

November 11, 2018
M19-003

TO: SPEEA Council
FROM: SPEEA Legislative & Public Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: **PRESUBMITTED NEW BUSINESS: TRADE AGREEMENTS**

BACKGROUND:

One of the most effective ways to create good new jobs and reverse the income decline of the past decade is for the United States to "become a thriving trading nation," concludes a new high-level Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)-sponsored Independent Task Force report on U.S. Trade and Investment Policy.

The report calls for recognizing that rebuilding our manufacturing base is in our national interest, and that we need new public policies that create good jobs and help us compete in the global economy.

The growth of global trade and investment has brought significant benefits to the United States and to the rest of the world. But U.S. leadership on international trade has waned in recent years because of deep domestic divisions over trade policy that arise largely from the very real economic difficulties too many Americans face.

Trade agreements between the United States and other countries should address the following:

Labor standards and protection

- Workers in the US and other countries should have the right to band together and collectively negotiate their wages, benefits and safety without interference.

Pollution control and environmental protections

- US producers move work to countries with weak environmental protections, leading to a race to the bottom. A trade agreement should obligate participating countries to meet minimum standards for protection of air, water, and the natural environment

Monitoring and enforcement provisions

- Previous agreements created global institutions to monitor and enforce investor rights. We need corresponding measures to protect rights of workers, communities, and the environment.

Balanced trade

- Large chronic trade deficits undermine our domestic economy and move jobs away. We should take coherent comprehensive steps to keep trade surpluses and deficits under control

Correction of currency misalignment

- Global financial distortions make the dollar artificially strong relative to foreign currencies, driving up the price of US products and making foreign products artificially cheap. Trade policies should support public policies that bring currencies into alignment..

Dispute settlement

- Trade disputes should be settled by domestic courts. Trade agreements should not subsidize offshoring of jobs by protecting global corporations who take on business risk by producing in countries with weak rule of law

Food and product safety, quality and labeling requirements

- Countries should have latitude to ensure imported food and consumer products meet reasonable safety and quality standards.

Country of origin labelling

- Trade policy should support meaningful and accurate labeling of the country of manufacturer or origin, so consumers can make informed purchasing decisions

American Content standard

- A country should be able to promote new industries and encourage industrial development in its domestic economy.

Allowance for Domestic procurement

- Trade agreements should not override anybody's ability to buy locally produced products or food

Manufacturing and industrial strategies

- Global corporations have little or no commitment to workers or communities where they operate. Trade policy should recognize that national strategies can play a legitimate role.

Pro statements: SPEEA members support and promote trade with other countries that is fair, promotes employee and environmental safety and contains American products.

Con statements: Increasing product content manufactured by American workers would increase the cost of products.

SPEEA L&PA Committee Majority Position: Trade agreements will continue in the future and the SPEEA Council should define a position on trade agreements.

MOTION

It is moved that: THE SPEEA COUNCIL SUPPORTS TRADE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND WILL ADVOCATE IN FAVOR OF TRADE AGREEMENTS THAT INCLUDE:

- STRONG ENFORCEABLE ENVIRONMENTAL, LABOR STANDARDS, WORKER SAFETY AND DEMOCRATIC LABOR UNIONS,
- PROVISIONS THAT CONTROL LARGE TRADE SURPLUSES AND DEFICITS,
- SUPPORT REASONABLE AMERICAN CONTENT STANDARDS AND DOMESTIC PROCUREMENT,
- ADDRESS CURRENCY MISALIGNMENT,
- PROTECT FOOD AND PRODUCT SAFETY,
- PERMIT COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING REQUIREMENTS,
- RECOGNIZE THAT NATIONAL MANUFACTURING STRATEGIES PLAY A LEGITIMATE ROLE IN REBUILDING AND MAINTAINING OUR INDUSTRIAL BASE AND
- RAISING LIVING STANDARDS.

Passage or adoption of any legislative or public issues proposal shall be by published ballot and require: Total affirmative vote must be a majority of all Council Representatives including those not present or not voting, excluding Council Representatives working in excess of 50 statute air miles from the meeting and are unable to attend and a committee majority position.