector by helping American companies shift production overseas to countries that have weak unions, few labor standards, and workers that are often paid less than a dollar an hour. Since 2000, more than 60,000 American factories have closed and our trade deficits have soared. Even more, over the last 20 years, we have replaced strong manufacturing-based middle-class jobs with a lower-skill service economy that offers little more than stagnant wages. We have run up massive trade deficits because our export growth has been more than matched by import growth, and we have allowed free trade to become an engine of inequality.

Now trade negotiators are going after the service sector. The WTO is currently sponsoring the negotiation of a Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) among dozens of countries. At the same time, the United States government is in bilateral talks with the European Union (EU) on the Trans-Atlantic Trade Investment Partnership (T-TIP), which would cover our economic interaction with the EU's 27 countries. In both negotiations, the Europeans are calling for the U.S. to phase out the Postal Service's monopoly on the delivery of letter mail, a policy adopted by the EU between 1992 and 2011. In other words, both the T-TIP and the TISA are direct threats to postal workers' jobs and America's system of affordable universal service.

Trade agreements should not have the ability to deregulate the Postal Service or any government agency. Moreover, we are concerned that Wall Street banks will use the TPP to ban governments from offering financial services, a prohibition that would block low cost banking services through our postal retail network, a promising solution for the tens of millions of Americans who are unbanked or under-banked. If these policies are being proposed, our members and the American people deserve to know about it before the vote on trade promotion authority is granted.

In the coming weeks, your role in the federal government's system of checks and balances will be crucial in ensuring that there is transparency and equity in the trade process. Congress must maintain its ability to approve trade partners in advance, to determine whether America's objectives are being met inclusively, and to have the ability to strike or amend from trade deals provisions that fail to incorporate your input. For these reasons, the NALC strongly urges you to vote "No" on H.R. 1890 until Congress' authority in the trade process is restored, to ensure that our leaders are negotiating the best possible trade deals.

Sincerely,

Fredric V. Rolando
President