

CITIZENS TRADE CAMPAIGN



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Congressional Leaders Keep Promise of Change

Trade Coalition Recognizes 106 Members for Cosponsoring Crucial Trade Reform Legislation

Washington D.C. - Over one hundred Congressional members joined together today in supporting bipartisan consensus legislation to reform America's failed trade policy. The "2009 TRADE Act" reflects commitments made by President Obama over 2008, as well as reform promises made by congressional candidates during the course of last year's campaign.

House members kept those election year promises today by cosponsoring the TRADE Act, dubbed a more balanced way to expand trade. The list of cosponsors spans 33 states, and includes 8 prominent committee chairs, 45 subcommittee chairs, 19 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, 17 members of the Blue Dog Caucus and 13 "New Democrats".

"The IAM applauds these one hundred and six members of congress for keeping their promise to reform our nation's trade laws," said R. Thomas Buffenbarger, President of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers (IAMAW). "They understand that the status quo is unacceptable as millions of manufacturing jobs are lost and as our trade deficit continues to soar. We know that trade is important and the Trade Act is a serious effort to make trade laws work for U.S. workers."

Entitled the *Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act*, the bill was first introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Rep. Mike Michaud (D-Maine) last year, along with support from 80 cosponsors in the House and Senate. It was introduced again today after 350 diverse organizations contacted members of congress in February 2009 calling for reintroduction.

"This bill maps out a fair path forward, detailing what we support in a good agreement," said Katy Ziegler Thomas, Vice President of Government Relations for the National Farmers Union. "It breaks ground on ensuring America's farmers and ranchers will have a level playing field when it comes to global trade."

Lisa Kinard, Director of Federal Legislation and Regulation at International Brotherhood of Teamsters, echoed her organization's support, saying, "The TRADE Act makes sure that the benefits of trade go to the many workers as well as the richest few. It sets new rules for global trade that create good jobs and improve working conditions everywhere."

Brett Blackwelder, President Friends of the Earth U.S., added his accolades, noting "Trade agreements should support, rather than undermine, environmental protection. The TRADE Act encourages responsible behavior from trading partners, providing a blueprint for a more sustainable way to move goods and services across borders."

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Citizens Trade Campaign is a coalition of labor, environmental religious, family farm, and consumer organizations united in the pursuit of social and environmental justice in trade policy

"Americans for Democratic Action applauds the 106 House co-sponsors for taking this monumental step towards an equitable, balanced and fair trade policy," said Don Kusler, Working Families Win project director. "ADA will commit our full resources both in Washington and around the country to push this landmark legislation."

Andy Gussert, CTC national director, added "Not one environmental, labor, family farm or religious group in the country endorsed the Peru Free Trade Agreement, but these organizations want to see a responsible expansion of trade. This legislation offers us all a fair way forward. It maps out a consensus model that reflects the promise of change made by President Obama and members of congress in 2008."

Gussert, along with others in the coalition, acknowledge trade pacts such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) have not met up to past promises. The Trade Act articulates specific changes needed within the NAFTA model to ensure future deals promote good jobs, safe food, basic human rights and environmental health.

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Citizens Trade Campaign (CTC) is a national coalition of environmental, labor, consumer, family farm, faith, and other civil society groups, and serves as a leading advocacy vehicle in the fight for international trade policy that focuses on the interests of the majority of the world's working people. For more information about trade policy reform, call CTC at (202) 494-8826 or email Andy Gussert at agussert@citizenstrade.org.

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