

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Rep. David Wu Praised for Leadership on Trade Reform** *New Human Rights Language in Trade Reform Bill Called "A Milestone"*

PORTLAND, OR – Comprehensive trade reform legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives earlier today includes new human rights standards that, for the first time, would put human rights in trade agreements on par with issues like copyright enforcement and patent protections. The human rights language was championed by Oregon Congressman David Wu (D-1<sup>st</sup>), who was praised by the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign and others for his leadership in connecting trade policy to human rights advances.

“The fact that this legislation now includes strong, enforceable human rights language is a major milestone. The TRADE Act is widely recognized as a new model for international trade policy—one that advances the reform promises made by President Obama and the wider Democratic Party,” said Arthur Stamoulis, director of the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign. “With the TRADE Act’s new provisions, future trade deals can be used as tool to prevent human rights violations. It’s hard to overstate how important a shift that is in our approach to international commerce. No one in Congress has done as much to highlight the connections between trade policy and human rights as Congressman Wu.”

The Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act—or the 2009 TRADE Act, for short—has 105 original House cosponsors and is supported by the AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, National Family Farm Coalition, Public Citizen and dozens of other organizations. The original TRADE Act was first introduced in 2008, but did not previously include explicit human rights language. The new language was advocated for and developed by Congressman Wu.

The TRADE Act establishes a process for reviewing and renegotiating existing trade agreements; sets criteria for what must be included in future trade agreements; and reasserts Congressional authority in the trade policymaking process. Issues covered by the legislation include labor rights, the environment, food safety, national security and more, including for the first time, human rights.

“One of the primary reasons that I ran for public office was to promote human rights both at home and abroad, and I believe that trade agreements are one of the key levers to do this,” said Congressman Wu. “I am thankful for the opportunity to put human rights on an equal footing with labor and environmental protections in a bill that carves a new path for trade policy. Democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are critical to peaceful relations between nations and the long-term stability of societies.”

The TRADE Act’s new human rights provisions require trading partner nations to recognize the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and they provide that any violations be subject to enforcement mechanisms and penalties at least as severe as those for violations of the commercial provisions of the trade agreement.

“Trade isn’t ‘free’ when workers in one country are persecuted for exercising their rights to free speech and assembly. The new human rights provisions in the TRADE Act acknowledge this,” said Beth Poteet, director of Witness for Peace Northwest. “Representative Wu’s commonsense new language requires U.S. trade negotiators to abide by standards which prevent countries that exploit their workers and crush democratic participation from gaining special access to U.S. markets until they clean up their acts.”

For more information on the TRADE Act, visit: <http://www.oregonfairtrade.org>

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