

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

January 21, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We look forward to working with you to establish trade policies that promote the creation of American jobs and support our national economic interests while safeguarding Congress's prerogatives to determine what domestic policies best promote the public interest.

Last year at this time, you focused the country's attention on the unprecedented widening of American income inequality. Across the political spectrum, economists agree that our trade policies have been a significant contributor to the growth in U.S. income inequality. When we lose well-paying manufacturing sector jobs to bad trade policies, American wages are pushed down across the economy as displaced workers flood the jobs market seeking reemployment in non-offshorable service sectors.

We can ill afford to have more American jobs sent offshore or destroyed by floods of imports produced with poverty-wage labor because of unfair trade agreements. Our constituents know that American trade pacts have resulted in an erosion of our manufacturing base and American wages. U.S. government data show that more than five million American manufacturing jobs alone have been eliminated since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) went into effect. More recently waves of offshoring in the service sector have begun.

Yet, time and again, our nation has replicated the same failed NAFTA model. After two years of the most recent such NAFTA-style pact, the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, our trade deficit with Korea had doubled. This translated into a net loss of 60,000 more American jobs, according to the trade-jobs ratio that your administration used to project gains from the deal. Given these outcomes, it is not surprising that polling consistently shows that Americans - Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike - oppose our current model of "trade" agreements.

Yet, that Korea pact was used as the template by U.S. negotiators for the latest deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP.) The TPP includes expanded versions of many of NAFTA's most devastating terms: investor protections that facilitate offshoring, a ban on Buy American procurement preferences, and the investor-state tribunals that subject American laws to review by foreign tribunals empowered to order payment of unlimited U.S. tax dollars to foreign firms that seek to avoid playing by the same rules as U.S. firms.

Thus, we write with serious concerns about both the TPP and the prospect of Congress delegating wide swaths of its Constitutional authority to regulate trade (Article 1, Section 8) through "Fast Track" or any other open-ended delegation of "trade promotion" authority.

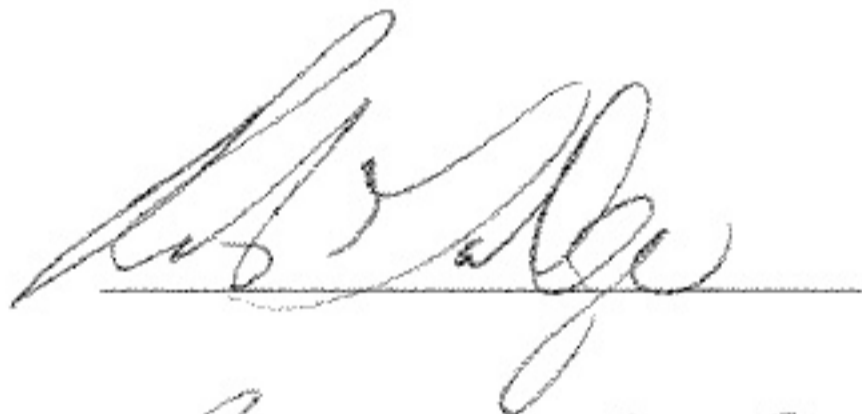
We join the vast majority of House Democrats in the 113th Congress who announced opposition to Fast Track Trade Promotion Authority. Nearly every Ranking Member and large blocs of the New Democrat Coalition, Blue Dogs, Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Hispanic Caucus were united in opposing Fast Track and demanding a replacement to that Nixon-era procedure that Congress has refused to authorize but for five of the past twenty years.

Indeed, given the vast scope of today's "trade" agreements, we believe that a broad delegation of Congress's constitutional trade authority is fundamentally inappropriate. Negotiations on the TPP delve deeply into many non-trade matters under the authority of Congress and state legislatures. Since the United States will be obliged to bring existing and future U.S. policies into compliance with the norms established in the TPP, the pact will create binding policies on future Congresses in numerous areas. This includes policies related to patents and copyright, land use, food, Internet governance, agriculture and product standards, natural resources, the environment, professional licensing, state-owned enterprises and government procurement policies, as well as financial, healthcare, energy, telecommunications and other service sector regulations. And, if completed, the TPP would lock in policies on these non-trade matters that could not be altered without consent of all other signatory countries.

Our constituents sent us to Congress to get American trade policy back on track - not give away its authority to do so. Reducing our authority to ensure our trade agreements serve the public interest will undermine our efforts to create American jobs and to reform a misguided trade policy that has swamped our manufacturing base under a massive trade deficit, offshored millions of American jobs and pushed down our wages.

We are all deeply committed to creating jobs in our communities and across the country, to providing access to affordable healthcare and medicines and to promoting a healthy environment. To do so effectively, we believe it is critical that Congress maintains its authority to ensure American trade agreements are a good deal for the American people.

Sincerely,



Kathleen

Ted W. Lee

Brenda Lawrence