

## 2004 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS – U.S. Congress and state and local offices

### **For Congressional Candidates**

1. This year, Congress will likely vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and U.S. trade negotiators are currently involved in negotiations of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Both of which would extend NAFTA-style trade and investment rules through Central and South America. The U.S. has lost over 3 million manufacturing jobs during NAFTA's nine years. In addition, environmental, health and food safety standards have come under NAFTA attack in all three countries, and hundreds of thousands of Mexican small farmers have lost their livelihoods to dumped NAFTA corn imports.

**Will you vote no on CAFTA and the FTAA if it is completed and comes before Congress? Will you oppose any trade agreement that does not include in its core text labor and environmental provisions enforceable by the same means as commercial provisions? Will you oppose any agreement that does not promote global food security, protect U.S. antidumping laws, and protect the ability of consumers to know how and where their food is produced?**

2. Negotiations on CAFTA, FTAA, and negotiations to expand the scope of the General Agreement on Trade in Services within the World Trade Organization cover an array of policies and issues that extend far beyond traditional trade issues such as tariffs and goods. Increasingly, services (e.g. water provision, banking, education, postal services) are the subject of negotiations to set one-size-fits-all binding rules regarding ownership and control of services. These negotiations will also determine if and how governments can regulate both public and private services.

**Will you oppose any trade and/or investment agreement that includes terms to promote, enable, or lead to privatization of essential public services such as those related to national security, social security, public health and safety, water delivery and/or education by foreign investors (e.g. corporations) or promotes commodification or foreign ownership of bulk water such as reservoirs and lakes?**

3. NAFTA's Chapter 11 investment rules allow foreign corporations to bring actions against governments that pass labor, public health or environmental laws that reduce corporate profits. These same provisions are being included in new free trade agreements.

**Will you oppose any trade and/or investment agreement that grants foreign investors and companies greater rights than U.S. investors (e.g. U.S. residents or businesses), including, but not limited to, the right to bring challenges before international trade tribunals demanding government compensation for domestic environmental, public health, zoning and other laws that might undermine the investors' expected future profits?**

The above questions can be modified to "oppose" rather than "vote no."

**For Local and State Candidates:**

1. While international trade policy is voted upon by Congress, increasingly the impacts of trade agreements—particularly in the expanding area of trade in services—will affect local and state policymakers’ ability to make and/or uphold laws that attach social criteria to investment and procurement decisions. (e.g. prevailing or living wage laws, purchasing preferences for women and minority-owned businesses, and/or water quality regulations more stringent than national standard could be deemed “more burdensome than necessary” to investors under international trade law and could be challenged in international tribunals.

**As a local or state legislator, would you be willing to actively express to Congressmembers and US trade negotiators (through meetings, letters, etc.) your opposition to the implementation of trade rules that would undercut your ability to legislate in the public interest?**

2. U.S. trade negotiators currently do not consult with state and local governments on the issue of trade policy, an issue which increasingly impacts state and local communities as well as the ability of state and local governments to legislate.

**Would you be willing to establish a state or city committee or commission to follow trade negotiations, study the local impact of trade policies, solicit public input, and to represent state and local interests to our Congressional representatives and trade negotiators?**