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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
June 4, 2008

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### **Public Citizen Supports Landmark Trade Expansion Legislation**

#### ***TRADE Act Addresses American Public's Demand for Change During Presidential Campaign With a New Way Forward on Trade, Globalization***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Following a presidential primary season highlighting broad public concern about current trade policies, the **Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act** introduced today by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Rep. Mike Michaud (D-Maine) reveals a way forward to a new trade and globalization agenda that could benefit more Americans, said Public Citizen. The bill is supported by a broad array of labor, consumer, environmental, family farm and faith groups and more than 50 House and Senate original cosponsors.

“The TRADE Act is exciting because it describes concretely new trade and globalization policies that many Americans would support and shifts the debate toward future consensus about what we are for, rather than focusing on opposition to the current model,” said Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch division.

The legislation requires a review of existing trade pacts, including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other major pacts, and sets forth what must and must not be included in future trade pacts. It also provides for the renegotiation of existing trade agreements and describes the key elements of a new trade negotiating and approval mechanism to replace Fast Track that would enhance Congress’ role in the formative aspects of agreements and promote future deals that could enjoy broad support among the American public.

“Corporate interests have hijacked past trade pacts to get special protections – patent extensions that jack up drug prices, subsidies for offshoring production and more. The TRADE Act tips the scales back in balance with a trade agenda that also suits workers, the environment and everyday consumers,” said Wallach. “The special interests who pushed our current trade pacts claimed that opponents of NAFTA and WTO were anti-trade, which was never true. We invite them to show their commitment to trade expansion by supporting the TRADE Act, which will build a new American consensus in favor of trade.”

According to a May 2008 Pew Research Center poll, 48 percent of respondents believe free trade agreements are bad for the country, including 42 percent of Republicans and 52 percent of Independents. Only 35 percent of respondents consider them positive. A *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll released in January 2008 found that 58 percent of Americans think “globalization has been bad ... because it has subjected American companies and employees to unfair competition and cheap labor.”

These polls reflect many Americans’ negative experiences under our current trade model. Since 1975, when Fast Track was first enacted, the U.S. trade balance has shifted from a slight surplus to an unsustainable \$709 billion deficit in 2007. A net 4.7 million manufacturing jobs have been lost, and while American worker productivity has doubled, American median wages are only 1 percent above 1970s levels. Since NAFTA and the WTO went into effect, an array of domestic public interest laws have been successfully attacked while imports of unsafe food and products have surged.

“Presidential primary candidates from both parties responded to the American public’s demand for trade policy change, and both leading Democratic candidates committed to renegotiating bad trade deals like NAFTA,” said Wallach. “This bill provides the specifics of what a broad array of labor, consumer, environmental, faith and family farm groups representing millions of Americans expect for a future trade agenda.”

The TRADE Act’s sponsors, Brown and Michaud, highlighted how the legislation offered specific positive trade policy solutions to the public’s concerns.

“The TRADE ACT will help Congress and the White House craft a trade agreement that benefits workers, business owners and our country. We want trade, and we want more of it,” said Brown. “The TRADE ACT is a critical first step on a new path for trade.”

Added Michaud, “The TRADE Act is a tremendous step forward in fixing our broken trade policies by setting out a new course on trade that will benefit businesses and workers in the U.S. This legislation outlines what a good trade agreement must and must not include. In this election year, with trade such a major focus of the debate, it’s important that the American people and the presidential candidates hear our message on trade. This legislation will help shape the debate on trade for years to come.”

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Public Citizen is a national, nonprofit consumer advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit [www.citizen.org](http://www.citizen.org).