

# Texas Fair Trade Coalition

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## Presidential Candidate Questionnaire for Federal Office

Candidate Name: *Hillary Rodham Clinton*

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The Texas Fair Trade Coalition is comprised of more than 40 organizations, including the Texas AFL-CIO, the Texas Farmers Union, the Texas State Association of Electrical Workers, the USWA Texas P & L Committee, the UNITE-HERE Southwest Regional Board, the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter, UFCW Region 5, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and the Texas Teachers Federation. We oppose further agreements based on the NAFTA model and expect those who represent us to do the same and urge candidates seeking federal office to commit to renegotiating existing agreements and promoting a new responsible trade model. We are asking questions of candidates to determine who is committed to addressing the damaging failures of our status quo trade and globalization policies.

The following questions will be shared with our TFTC partners in the labor, environmental, family farm, student, and faith communities. We strongly encourage you to supplement answers with additional information, explanations and rationale.

**Please respond by e-mailing [info@texasfairtrade.org](mailto:info@texasfairtrade.org) or faxing 866-695-8776.**

### **Our Position**

We believe the NAFTA model has failed the U.S. and our trading partners, and has not lived up to its promises. During the NAFTA era, we have seen one out of every four U.S. manufacturing jobs destroyed, including tens of thousands of jobs here in Texas. We've seen real wages decline as income inequity has soared. NAFTA and other NAFTA style agreements have resulted in scores of attacks on our domestic environmental, health and safety laws. They limit our ability to promote good-paying jobs here and restrict initiatives to raise working conditions around the globe. NAFTA resulted in the displacement of over one million Mexican peasant farmers, increasing immigration to the United States from Mexico by 60 percent. CAFTA is leading to more of the same.

### **NAFTA Style Trade Agreements**

#### **Procurement**

1. Trade agreement procurement rules undermine the ability of federal and state governments to use tax dollars to create and maintain good jobs, to promote economic opportunity and development, and to achieve other important social goals, including safeguarding prevailing wage, renewable energy, and recycled content laws. Will you renegotiate current and existing trade agreements' procurement provisions to remove the bans on *Buy America* and anti-offshoring policies and to remove the provisions that could subject prevailing wage, renewable energy, recycled content, living wage and other important procurement policies to challenge in trade tribunals?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

As President, I will take a timeout from new trade agreements until my administration has done two things: reviewed all of our existing agreements to determine whether they are benefiting our economy and our workers; and crafted a comprehensive, pro-America trade policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that is genuinely pro-worker, pro-American, and vigorously enforced. I have introduced the Trade Agreement Assessment Act so that all our trade agreements will be reviewed every five years. And I have committed to renegotiating NAFTA. As President, I will make trade work for working families.

As part of my plan to fix NAFTA, I have called for revising the provisions that permit foreign companies to challenge U.S. laws before special panels rather than in courts. The laws companies can challenge include regulations intended to protect workers and protect the environment. I believe that trade agreements must elevate standards of living around the world and not empower corporations to hold those standards down.

As Senator, I have voted for legislation to require the federal government to purchase American-made equipment with certain exceptions. And I have pledged to close the tax loopholes that reward corporations for moving jobs abroad. I have also co-sponsored legislation that will encourage companies to create and keep good-paying jobs in America.

2. Will you commit that all future trade agreements you may negotiate will not include the procurement terms that ban Buy America policies, local preferences and anti-offshoring policies by requiring us to treat foreign bidders the same as U.S. firms?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

As President, I will close the tax loopholes that reward companies for moving jobs overseas. And I will make the necessary investments in green technology, innovation, and infrastructure to create millions of new jobs that cannot be outsourced. I will also insist on the inclusion of strong labor and environmental provisions in all trade agreements so that American workers are not caught in a race to the bottom. As Senator, I have voted for legislation to require the federal government to purchase American-made equipment with certain exceptions. I have also co-

sponsored legislation that encourages companies to create and keep good-paying jobs in America.

### **Food and Product Safety**

3. Do you commit that future trade agreements you may negotiate will not include the terms now found in or trade agreement that limit our ability to ensure that imported and domestic products actually meet our U.S. safety standards, and limit the rate of border inspection of imported goods?

Yes  No

#### **Comments:**

We have to take decisive steps to protect our children and our citizens from dangerous imported products. I have proposed a broad safety agenda to address this challenge. As President, I will hold foreign producers of drugs, toys, and food to American safety requirements. Specific initiatives in my plan include creating a single food safety agency; banning lead in children's products; requiring independent third-party testing of imported toys; holding importers liable for the products they bring into this country; and imposing stiffer penalties and pursuing criminal prosecutions against companies that put our children and citizens at risk. I will also increase the number of inspectors at ports of entry and in foreign countries to verify that our safety rules are being followed, mandate and fully fund Country of Origin Labeling, and appoint a chair to the Consumer Product Safety Commission whose first priority is protecting the public not industry.

4. Do you commit to renegotiating the provisions in WTO, NAFTA and other existing U.S. trade agreements that require us to accept imports of food and products that only meet 'equivalent' standards set by the exporting country INSTEAD of actually meeting our U.S. safety standards and the provisions that limit the rate of border inspection of imported goods?

Yes  No

#### **Comments:**

As President, I will protect American families from unsafe food, drugs, and toys made overseas. No imported food or products will be sold on American shelves unless independent testing shows that they have met American safety standards. I have called for creating a single safety agency to oversee all federal food safety activities. I will also increase the number of inspectors at ports of entry and in foreign countries to verify that our safety rules are being followed, and will mandate and fully fund Country of Origin Labeling.

### **Agriculture**

The number one priority of each future trade agreement must be to provide farmers and ranchers across the globe an opportunity to receive a fair price for their commodities. Each trade agreement since the early 1990's has led to both lower prices being paid to producers for

commodities and floods of imports that lack environmental and quality-control standards. These agreements have undermined the livelihoods of family farmers and ranchers here and in our trading partners, increasing rural poverty while doing nothing to protect the environment or ensure food safety.

5. As President, will you renegotiate existing trade agreements to address these problems, and ensure that they are addressed in all future agreements?

Yes  No

**Comments:**

As President, I will ensure that trade agreements benefit workers and farmers – not just corporate elites. In the early months of my presidency, I will observe a timeout from new trade agreements until my administration has reviewed all of our existing agreements and has formulated a comprehensive trade policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that promotes the interests of all Americans. I have committed to requiring that all future trade agreements contain strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards that raise welfare at home and around the world. Also, as President, I will continue to pursue the priorities on agriculture that I have as Senator of New York. Local marketing, purchasing and distribution of food from our family farms are crucial. I have introduced with Sen. Brown the FOOD for a Healthy America Act, which will go to the heart of expanding direct-to-consumer marketing of products to the benefit of those in underserved areas, in need of healthier food, and the farmers who can use more markets to increase their share of the food dollar. Thinking of innovative ways to help farmers and strengthening family run operations has been a focus of mine, and something I've succeeded with in New York. That is also why I created my “Farm-to-Fork” initiative to develop new ways to tackle the hurdles that obstruct farmers and create opportunities where they can find in roads to the largest market in our country, New York City.

**NAFTA Expansion to Panama**

6. The Panama Free Trade Agreement is currently stalled because a prominent Panamanian politician has been indicted for murdering U.S. military personnel. However, at some point this controversy will be over. During the campaign, all Democratic candidates have powerfully critiqued NAFTA’s failures and agreed it must be altered. Given the Panama FTA replicates many of NAFTA’s worst problems – such as foreign investor provisions that grant foreign investors greater rights than those of Americans – will you commit to either renegotiate or withdraw from this agreement if you are elected President?

Yes  No

**Comments:**

I have opposed the agreement with Panama because the head of its National Assembly is a fugitive from justice in America. I will not weigh the specifics of the agreement while this issue remains unresolved. I have introduced a plan to fix NAFTA. As part of that plan, I will change

the investor provisions that enable foreign companies to challenge American safety and environmental regulations outside of court and in front of special panels. Trade agreements must elevate workers' standard of living, not empower corporations to hold them down. Also, as President, I will ensure that foreign companies do not have greater rights than American companies.

## **Priorities**

7. Will you commit to renegotiating NAFTA and all existing trade agreements to address problems including labor and environmental standards, investor rights, procurement rules, food and product safety, and agricultural provisions BEFORE initiating any new trade agreement negotiations?

Yes  No

## **Comments:**

As President, I will observe a trade "timeout" until my administration has reviewed all existing trade agreements to determine whether they are good for our economy and has created a trade policy that will strengthen our country.

I have said that NAFTA was a mistake – it has not lived up to its promises. As President, I will work with Canada and Mexico to fix the agreement so that it works for America. I have a four-point plan to fix NAFTA and it includes changing the rules that allow private enforcement of investor privileges. Specifically, my plan calls for:

*Dramatically strengthening NAFTA's labor and environmental provisions.* Strengthening these provisions will elevate labor and environmental standards around the world, protecting our workers from a race to the bottom. It will also make it harder for companies to move jobs to countries where workers have fewer protections than they do in America. NAFTA's labor and environmental provisions are now in a side agreement rather than in the core text. The requirements are weaker than those I will demand in future trade agreements and weaker than those the Democratic leadership recently crafted. As President, I will bring NAFTA's labor and environmental protections up to date. I will make the standards far tougher and absolutely binding, and I will place them in the core agreement in order to raise living standards around the world.

*Changing NAFTA's investment provisions that grant special rights to foreign companies.* Under NAFTA, foreign companies can challenge American laws before special tribunals and outside of our court system. The laws that foreign companies can challenge include regulations intended to protect workers and protect the environment. I believe that trade agreements must elevate standards of living around the world, not empower corporations to hold them down.

*Strengthening NAFTA's enforcement mechanisms.* Stronger enforcement mechanisms will ensure strict compliance with the agreement and it will help remove trade barriers our companies

may still encounter. I will apply the stronger enforcement mechanisms not only to NAFTA's commercial provisions, but also to its labor and environmental provisions.

*Reviewing NAFTA regularly.* Regular reviews will enable us to measure whether our workers and communities are reaping benefits, ensure that labor and environmental standards are improving, and allow us to assess whether the agreement requires additional changes going forward.

### **Sweatshops**

8. Cities, counties, and states across the country have passed anti-sweatshop ordinances and policies designed to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to purchase goods made in violation of basic labor standards. Just last year, the city of Austin passed an anti-sweatshop ordinance. Will you commit to passing and implementing similar legislation at the federal level to ensure that our federal tax dollars are not used to purchase sweatshop-made products?

Yes  No

### **Comments:**

I believe that America must promote strong labor and environmental standards around the world so that our own workers are not trapped in a race to the bottom. Also, when corporations are able to exploit workers abroad, it pressures wages in America and costs us jobs. As President, I will require that all future trade agreements contain strong and enforceable labor and environmental provisions in the core of the agreement. These provisions will help elevate labor and environmental standards around the world. We must also consider whether countries are suitable partners for American before we enter into trade agreements with them. For example, I have opposed the trade agreement with South Korea in part because it opens the door to the importation of goods produced in a region of North Korea where the rights of workers are not respected.

### **Fast Track**

Fast Track concentrates power in a small executive branch agency where corporate lobbyists set the agenda away from democratic oversight. This process is how we got into NAFTA, CAFTA and WTO – with past administrations signing trade deals before Congress got to vote on their contents. The agreements put into place under Fast Track have resulted in disproportionate damage to U.S. farmers, ranchers, workers and firms.

9. As President, will you commit to replacing the fast track negotiating process with a new system that includes the following principles that have been adopted as formal policy by the National Farmers Union, the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win labor federation:
- a. Readiness criteria to determine appropriate negotiating partners;
  - b. Binding obligations regarding what must and must not be in future trade agreements;
  - c. The right of prior informed consent for states before they are bound to investment, service sector and procurement rules in trade agreements; and

d. The right for congress to vote before agreements are signed.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

I oppose fast track for President Bush because he has failed to enforce our trade agreements and because he negotiates trade deals without particular concern for our workers. As President, I will take a timeout from new trade agreements. My priorities will be to review all of our existing agreements to ensure that they are benefiting our workers and to craft a trade policy that is genuinely pro-worker, pro-American, and vigorously enforced. Our focus should not be on new trade deals, nor should it be on the fastest way of getting new deals done. It should be on enforcing the existing agreements and designing policies that benefit our workers.

**WTO “Doha” Round**

10. The agenda of the WTO Doha Round has proved to be disagreeable to a majority of countries. Negotiations have collapsed repeatedly and the talks are 3 years past their deadline for conclusion. Workers, family farmers, and activists around the globe have made clear that the WTO hinders instead of helps the world develop in a fair, just, equitable and environmentally sound way. Do you think that the time has arrived for a new U.S. president to take the leadership to declare that the current Doha framework is a loser and to call for talks to be restarted on a different agenda that focuses on fixing the problems in the existing WTO rules that have caused the WTO’s lack of legitimacy in the first place?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

We need a 21<sup>st</sup> century trade policy that allows us to better manage globalization. Trade policy cannot just protect the interests of elites. It must make our workers better off and it must elevate standards of living around the world. That is why I have insisted on ever stronger labor and environmental provisions that will ensure that American workers are not caught in a race to the bottom. As President, my immediate priority will not be new agreements. Rather, it will be to review our existing agreements to assess whether they are delivering benefits and to formulate a comprehensive trade policy that is genuinely pro-worker and pro-American. After the timeout, I will not sign any agreement that I do not believe protects American interests to the fullest extent possible. President Bush hastily signed the South Korea free trade agreement which cost America jobs. I strongly believe that the President should not rush to sign other trade agreements on his way out of office.

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

*Hillary Rodham Clinton*

**Signature**

February 29, 2008

**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 on trade issues. We look forward to working with you over the period of your candidacy, and thereafter.*