



# Maine Fair Trade Campaign

*Working together for fair trade  
and a just, sustainable and democratic  
global economy*

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## Coalition Member Organizations

Alliance for Democracy  
 Auburn WAGE Committee  
 Central Maine Central Labor Council  
 Eastern Maine Labor Council  
 Food AND Medicine  
 Greater Brunswick Peace Works  
 IAMA W Machinists Local 1821  
 Institute for Local Self-Reliance  
 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 567  
 IBEW 1768  
 IBEW 1837  
 IBEW 2327  
 Laborers Local Union 327  
 The League of Young Voters  
 Maine AFL-CIO  
 Maine Council of Churches  
 Maine Council of Senior Citizens  
 Maine Education Association  
 Maine Labor Council – United Steel Workers  
 Maine Labor Group on Health  
 Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association (MOFGA)  
 Maine Peoples Alliance  
 Maine State Employees Association SEIU Local 1989  
 National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Local 391  
 Pax Christi Maine  
 Peace Action Maine  
 Peace and Justice Group of Waldo County  
 Peace through Inter-American Community Action (PICA)  
 Portland Organizing to Win Economic Rights (POWER)  
 Sierra Club, Maine chapter  
 Southern Maine Central Labor Council  
 Sustainable Harvest  
 Teamsters Local 340  
 UA Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 716  
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast  
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick  
 UNITE -HERE Local 486  
 United Food & Commercial Workers 791  
 UFCW 1445  
 United Steelworkers (USW) Local 9  
 USW Local 11  
 USW Local 36  
 USW Local 261  
 USW Local 1069  
 USW Local 1188  
 Veterans for Peace  
 Waldo County Progressives  
 Western Maine Labor Council  
 Women's International League for Peace &

## Maine Fair Trade Campaign Questions for 2008 Congressional Candidates

The Maine Fair Trade Campaign is a statewide coalition of environmental, labor, family farm, religious, and community groups working to build a more just and sustainable global economy. MFTC members are united in a common belief that international trade and investment are not simply ends unto themselves, but must be viewed as a means for achieving other societal goals, such as economic justice and the promotion of human rights. The rules which govern our global economy must reflect the views and needs of the majority of people on issues such as jobs, wages, the environment, human rights, food and consumer safety, access to essential services, and public health.

Because it is Congress' constitutional responsibility to govern international trade, we want to hear from all of Maine's Congressional Candidates on their positions on international trade policy.

It is not enough that candidates merely highlight the trade issue. Our country needs to see real answers, based on a dedicated commitment to change, if we hope to solve these difficult problems. Your responses will be shared with our national and state partners in the labor, environmental, family farm and faith communities, and we encourage you to supplement answers with additional information, explanations and rationale.

### 2008 Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

**Candidate Name: Chellie Pingree**

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**Party Affiliation: Democrat**

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**PLEASE RETURN TO MFTC BY MAY 20<sup>th</sup>  
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## NAFTA Style Trade Agreements

We believe NAFTA has failed the U.S. and our trading partners. It has sent good working-class jobs offshore and fuels environmental damage. NAFTA grants extra rights to foreign investors and limits our ability to inspect for the safety of children's toys or the food supply.

1. Several Presidential candidates committed to review and renegotiate NAFTA over the next four years. Do you support reviewing and renegotiating NAFTA during your next term of office?

**Please circle one:**    **Yes**                      **No**

**Additional Comments:**

Absolutely. There is no question in my mind that we need to renegotiate NAFTA, both because of the policies that were intended but ill advised and the numerous consequences that seem to have been unintended, but have proven destructive. Many of the “positives” espoused by NAFTA proponents have not come true and all too many of the negatives the opponents warned of have come to fruition. After more than a decade of NAFTA, we have lost millions of manufacturing jobs, we have an ever-increasing trade deficit and wages have stagnated.

2. As a Member of Congress, if the vote came up today, would you support or oppose the Colombia Free Trade Agreement?

**Please circle one:**    **Support**                      **Oppose**

**Additional Comments:**

If I were a Member of Congress, I would oppose the Columbia Free Trade Agreement because it would not protect the fundamental human rights of workers in either country and I see no evidence that it is in the best economic interest of either country. Equally upsetting is the notion that the United States would enter into this agreement with Columbia, even while there are well-documented violations of trade union rights in Colombia, including the torture and murder of trade unionists by state actors and/or paramilitary groups.

Moreover, given the results of current international trade agreements, we are not in a position where we should be expanding these agreements – we should be doing a full review and redesign to ensure that our country’s trade policy fosters and fair labor and environmental standards abroad and once again gives Americans an equal opportunity to succeed.

3. Do you believe NAFTA, overall, has done more to help or hurt the economy of United States?

**Please circle one:**    **Help**                                      **Hurt**

**Additional Comments:**

NAFTA has hurt the economy of the United States – most painful is what we see here in Maine – the continuing loss of the manufacturing sector and the overall growth and

empowerment of corporations at the expense of locally based businesses that serve our communities in multiple ways. After more than a decade of NAFTA, we have lost millions of manufacturing jobs, we have an ever-increasing trade deficit and wages have stagnated – clearly this is hurting our economy and costing us more in job loss than it is saving consumers. I am not opposed to international trade agreements, I just don't think we should sacrifice the advances we have made in this country – in terms of labor rights, environmental and safety standards – in the name of increased global trade, particularly when increased global trade has had such a debilitating effect on many local communities.

### **Meaningful Labor and Environmental Provisions**

Labor rights set out within International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions include the *freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor, the effective abolition of child labor, the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, and the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation.*

4. Will you insist that new trade agreements include, within the text, these five basic internationally-recognized core labor rights stated within the ILO conventions?

**Please Circle One:** **Yes** **No**

**Additional Comments:**

The rights set out within the ILO are essential human and labor rights that we have fought for and I feel very strongly that they should be included (and enforceable) in any new trade agreements that the United States participates in.

5. Will you insist that new trade agreements incorporate major Multilateral Environmental Agreements, which make up the global consensus on basic environmental protections?

**Please Circle One:** **Yes** **No**

**Additional Comments:**

As with labor rights set out within International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions, the Multilateral Environment Agreements represent that standard to which we should all be either held to or working towards. The United States and multinational corporations should be using leverage to increase standards. It just doesn't make sense to exclude such provisions in agreements governing major corporations and among international governments.

6. Will you oppose future trade agreement which do not include enforceable protections for workers and the environment such as those listed above?

**Please Circle One:** **Yes** **No**

**Additional Comments:**

The notion of enforcement is a very important one in this situation. I am someone who believes that including the words on the page, but not laying out enforcement provisions, or leaving the protections open to interpretation, is counterproductive. We are saying we value the protections but not ensuring that they are met? I know there has been somewhat of a split among Democrats and some labor organizations in regards to recent

trade votes – I expect I would come down on the side of standardized enforcement standards and mechanisms, in addition to the actual protections.

### **Enforcement**

7. Will you insist that any worker rights and environmental standards be subject to the same dispute resolution and enforcement mechanisms currently in place that are used to enforce commercial provisions in trade agreements?

**Please Circle One:**  **Yes**  **No**

**Additional Comments:**

As I said above, enforcement is essential...so I am totally in favor of making worker rights and environmental standards subject to the same dispute resolution and enforcement mechanisms used to enforce commercial provisions in trade agreements.

### **Fast Track Trade Promotion Authority**

8. Do you support strengthening the role of Congress in trade policy by replacing the failed Fast Track process with a new system that includes readiness criteria to determine appropriate negotiating partners, binding obligations regarding what must and must not be in future trade agreements, and the right for Congress to vote before an agreement is signed?

**Please Circle One:**  **Yes**  **No**

**Additional Comments:**

Clearly, Congress needs to have more say in trade negotiations – getting rid of Fast Track is our first step in the right direction when it comes to developing true fair trade policies. We need to update the Fast Track negotiating process to a system that includes readiness criteria to determine appropriate negotiating partners, the right of states to have a say before their rights are taken away or overruled, service sector and procurement rules in trade agreements, binding obligations regarding what must and must not be in future trade agreements and, of course, the right for Congress to vote before agreements are signed.

9. The State of Maine, along with all of the other states, is bound to provisions of U.S. Trade Agreements but has had no say in their negotiation. Do you support replacing Fast Track with a new process that includes mechanisms for state input and for the ability for states to opt-out?

**Please Circle One:**  **Yes**  **No**

**Additional Comments:**

As a the former Majority Leader of the Maine Senate and someone who has worked to foster local small businesses and responsible business and economic development, I would say yes. It is somewhat shocking that Maine is bound to provisions of U.S. Trade Agreements that we are not a party to or that are not done with detailed knowledge of ongoing state-based efforts. States should be able to weigh in be a part of the process and if this is not the case, there should be discussion and a public dialogue about opting-out if the agreement is harmful to a state.

### **The Trade Deficit**

10. Will you support emergency policies to bring our trade deficit into balance, including addressing currency manipulation, eliminating tax breaks for off shoring production, and exploring other options, such as an import surcharge?

Please circle one: **Yes** No

**Additional Comments:**

The United States has experienced steadily growing global trade deficits for nearly three decades, and these deficits accelerated rapidly after NAFTA took effect on January 1, 1994. We have to find a way to bring both the trade deficit, and the associated job loss, under control.

**Foreign Investor Rights**

11. Existing trade deals like NAFTA and CAFTA give foreign investors greater rights than U.S. residents or businesses. With these investor rights, a foreign business can sue the State of Maine for passing public health or environmental protection laws, and can demand compensation in taxpayer dollars for these laws. Do you agree that future trade agreements should not grant foreign investors and overseas companies greater rights than U.S. residents or businesses?

Please circle one: **Yes** No

**Additional Comments:**

It's clear that NAFTA and CAFTA were more investment deals than they were trade deals – and it's just appalling to think how much power these major business interests have over our daily lives. I am strongly opposed to future trade agreements granting foreign investors and overseas companies greater rights than U.S. residents or businesses and I am willing to go back and renegotiate the existing agreements regarding this and other provisions.

12. Are you willing to renegotiate existing agreements, like NAFTA and CAFTA, to eliminate these investor rules that undermine the legitimate right of a government to protect public health and the environment?

Please circle one: **Yes** No

**Additional Comments:**

Please see above.

**Privatization and Regulation**

In several international trade negotiations, the current administration has pushed for rules that would give private foreign companies the right to bid on work currently done by public employees – at the federal, state and local levels – regardless of whether citizens and their elected officials decide they want to privatize those services.

13. Will you insist upon negotiating trade agreements that would not mandate or require the privatization or deregulation of essential services, including education, health care, construction, transportation, water supply and energy?

Please circle one: **Yes** No

### **Additional Comments:**

There is very little proof that a private company can perform the services of government better – and I believe the results are actually much to the contrary. We have seen the down side of privatization many times and the resulting lack of accountability as well as increased --not decreased --costs. One has to look no further than the contracting out of the military today to see one of the most egregious examples.

I would oppose efforts to privatize services currently provided by federal, state and/or local governments and did so at a state level several times during my legislative career, including at the Maine State Prison and with the state's mental health services.

Since the WTO was established and NAFTA approved, free trade agreements have become increasingly intrusive, threatening to dispose of state and even local laws and regulations to protect public health, the environment, local and minority-owned business, and workers' rights as disguised obstacles to trade.

14. Would you support language in new trade agreements safeguarding the rights of states and local governments to regulate in the public interest?

**Please circle one:**    **Yes**                      **No**

### **Additional Comments:**

Absolutely. State laws are among our most progressive and are often the closest to constituents – we can be responsive, address critical issues and are often the place where real reform begins. Thus safeguarding the rights of states and local government to regulate in the public interest is essential.

### **The WTO “Doha Round”**

The failing “Doha Round” of talks at the World Trade Organization seeks to expand corporate investor rights and to liberalize services — including possible privatization of public goods like education and water utilities.

15. Do you support the U.S. walking out of the Doha Round, and calling for a new direction in global trade talks to prioritize protections for workers, the poor, the environment, people of color, and public health, and to ensure that global trade rules do not undermine the ability of governments to regulate in the public interest?

**Please circle one:**    **Yes**                      **No**

### **Additional Comments:**

There's no question that we need a new direction in global trade talks and to continue with the Doha Round just seems to be way too timid a response to what we all know now about trade, NAFTA and our economy. This is a place for a bold change that not only sets our policy in a better direction but also begins to rebuild peoples' confidence that lawmakers “get it” and are willing to take a bold stand to right what's been going wrong.

### **Agricultural Provisions**

16. Will you insist upon trade agreements that secure family farmers' livelihoods by offering fair prices for their products, that support measures to safeguard the health of rural communities, and that ensure the access of farm laborers to fair wages, contracts, and safe working conditions?

Please circle one: **Yes**  **No**

**Additional Comments:**

This is such an important part of our economy and under NAFTA, we have taken such poor care of our county's agricultural resources. With NAFTA and its export-oriented agriculture, we have seen small and mid-size farms fail, food prices rise and large agri-business prosper. We have also seen a rise in unsafe food imports. I think it is essential to secure small and family farms and revisit the export model, and I think that we have a unique opportunity that we should take advantage of with the resurgence in organic and more importantly, local, food sources. It is essential that we help build up those business and community resources, not tear them down with international trade policy built for major corporate interests. I was an organic farmer for years and made a living by selling milk, eggs and wool to my community and feeding my family from our farm - I understand both the economics of farming and the enormous challenges facing today's family farmers as well as the vital role they play for our communities and our environment, and I would be a committed proponent of strengthening this country's family farmers.

“Dumping” refers to the practice of exporting subsidized commodities onto the markets of another nation at prices below the actual cost of production. Under NAFTA, the exportation of subsidized corn crops from the U.S. decimated Mexican farmers, putting more than 1.5 million family farmers out of business. Likewise, Chinese steel manufacturers have used a similar practice to displace U.S. steel workers.

17. Do you believe that the practice of “dumping” should be allowed in trade agreements?

Please circle one: **Yes**  **No**

**Additional Comments:**

I am someone who believes that “dumping” is a predatory and destructive practice, so definitely, no, I do not believe that “dumping” should be allowed in trade agreements. Charging a lower price in a foreign market than one charges for the same good in a domestic market or charging below the cost of production is designed to stifle competition and is deaf to the long-term reality associated with the product and the consumer.

Any additional comments or responses you would care to expand upon?

I am running to represent Maine's First Congressional District because I truly believe that this is one of the most important elections of our lifetime. Now more than ever, our country is yearning for honest leadership, real action, and meaningful results - this is a time for bold and courageous change to get America back on track. Given the challenging times in our country, perhaps the most important thing is that I am willing to take on a tough fight when it's the right thing to do – more importantly, though, I've won some of these fights through perseverance, negotiating and significantly, partnerships with allies. Some of my most important work as a lawmaker was done in partnership with labor and progressive organizations (think of Maine's corporate accountability laws and the Maine Rx fight) and I would be proud to continue working in this way. I want to serve in

Congress not because I want to just have the title, but because I believe that there is so much that needs to be done and not enough people fighting for change.

As part of this, and as a member of the National Writers' Union/UAW Local 1981, I want to ensure that working people get a fair deal in our country, and that the policies of our federal government improve the likelihood of good-paying jobs in Maine and other states, and do not send those jobs overseas. I believe that I have the skills to serve as a common sense voice for working families, advocating for universal health care, more sound economic policies, reform of labor laws and most importantly, improving our nation's trade policy.

I'm proud to be from a state that has been a leader on many key progressive issues (and to have worked on so many of the laws we are proud of!), whether it's health care and prescription drug pricing, regulating toxics in our environment, supporting working families through higher wages and fair labor practices or fair trade. The Maine Fair Trade Campaign and its many allies have once again made sure Maine is at the forefront of one of our country's important challenges – fighting for fair trade and working conditions and a sustainable economy – through work with our state and federal leaders, strong coalition building and the development of important infrastructure like the Citizens Trade Policy Commission. Maine is a progressive leader because of the good people who live and work here and who focus on doing the right thing – and it would be a real pleasure and honor for me to represent and work with these fine people to advance the issues we all care about so deeply.

I attest that these answers represent my beliefs, are now part of the public record, and may be used by the Maine Fair Trade Campaign to keep members and the public informed about trade issues.



May 20, 2008

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**Signature**

**Date**

Thank you for your willingness to complete this questionnaire. We would like to act as a resource of information to you and your campaign. We look forward to working with you over the period of your candidacy, and thereafter.