

Fair Trade for Working Families (H.Res. 1286)

For at least the last four decades, U.S. trade policy and negotiations have undergone corporate capture, twisting U.S. trade agreements to serve the interests of wealthy individuals and large corporations to the detriment of working people, consumers, independent farmers, small businesses, and the environment. Interests eager to relocate production to low-wage countries, particularly China, shaped U.S. trade policies and facilitated a general lack of robust enforcement of labor and environmental standards to crush U.S. manufacturers and workers; to fuel extreme global trade imbalances and offshoring; and to destroy the potential benefits of trade for all except those at the very top.

In response, President Trump has enacted a trade policy—through the usurpation of Congress’ constitutional role—that has thrust the United States into trade wars with its closest allies on the one hand while cutting tariffs and other trade barriers on trade cheating countries like China. President Trump’s chaotic tariffs and the economic uncertainty caused by ever-changing tariff rates and targets have chilled investment and job creation, placed severe strain on many small and medium-sized businesses, and exacerbated the ongoing affordability crisis.

Neither of these approaches to trade policy will remedy the economic and national security risks generated by the current trade regime. *Therefore, we propose an alternative model for trade that delivers benefits to everyone – not just those at the very top:*

- 1. Trade agreements must include strong, enforceable labor, wage, and environmental standards.** Trade should raise wages and standards globally, not allow companies to seek out low-wage labor markets with weak worker rights and environmental protections, pitting workers against each other in a never-ending race to the bottom.
- 2. Buy America must mean Made in America.** Public procurement and infrastructure investment should support U.S. workers.
- 3. Trade and domestic policy must work together to stop offshoring and support American jobs.** Trade should rebuild domestic manufacturing capacity, not accelerate its decline.
- 4. Trade policy should not provide a competitive advantage stemming from pollution, exploitation, or industrial theft.** Trade policy must not allow companies to undercut U.S. workers by exploiting weaker standards abroad.
- 5. Trade policy should make medicine safe, reliable, and affordable – not more expensive.** Trade agreements should prioritize access to affordable medicine at home and abroad.
- 6. Trade policy should support independent farmers and rural communities.**
- 7. Trade agreements should include guardrails to prevent offshoring spurred by certain applications of advanced technology like AI.**
- 8. Tariffs must be used to defend workers and industry, not secure special favors or bully allies.** When an Administration fails to do this, Congress will exercise its constitutional trade authority to address specific abuses.
- 9. Trade policymaking should prioritize working people, not corporations.** The priorities of working families should be front and center in transparent negotiations.
- 10. Trade laws must be enforced aggressively and loopholes must be addressed.** The United States must fully enforce its trade laws to stop other unfair practices, such as dumping government-subsidized products on the U.S. market to undercut U.S. producers.