

## **Sen. Sherrod Brown's trade bill calls for reviews of existing pacts**

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Washington - Ohio Democrat Sen. Sherrod Brown, who won his seat in 2006 after a campaign that emphasized his opposition to U.S. trade policy, unveiled legislation Wednesday that would drastically change the U.S. approach to trade.

Brown, flanked by labor leaders including Teamsters President James Hoffa, said the bill proves that he and other leading trade critics aren't against trade but rather, that they're serious about changing the rules governing it.

The legislation would forbid negotiations on new trade deals until the government conducts a detailed review of all existing trade pacts, and recommends changes to ensure they meet tougher standards to protect U.S. workers and consumers.

The government would have two years to complete the review - meaning that new trade agreements could be stalled for years if the legislation were enacted. Brown acknowledged at a Capitol Hill news conference that the legislation has no chance of passing this year, saying it is designed to influence the next administration.

He said that aides to Sen. Barack Obama, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, are aware of the bill but that he doesn't know whether Obama will back it. Though anti-trade sentiment has been growing in Congress, Brown and other sponsors of the bill are likely to face opposition from the business community.

Frank Vargo, vice president for international economic affairs at the National Association of Manufacturers, said the bill baffles him because only a small portion of the nation's trade deficit is accounted for by countries that have trade deals with the United States. Blocking new trade deals would cost U.S. jobs, he warned.

"To me, it's pretty silly legislation," Vargo said.