

February 16, 2012

Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice
298 Garfield Street
Ashland, Oregon 97520

Oregon Fair Trade Campaign
310 SW 4th Ave, #436
Portland, Oregon 978204

Dear Friends:

To all of you that took the time to come out today, to those of you that demand that your voices be heard, to those of you that simply demand transparency in government: thank you.

The rules that govern international trade are critically important. Poorly designed rules – and there are many of them – undermine our economic growth and our ability to create the good-paying jobs that our families deserve. Even well-conceived rules on international trade work to our collective benefit only if they are vigorously and consistently enforced.

Most importantly, the rules that are to govern international trade and are supposed to give American producers a level playing field on which to compete must be designed with our broad, collective interests in mind, not just those interests of the well-connected few. That is not the situation that exists now.

As you know, the details of trade negotiations, as they are underway, are shared only with Members of Congress, select congressional staff, and hand-selected industry insiders. The details of many trade negotiations are not made public until the agreement is complete and changes are nearly impossible. This is wrong and this must change.

I feel strongly about this and am taking the Obama Administration to task on it. As an example, under my pressure, the Obama Administration made public the text of the controversial Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement, or ACTA, before it was finalized. Doing so enabled us to successfully remove some harmful provisions. ACTA is still unacceptable and the process was still too secretive. But in this instance, the pressure we brought to bear made a difference. It can again.

With respect to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations and others, working with you, I will continue to forcefully press the Obama White House to make them more transparent. Specifically, U.S. trade negotiators should be required to – at a minimum – share with the public

the proposals they are putting forward, as they put them forward, in negotiations. Obama's trade negotiators cannot be allowed to shroud their goals in secret because, after all, they are supposed to be negotiating on our behalf -- on behalf of workers and everyone who simply seek to make a decent income for honest day's work.

On my website you can see some examples of how I have pressed the Administration for more transparency, and there will be more efforts moving forward. I make that pledge today. And your collective action today provides the type of currency and credibility that will enhance my efforts and we press forward on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator