

Oregon Fair Trade Campaign
Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Bernie Sanders

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The Oregon Fair Trade Campaign is a statewide coalition of more than twenty-five labor, environmental and human rights organizations. Information about our coalition and its mission can be found on our website: www.oregonfairtrade.org.

We are interested in knowing what you think about a variety of issues surrounding the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and trade. Answers to the following questions will be used to educate voters, highlight trade issues and create voter guides.

Please return your completed questionnaire to Michael Shannon at the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign by emailing m.shannon@oregonfairtrade.org or calling (503) 736-9777.

Questions

(1) Do you believe the rules that govern international trade should reflect the views and needs of working people on issues such as jobs, wages, the environment, human rights, consumer safety and access to medicine?

Yes

In my view, we need to fundamentally rewrite our trade agreements to prevent the outsourcing of good paying jobs, protect human rights, the environment, consumer safety, and access to medicine.

I believe that we need to adopt fair trade policies which not only raise wages in this country, but lift living standards throughout the world.

As president, I would nominate a U.S. Trade Representative who does not come from Wall Street and has a strong track record of standing up for working people. And I will not negotiate nor will I support future trade agreements that make it easier for corporations to throw workers out on the street and move to low wage countries; harm the environment; increase prescription drug prices; reward human rights violators; or threaten the safety of the food we eat.

(2) Do you believe we need to change the way America conducts international trade in comparison to existing trade pacts like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)?

Yes

The U.S. has several laws on the books that require the federal government to buy goods and services that are made in America or mostly made in this country. Under TPP, foreign corporations must be given equal access to compete for these government contracts with companies that make products in America. Under TPP, the U.S. could not even prevent companies that have horrible human rights records from receiving government contracts paid by U.S. taxpayers. That is unacceptable.

We have got to lift up the living standards of workers in America. Trade is a good thing, but it has got to be fair.

(3) Do you believe Congress should approve the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as written?

No

I have been opposed to the TPP since day one.

Our unfettered free trade policies have been a disaster for American workers. During my 25 years in Congress, I helped lead the fight against NAFTA, CAFTA, and Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. These agreements have allowed corporations to close thousands of factories, and ship millions of jobs to low-wage countries where people are forced to work for pennies an hour.

I have been strongly opposed to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) ever since it was first announced, and I will do everything I can to defeat that agreement. The TPP is the continuation of a failed approach to trade that began when President Bill Clinton championed NAFTA; an approach that boosts the profits of large corporations by offshoring jobs while undercutting worker rights, and environmental, health, and financial laws here and abroad.

In Vietnam, the minimum wage is 65 cents an hour, independent labor unions are banned, and people are thrown in jail for expressing their political beliefs. In Malaysia, many migrant workers who manufacture electronics are modern-day slave laborers who have had their passports and wages confiscated and are unable to return to their own countries. American workers should not have to “compete” against people forced to work under these conditions. This is not “free trade;” this is a race to the bottom.

To rebuild the middle class and create the millions of good paying jobs we desperately need, we must fundamentally rewrite our trade policies. Corporations must start investing in America and create jobs here, and not just in low wage countries. Our goal must be to make sure that American made products, not American jobs are our number one export.

(4) Do you believe the TPP’s “Rule of Origin” provisions are adequate to protecting American jobs?

No

The U.S. has several laws on the books that require the federal government to buy goods and services that are made in America or mostly made in this country. Under TPP, foreign corporations must be given equal access to compete for these government contracts with companies that make products in America. Under TPP, the U.S. could not even prevent companies that have horrible human rights records from receiving government contracts paid by U.S. taxpayers. That is unacceptable.

(5) Do you believe the TPP’s investor-state dispute settlement provisions provide greater rights

to corporations than to American citizens?

Yes

The TPP creates a special dispute resolution process that allows corporations to challenge any domestic laws that could adversely impact their “expected future profits.” These challenges would be heard before UN and World Bank tribunals which could require taxpayer compensation to corporations. This process undermines our sovereignty and subverts democratically passed laws including those dealing with labor, health, and the environment.

As president, I will not approve any trade agreement that gives foreign corporations the right to undermine American democracy through the disastrous Investor State Dispute Settlement system.

(6) Do you believe the TPP should include binding safeguards against currency manipulation?

Yes

I was one of [60 Senators](#) and 230 Representatives that sent a letter demanding that the TPP include binding safeguards against currency manipulation. As almost everyone knows, China, Japan and many other countries have manipulated their currency, which has given these currency manipulators an unfair trade advantage over the United States and destroyed decent paying manufacturing jobs in the process. If we imposed a currency manipulation fee on China and other countries, we could raise hundreds of billions of dollars in new revenue and create at least 2.2 million jobs. As President, that’s exactly what I will do.

I will also demand that Japan opens its auto market. At least two-thirds of our trade deficit with Japan is in automotive products. Japan’s auto market is the most closed in the industrialized world. It needs to be opened up.

My Administration would use every means necessary to end currency manipulation and stop the outsourcing of American jobs.

(7) Do you believe the TPP’s intellectual property provisions put the interests of pharmaceutical companies ahead of American citizens?

Yes

A major reason why I am leading the fight against the disastrous Trans-Pacific Partnership is because it would significantly increase prices for prescription drugs for some of the most desperate people in the world.

At a time when prescription drug prices are skyrocketing, the TPP would make a bad situation even worse by granting new monopoly rights to big pharmaceutical companies to deny access to lower cost generic drugs to millions of people.

Big pharmaceutical companies are working hard to ensure that the TPP extends the monopolies they have for prescription drugs by extending their patents (which currently can last 20 years or more). This would expand the profits of big drug companies, keep drug prices artificially high, and leave millions of people around the world without access to life saving drugs. Doctors without Borders has stated that “the TPP agreement is on track to become the most harmful trade pact ever for access to medicines in developing countries.”

As president, I will not send any trade deal to Congress that would increase the price of prescription drugs.

(8) Do you believe the TPP does enough to address labor and human rights abuses abroad?

No

In my view, the TPP is not, nor has it ever been, the gold standard of trade agreements. That is especially true when it comes to addressing human rights abuses abroad.

As stated above, in Vietnam, the minimum wage is 65 cents an hour, independent labor unions are banned, and people are thrown in jail for expressing their political beliefs. In Malaysia, many migrant workers who manufacture electronics are modern-day slave laborers who have had their passports and wages confiscated and are unable to return to their own countries. American workers should not have to “compete” against people forced to work under these conditions. This is not “free trade;” it is a race to the bottom.

Furthermore, under TPP, the U.S. could not prevent companies that have horrible human rights records from receiving government contracts paid by U.S. taxpayers. That is unacceptable.

I will not send any trade deal to Congress that includes major human rights violators like Brunei – a country that passed a law to stone people to death for the “crime” of being gay or a single Mom.

We will make sure that strong and binding labor and human rights standards are in the core text of all trade agreements. We have got to lift up the living standards of workers in America. Trade is a good thing, but it has got to be fair.

(9) Do you believe the TPP does enough to address climate change?

No

As president, I will make sure that binding environmental standards are in the core text of all trade agreements.

In my view, we need to fundamentally rewrite our trade agreements to protect the environment and raise living standards in the U.S. and throughout the world.

(10) If elected President, would you oppose holding a vote on the TPP during the “lame duck” session before you take office?

Yes

Holding a vote on the TPP during a “lame duck” session would be going against the will of the people. Fast track has already relinquished Congress’s constitutional authority to the President to “regulate commerce with foreign nations,” limited our debate and prevented members of Congress from improving trade agreements to benefit the American people. Congress must have a say in these matters, and that say should not take place during a “lame duck” session. The job of Congress must be to represent their constituents’ interests. Holding a vote during a “lame duck” session would be in direct conflict with that.

These answers represent my beliefs and positions, and may be used by Oregon Fair Trade Campaign to keep members and the public informed about trade issues.



April 27, 2016

Signature

Date

Thank you for your willingness to complete this questionnaire. We would like to act as a source of information to you and your campaign on trade issues. Please do not hesitate to contact us.