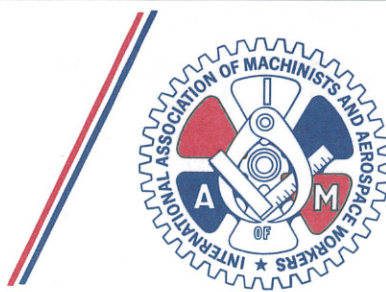


**International  
Association of  
Machinists and  
Aerospace Workers**



9000 Machinists Place  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772-2687

Area Code 301  
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

February 4, 2015

To: All State Council Presidents, Secretary-Treasurers, and Recording Secretaries in the United States

RE: February Congressional Recess Stop Fast Track Meetings

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

State Councils are strongly urged to meet or contact the members of their Congressional delegation on the attached list during the upcoming President's Day district work period. Please let them know that we cannot have a Fast Track approval process for the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which is in the final stages of negotiations.

Based on leaked texts, the secretly negotiated TPP reflects the same old corporate driven free trade agenda that has weakened American manufacturing, exported our jobs, and lowered the living standards of working families. The TPP also fails to deal with currency manipulation, which allows our competitors to artificially lower the value of their currency and the cost of their manufactured goods in the global marketplace. This puts American manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage and results in the loss of U.S. jobs.

Historically, Congress has relinquished its Constitutional authority over trade for the most egregious FTAs like NAFTA and, more recently, the Korea-U.S. FTA. With Fast Track Congress abdicates its Constitutional responsibility to set the terms and conditions of our trade policy. Free trade agreements are subject to limited debate and a straight up or down vote. This is no way to deal with a free trade agreement as expansive as the TPP, which would apply to twelve Pacific Rim countries.

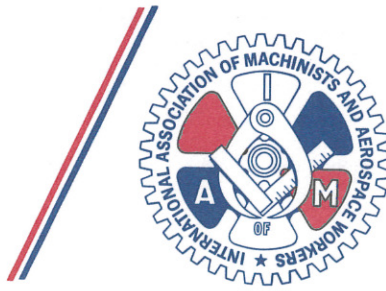
State Councils are requested to report the outcome of their meetings to Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at (301) 967-4575.

Fraternally,

R. Thomas Buffenbarger  
International President

Cc: Executive Council  
COSS  
DBRs

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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

January 27, 2015

Dear Senator,

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 TPP 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 TPP 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 TPP 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 TPP 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 TPP are negotiated not in the back room, but in the light of day. Additionally, we must not allow secret trade agreements like the TPP 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



# American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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January 8, 2015

Dear Representative:

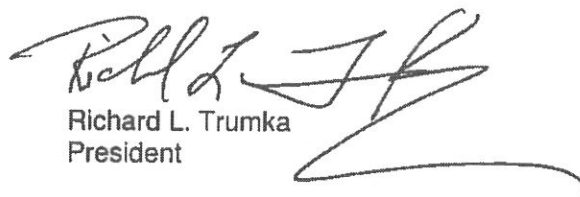
I know we share the goal of creating a better America, one in which all of America's workers can earn fair pay in decent conditions, confident their children will live in a better, freer, more prosperous world. That's why I'm writing to ask you to join me in the fight against traditional "Fast Track" trade promotion authority.

To achieve a better future, America must rethink its trade and economic policies—policies that have for more than 30 years driven wages down, hollowed out our manufacturing sector, undermined our financial strength, and watered down the ability of our state governments to adopt the procurement and regulatory policies of their choice.

Simply put, "Fast Track" makes it far too easy for the executive branch to present America with a poorly negotiated deal—one that will threaten our wages, jobs, families and communities—and to ensure that deal's passage through Congress. This is no way to improve economic opportunities for workers or entrepreneurs, raise wages and or build a sustainable economy for our children.

I encourage you to consider what you give up by supporting the secretive, undemocratic, outdated "Fast Track" process: the opportunity to create better trade rules that work for all of us. Please join me in standing with America's working families by opposing "Fast Track."<sup>1</sup>

Sincerely,



Richard L. Trumka  
President

RLT/CD/lkr

<sup>1</sup> For ideas on developing a more democratic, participatory and transparent trade negotiating authority that will support good trade deals, see "Time for a New Track: What Labor Unions Mean When We Say Trade Policy Must Ensure That Negotiations Are Transparent, Democratic and Participatory," available at: [http://www.aflcio.org/content/download/132311/3551971/TTPFastTrack\\_TimeForANewTrack.pdf](http://www.aflcio.org/content/download/132311/3551971/TTPFastTrack_TimeForANewTrack.pdf).

## Trade and Fast Track

Republican leaders in Congress and the Obama administration have declared that trade is a potential area of compromise this year and working people should be concerned. From what we've seen, new trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) are being negotiated in the same failed NAFTA model. The negotiations are focused on padding corporate profits not increasing worker's paychecks. Before any trade deal comes to a vote, the administration will ask Congress to pass "Fast Track" legislation.

### What is "Fast Track"?

"Fast Track" is a policy that gives the executive branch the opportunity to negotiate—out of public view—as many trade agreements as it can during a given time period and send them to Congress, which may then only vote yes or no on the agreement: it may not amend the agreement or its "implementing bill," nor may it send the agreement back to the executive branch with instructions for improvement.

"Fast Track" is dangerous because it forces Congress to make a take-it-or-leave-it decision on a 29 chapter, 1,000 page agreement no matter how bad it is for wages, jobs, small business and the environment. Instead of exercising its constitutional authority to review and amend a trade deal, Congress is unable to improve any section that hurts working people.

A fast track bill was introduced last year but it never came to a vote thanks, in part, to strong opposition from the AFL-CIO. That's because nearly two-thirds of American voters oppose granting the President fast track authority. They believe it gives too much power to one person.

### Why is "Fast Track" bad for workers?

No trade deal, no matter how bad, has ever been defeated under "Fast Track" procedures. The minute the negotiators have the "Fast Track" ticket in their hands, they know they are free to agree to provisions that will send jobs overseas, reduce the bargaining power of workers, jeopardize important environmental, health and safety regulations, and give global corporations even more influence over our economy. While it's possible to influence the administration to reverse course and create a new, pro-worker trade policy, it will be nearly impossible to defeat global corporate interests if "Fast Track" is approved.

Please talk to your federal elected officials about why "Fast Track" harms workers and why they should oppose considering it during the Lame Duck session.

- Give the member and staff the AFL-CIO study on the devastating effects of NAFTA. We think "On the whole, NAFTA-style agreements have proved to be primarily a vehicle to increase corporate profits at the expense of workers, consumers, farmers, communities, the environment and even democracy itself." Download the report here: [http://www.aflcio.org/content/download/121921/3393031/March2014\\_NAFTA20\\_nb.pdf](http://www.aflcio.org/content/download/121921/3393031/March2014_NAFTA20_nb.pdf) Note, If you would like hard copies of the report (which are limited) please contact Cassandra Waters at [cwaters@aflcio.org](mailto:cwaters@aflcio.org)

- Explain that bad, corporate-centered trade agreements like NAFTA put downward pressure on wages, make it harder for workers to organize and bargain for better, and have exacerbated inequality by skewing benefits to capital instead of labor. If the member cares about wages and inequality, he or she should care about creating a new trade model.
- Senator Wyden (D-OR) and other Democrats say they support reforming “Fast Track” to make it better. Piecemeal reforms won’t help this fundamentally flawed system, which puts too much power in the executive branch and away from the people. We need a wholesale rewrite to trade negotiating authority that will open up the process to make sure it is more open, participatory and democratic, and make sure that the Administration and Congress are accountable for the outcomes of the trade deal. There can’t be any more blank checks to negotiate deals that are bad for the 99%.
- Explain that working people are very interested in “Fast Track,” and whether Members of Congress will vote for more bad trade policy just because it has a new name. We want a new track, but that means serious reforms that will lead to a whole new set of trade rules that put working people before corporate profits. Trade deals can no longer substitute corporate interests for the interests of the American people, which is why we must bring trade negotiations out into the public.
- Ask the member to keep in mind the lessons learned from NAFTA and the harm it has done to the middle class as s/he considers “Fast Track” legislation, as well as the trade agreements, the TPP (Pacific) and TTIP (European).
- ASK:
  - Will the member oppose “Fast Track” when it is introduced this Congress? Will he or she say so publicly?
  - Will the member commit to supporting trade negotiating authority only if it ensures:
    - appropriate trading partners,
    - greater public participation,
    - greater access to U.S. trade policy making, trade proposals, and negotiating texts for members of the public
    - sufficient Congressional participation and oversight,
    - executive branch accountability for achieving trade rules that benefit America’s workers, and
    - the assurance that Congress, not the executive branch, has the final authority to determine whether trade negotiating goals have been met and whether a particular agreement should qualify for expedited consideration.