

Turning it Around on Trade Policy

By Andy Gussert, National Director of [Citizens Trade Campaign](#)

Ten years ago, citizen activists took to the streets of Seattle, demanding change to the structure of the World Trade Organization. And they succeeded. A message was sent to the World that the public would not sit idly by while corporations decided our future.

Now, ten years later, we are in a new political environment. A trade viewpoint once marginalized as fringe -- and attributed by media to leftists and bomb throwers -- today represents a majority view of the American public. More than 110 candidates nationwide, from both parties, joined President Obama in running on a trade reform in 2008. Over eighty new representatives and senators were elected to Congress in 2006 and 2008 by advocating for trade reform, and over sixty-five of those candidate filled seats previously held by the keepers of the NAFTA status quo.

Momentum is on our side. In December of 2007, a majority of the majority in the house opposed the Peru FTA. Today the NAFTA style trade agreements with Panama, Colombia and South Korea are virtually dead in the water. Almost half of the House majority has already cosponsored the 2009 TRADE Act. And recently, President Obama has pushed for unprecedented enforcement on past agreements, including labor and environmental standards.

We are winning by advocating *what we are for*. Big business is now reacting to our agenda, rather than the other way around. We are making headway, **but there is still more to do**.

For a real trade turnaround, we have to roll up our sleeves, and close the deal.

Here's how:

[Contact members of Congress](#) to cosponsor the 2009 Trade Act. We only need a handful more to push us over a majority of the majority, so call your Representative today. *Don't take no for an answer*. Be persistent. If he or she is a cosponsor, contact your Senator and ask to cosponsor Sherrod Brown's Senate version.

[Host a House Party](#) or other trade send-off event to promote a trade turnaround. To send a message to the WTO, and to celebrate the victory of people power over corporate rule, we're helping folks organize house parties across the country the week of November 15th. Sign up, and we'll send you a copy of the film *Battle in Seattle* starring Charlize Theron and Woody Harrelson.

[Contact the White House](#) to fix the Doha Round. As they chanted 10 years ago in Seattle, *we need to fix it or nix it*. We can't plug financial loopholes under current WTO rules. Tell the Administration that financial service deregulation got us into the current

economic crisis. The Doha Round -- the WTO expansion negotiation started in 2001—requires further financial service deregulation and liberalization. This is the opposite of past promises. We need a trade turnaround. It's time for a new round.

Support President Obama's Trade Promises. Let people know we are rolling up our sleeves to help bring about the reform promised in the last election. We agree with his call to create new trade policies that serve the needs of all Americans, not only the special interests who have promoted the past, failed model. We strongly support his efforts to put people back to work, including use of *Buy American* stimulus programs.

For more background, visit CTC's website at www.citizenstrade.org.

Citizens Trade Campaign (CTC) is a diverse national coalition of environmental, labor, consumer, family farm, religious, and other civil society groups founded in 1992 to improve the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). We are united in a common belief that international trade and investment are not ends unto themselves, but must be viewed as a means for achieving other societal goals such as economic justice, human rights, healthy communities, and a sound environment.