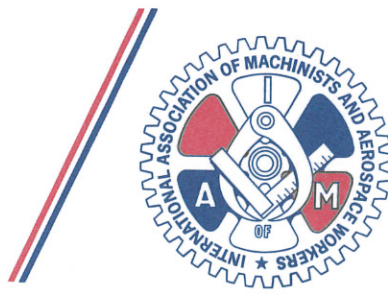


**International  
Association of  
Machinists and  
Aerospace Workers**



9000 Machinists Place  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772-2687

Area Code 301  
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

January 27, 2015

Dear Representative,

Recently, President Obama called on Congress to pass “fast track” trade authorization for the secretly negotiated Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement (FTA). **The Machinists Union strongly opposes the fast track approval process, which is viewed as the primary vehicle to pass the TPP.** The TTP represents yet another FTA that sacrifices the middle class for corporate interests that have so long ago turned their backs on U.S. workers.

Negotiated behind closed doors and covering twelve Pacific Rim countries, the TPP is the largest free trade agreement ever negotiated and it goes far beyond traditional trade issues like tariff reduction. While the text has still not been made public, leaked texts indicate that the TTP seeks to undue the financial reform measures of Dodd-Frank, end Buy American requirements and other governmental procurement practices, and undermine current U.S. regulations covering such areas as food safety, the environment, and patent and copyright law. While the TTP covers a broad swath of non-tariff issues, and, if based on the failed “Peru” template, would not require countries that lack fundamental labor rights, like Vietnam and Brunei, to end their authoritarian human rights abuses. The bill would also fail to correct notorious defects in the labor chapters of FTAs such as with Columbia. We have also yet to hear anything to indicate that the TTP addresses the serious problem of currency manipulation by our competitors.

Historically, Congress has relinquished its Constitutional authority over trade for the most egregious FTAs like NAFTA which have had a devastating impact on U.S. workers, the manufacturing sector, and our communities. Since NAFTA was implemented, hundreds of thousands of high wage U.S. jobs have been lost due to the skyrocketing trade deficit with Mexico. Most recently, fast track, which effectively strips FTAs of Congressional oversight and only requires an up or down vote for passage, was used to pass the Korea-U.S. FTA. The FTA with Korea was sold on the promise of expanded exports to that country. Unfortunately, our worst fears have been realized. Not only have imports from Korea increased, but our exports to Korea have fallen in every month since the passage of the FTA. According to data from the U.S. International Trade Commission, our trade deficit with Korea has grown 50 percent and over 50,000 American jobs have been lost.

While Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the authority to “regulate commerce with foreign nations,” fast track surrenders that authority and responsibility to the administration. Under fast track, the President can unilaterally select

trading partners, enter into negotiations, and determine the content of the trade agreement and when the negotiations are complete. While prior fast track legislation often listed a number of admirable negotiating objectives, the administration is under no obligation to adhere to those objectives since the legislation has lacked Congressional enforcement mechanisms. Consequently, both Democratic and Republican administrations have historically ignored the negotiating objectives.

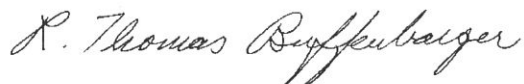
Additionally, under fast track the President can sign a trade agreement prior to a Congressional vote. Further, the administration, not Congress writes the enabling legislation, determines the timing of the Congressional vote, and the length of debate. No other legislation is subject to such blatant control by the Executive Branch of our government.

While campaigning in 2008, President Obama declared that we needed "a new day in trade." We could not agree more with the President, and since he entered office six years ago the IAM has worked with Members of Congress and other interested parties to craft an alternative ratification process to the antiquated fast track authorization first designed by President Nixon. An authentic ratification process for a trade agreement would provide for real Congressional oversight of the entire negotiating process, including the selection of countries with which we would enter into negotiations with, as well as the development of enforceable negotiating objectives. Additionally, the process would be transparent and open and include real input from all sectors of the American public and not just from corporate interests as happens now.

For working Americans our corporate driven trade policies have meant the continual threat of outsourcing, stagnant wages, and declining living standards. This will not change until deeply flawed free trade agreements like the TTP are negotiated not in the back room, but in the light of day. Additionally, we must not allow secret trade agreements like the TTP to be railroaded through Congress. I urge you to put America on the right track to renewed prosperity by rejecting fast track legislation.

If you have any questions, please contact Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at (301) 967-4575.

Sincerely,



R. Thomas Buffenbarger  
International President