

Pennsylvania Fair Trade Coalition

Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Bernie Sanders

Campaign Office Address: Bernie 2016. PO Box 905. Burlington, VT 05402

Contact phone: 847-732-0680 Email: billygendell@berniesanders.com

Campaign Contact: Billy Gendell

The Pennsylvania Fair Trade Coalition represents labor, environmental, family farm, faith and community organizations throughout the state.

We are interested in knowing what you think about a variety of issues regarding international trade policy. Answers to the following questions will be used to educate voters, highlight trade issues and create voter guides.

Please return your completed questionnaire to Amy Conahan by emailing amy@citizenstrade.org or calling (412) 999-3750.

Views on Free Trade Agreements

1. NAFTA has been in effect for more than 20 years. How would you describe the overall effects of NAFTA on U.S. workers and the U.S. economy?

Severely Damaging

Additional Comments:

Here is the sad truth. The North American Free Trade Agreement, which was supported by Secretary Clinton, cost our nation 850,000 good paying jobs.

One of the major reasons why our middle class has been disappearing for the past 40 years is the decline of the manufacturing sector. Incredibly, over the past 15 years, we have lost nearly 60,000 factories and almost 5 million manufacturing jobs.

Not only has our trade policy cost us millions of decent paying jobs, it has led to a race to the bottom. American workers are forced to compete against desperate workers abroad who make pennies an hour. That's unacceptable.

Enough is enough! As president, we will work together to fundamentally rewrite our trade policies to make sure American jobs are no longer our number one export.

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2. A final text for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was released in November 2015. If implemented, the pending TPP would become the largest U.S. Free Trade Agreement to date. Do you support or oppose the TPP?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

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 the agreement. In my view, 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;” it 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.

3. Would you support or oppose future trade agreements, including the TPP and the pending Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), if they included “investor-state” dispute resolution, a mechanism that allows foreign corporations to challenge U.S. federal, state and local laws, regulations, court decisions and government actions in private extrajudicial tribunals that circumvent the U.S. judicial system to obtain unlimited sums of taxpayer compensation for those that investors claim violate their new TPP rights and undermine investors’ expectations?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

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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.

4. Would you support or oppose future trade agreements, including the TPP and TTIP, if they provide drug firms extended monopoly rights — by requiring signatory countries to effectively lengthen patent terms, provide data or marketing exclusivity or broaden the scope of patentability — thereby delaying access to affordable, generic medications?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

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.

Views on “Fast Track” Trade Promotion Authority

5. Would you support or oppose attempts to reestablish “Fast Track” trade promotion authority when it expires?

Oppose

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Additional Comments:

I helped lead the opposition against fast-tracking the Trans Pacific Partnership. Fast-tracking these disastrous trade deals would pave the way for more lost jobs, more lost factories, and more pain for the middle class.

All Americans, regardless of political ideology, should be opposed to the “fast track” process which would deny Congress the right to amend trade agreements and represent their constituents’ interests.

6. Would you support or oppose strengthening Congress’ role in trade policy by replacing Fast Track with a new trade authority mechanism that includes congressionally-set readiness criteria to determine appropriate negotiating partners and the right for Congress to veto partners proposed by the executive branch as necessary; involvement of more congressional committees and a more transparent negotiating process; binding obligations regarding what must and must not be in future trade agreements; and the right for Congress to vote on an agreement before it can be signed?

Support

Additional Comments:

Fast track has 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. That has been an absolute disaster.

Views on Public Procurement

7. Would you support or oppose future trade agreements, including the TPP and TTIP, if they limit the adoption, maintenance, or application of strong “Buy American” and “Buy Local” government procurement preferences by the U.S. federal government and/or by states and municipalities?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

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.

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We must end the race to the bottom. And, we must encourage countries throughout the world to increase their living standards. That's what fair trade is all about.

Views on Consumer Safety and the Environment

8. Would you support or oppose a trade agreement that allows entry into the U.S. of imported food, toys and other products that do not actually meet U.S. safety standards?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

The TPP would make it easier for countries like Vietnam to export contaminated fish and seafood into the U.S. The FDA has already prevented hundreds of seafood imports from TPP countries because of salmonella, e-coli, methyl-mercury and drug residues. But the FDA only inspects 1-2 percent of food imports and will be overwhelmed by the vast expansion of these imports if the TPP is agreed to. That is why the TPP

As stated above, 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.

We will end the race to the bottom. And, we will encourage countries throughout the world to increase their living standards. That's what fair trade is all about.

9. Would you support or oppose future trade policies, including the TPP and TTIP, if they fail to include an environmental chapter that requires countries to “adopt, maintain and implement” in their domestic laws the requirements of at least as many Multilateral Environmental Agreements as those included in George W. Bush-era trade agreements, such as the Peru Free Trade Agreement?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

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

The TPP follows in the footsteps of NAFTA, CAFTA and other unfair trade agreements that have harmed the environment and led to the loss of good paying jobs. 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.

I am proud to stand with working people and environmentalists to voice our strong opposition to the TPP – the largest unfettered free trade agreement in history representing about 40 percent of the world's economy.

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Our nation needs strong leadership in the fight against climate disruption, which represents the greatest environmental challenge of this century. Science demands that we take bold action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030.

Future trade deals must deal with this stark reality and include strong environmental standards.

10. Would you support or oppose future trade agreements, including the TPP and TTIP, if they fail to mention the term “climate change” and fail to include clear carve-outs protecting future climate policies from attack under the agreement?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

Climate change is the greatest threat facing the planet.

I am proud to have put forth the most far-reaching and significant climate plan of any candidate for president. You can read the details of my full plan to put people before polluters and take aggressive action on climate change at <https://berniesanders.com/people-before-polluters/>.

The next President cannot merely envision climate solutions in terms of incremental progress, but must instead set a new course to use every tool across multiple agencies and departments to make reducing carbon emissions and preparing for climate change impacts a top priority of the U.S. federal government. That begins even before my inauguration, as I will convene a Climate Change Summit with environmental leaders, scientists, and experts to begin developing a Climate Action Agenda. Then on day one of my Presidency, I will sign the most ambitious series of executive orders in history to deal with the urgent issue of climate change – and then move swiftly to introduce climate legislation in Congress, including a carbon pricing bill.

And I will absolutely oppose future trade agreements that fail to address climate change.

Views on Currency Manipulation

11. In 2013, 60 U.S. Senators and 230 Representatives demanded that the TPP include enforceable rules against currency manipulation. Would you support or oppose future trade policies that fail to include enforceable disciplines against currency manipulation?

Oppose

Additional Comments:

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I was one of those [60 Senators](#). As almost everyone knows, China, Japan and many other countries are manipulating their currency, giving these currency manipulators an unfair trade advantage over the United States and destroying 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 would 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. I look forward to working with you to make that a reality.

As president, I would nominate a Treasury Secretary and a U.S. Trade Representative who do not come from Wall Street and have a strong track record of standing up for working people.

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

These answers represent my beliefs, are part of the public record and may be used by the Pennsylvania Fair Trade Coalition to keep its members and the public informed about trade issues.



March 25, 2016

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, and look forward to working with you over the period of your candidacy, and thereafter.