



June 13, 2016

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the 700,000 members and officers of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), I am writing to express our opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

The TPP is very much a product of the secretive nature in which the agreement was negotiated. While the agreement was kept secret from the general public and labor, consumer, public health, and religious groups had extremely limited access to information relating to the negotiations, large multinational corporations had strong input in the agreement. Given that, it is unsurprising that the final deal would benefit large corporations that seek to ship jobs overseas exacerbating a global race to the bottom, but would do little for workers, consumers, small businesses, or the environment.

The TPP fails to fix a number of problems with our trade policy that have led to lost jobs and lower wages for decades. For example, although several TPP member nations have long histories of manipulating their currencies, the TPP includes no enforceable rules on currency manipulation. At the same time, TPP countries including Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Mexico fail to protect fundamental worker rights, but the TPP lacks the fundamental changes needed to create a meaningful enforcement mechanism for labor rights provisions. In fact, Vietnam would be able to get much of the TPP's tariff benefits before even nominally coming into compliance with the agreement's labor standards.

In contrast to the lack of meaningful and strong mechanisms that would be used to enforce the TPP's labor and environmental standards, the TPP provides multinational investors with a robust private right of action that gives them broader protections than they would be provided under U.S. domestic law. This crony court investor-state dispute settlement still lacks independently-selected judges, an appeals process, or requirements that judges follow judicial precedent. While the TPP does strictly limit ISDS cases that can be filed over tobacco, it gives the banking industry a broader right to sue than has been provided in any previous U.S. trade agreement.

In some areas, the TPP is actually even worse for American workers and consumers than past trade deals that have failed to deliver the promised benefits. For example, Japanese auto companies heavily source steel and other goods from China and Thailand yet the TPP contains very weak rules of origin that will allow cars and trucks to be imported to the U.S. tariff-free even if the majority of their value was manufactured in China.

It is critically important that our trade policy be constructed in a way that benefits working people in the United States and raises wages and standards throughout the world. Unfortunately, the TPP fails to meet this test and instead benefits just a few connected companies at the expense of working people.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane Larson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shane Larson
Legislative Director
Communications Workers of America (CWA)