

We have a **once-in-a-decade opportunity** to make the global economy work

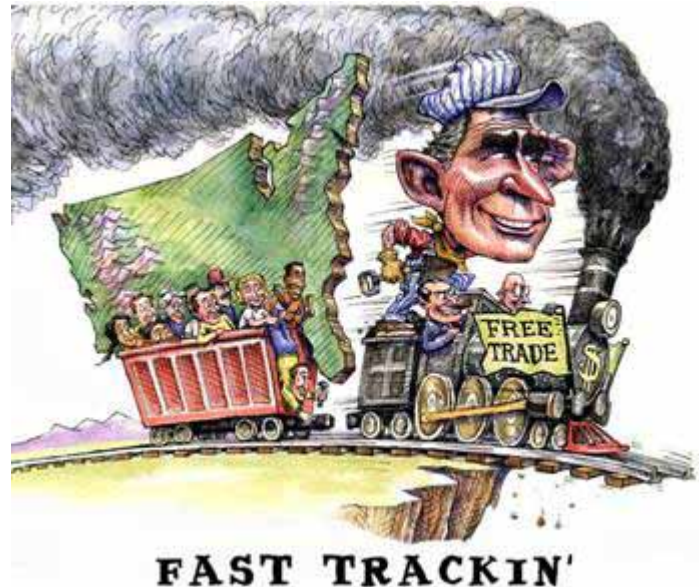
for working people, the environment, and democracy: **REPLACE FAST TRACK!**

THE NAFTA & WTO FAST TRACK ILLNESS

The current model of globalization is a train wreck. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are delivery mechanisms for a model of globalization that has meant:

- ❖ millions of good U.S. jobs off-shored
- ❖ declining living standards for the middle-class
- ❖ key environmental, health laws weakened
- ❖ food safety gutted
- ❖ more poverty in developing nations

The “Fast Track” trade negotiating process is how we got into this mess. Fast Track is an outdated, outrageous law that Richard Nixon initially cooked up to take away Congress’ constitutional authority over U.S. trade policy. Under Fast Track, the White House is empowered to pick countries, decide what’s in trade deals and then sign agreements before Congress even has a vote!



The result has been a web of powerful, retrograde global rules – like NAFTA and the WTO – that systematically favor multinational corporations over working people, the environment, and democracy, and that negatively affect our daily lives in innumerable ways.

THE FAIR TRADE CURE: REPLACE FAST TRACK

The public sent a clear message in the 2006 midterm elections:

“Stay the Course” is not an option on trade and globalization”

Now we must ensure Congress seizes this opportunity to turn around our failed trade policy.

Yippee! Fast Track expired on June 30, 2007.

This is a **once-in-a-decade opportunity to replace Fast Track**, fix the current devastating rules of the global economy, and move forward to fair trade!

Surprise, surprise. President Bush wants Congress to deliver a blank check in the form of more Fast Track to do more of the same NAFTA-style deals for his big corporate buddies. We need to show Congress what we’re for – and what we demand instead: a new trade policy-making process that guarantees what *must* and *must not* be included in trade pacts – and keeps policy-makers accountable to the public and Congress. Here’s what you can do:

- ❖ **Write and Call Your Representative and Both Senators:** Call the U.S. Capitol at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your representative and senators. Ask for the “Trade LA” and tell them you absolutely oppose any more Fast Track; and that it cannot be fixed but must be **replaced** with a better system that will help us create fair trade agreements. Find a sample letter & send it at www.citizen.org/fasttrackletter
- ❖ **Bird-dog!** Your congresspeople constantly attend town hall meetings in your hometown. Show up to one, ask tough questions, and make them go on record with their position on Fast Track. They’ll be happy you have a better proposal.
- ❖ **Write a Letter to the Editor:** Publishing a letter in your local newspaper is a great way to spread the word. It also puts pressure on your congressperson to do the right thing. Go to www.citizen.org/trade/media to get started!

What is Fast Track? Fast Track is a procedure by which Congress agrees to delegate away to the president its authority over trade policy. The U.S. Constitution gives Congress *exclusive* authority to set U.S. trade policy and gives the executive branch authority to conduct international negotiations. This smart check and balance means the President *cannot* negotiate trade deals - unless Congress gives authority to do so. **But in 1974, then-President Nixon hatched Fast Track to grab all control over trade policy for the White House.** It was under Fast Track that President Bush I cooked up the NAFTA and WTO – and these retrograde deals were signed and sealed *before* Congress even had a vote. Obviously, we need a new process that puts a steering wheel and, when necessary, emergency brakes on the president's trade negotiators and puts the public and Congress in the driver's seat. There simply is no way to "fix" Fast Track. Its very design is intended to cut out Congress. Adding new negotiating objectives, like on labor, is useless.

How does Fast Track work? Under Fast Track, all the president must do is give Congress notice that he intends to start negotiations. Then the White House gets to make all the decisions that Congress otherwise would make. As a result:

- ❖ **Congress can't choose which nations we will negotiate with** (to make sure they aren't violating human rights)
- ❖ **Congress can't determine the contents of the deals** (e.g. to include labor rights or block drug patent extensions)
- ❖ **Most in Congress don't even get to see the final text** before the president's has signed the completed deals
- ❖ **Congress doesn't get to write the legislation** to approve the deal, which changes scores of U.S. laws
- ❖ **The normal congressional committee procedure is circumvented, and debate is strictly limited;** and
- ❖ **When Congress finally gets to vote, all amendments are forbidden.** Congress can only vote "Yes" or "No".

What has Fast Track gotten us so far? NAFTA and WTO, for starters.

NAFTA pushed corporations to move jobs out of the U.S. and allows corporations to demand cash payments when other nations' environmental, health, zoning, safety and other public interest laws cut into their "expected" profits. Then NAFTA guarantees these corporations tax-free access back into the U.S. market to sell the products they make offshore under these race-to-the-bottom conditions. Over **a million specific U.S. jobs are government-certified as NAFTA casualties** under just one narrow program. And with NAFTA's corporate agribusiness rules driving 1.3 million Mexican farmers off of their land, NAFTA is the supply-side of the immigration controversy we face today. After declining before NAFTA, immigration from Mexico rose 60% in NAFTA's first seven years. Now, the "Security and Prosperity Partnership" (SPP) and NAFTA Superhighway could deepen some of NAFTA's worst terms.

The WTO guarantees privileged access to our markets for products made by U.S. corporations that relocate to China and other countries with \$1/day wages and violent repression of workers. WTO also allows foreign governments to **challenge laws that safeguard workers, the environment, and public health and promote economic development.** U.S. dolphin protection and clean air rules have fallen to WTO. We are required to import meat that doesn't meet our safety standards. WTO required us to provide new drug-patent monopolies, jacking up prices for all of us.

Tell Congress and Your Friends *Why We Have to Replace Fast Track*

Fast Track must be boxed and buried... and replaced with an entirely new trade policy-making mechanism that gives Congress and the public back control over our trade policy. We cannot trust President Bush to get trade right. Congress needs to take back control on our behalf – and change direction.

Fast Track is undemocratic. It is ridiculous that Congress is barred from deciding the contents of trade pacts and kept from voting on something as important as NAFTA or WTO only *after* the agreement is signed.

Fast Track has hurt the economy. Fast Track and the trade agreements that it has enabled – NAFTA and the WTO – have been a major cause of the current economic mess now slamming millions of American families:

- ❖ **U.S. wages have stagnated.** Fast Tracked trade deals promote job off-shoring to low wage venues and a flood of return imports. This race-to-the-bottom competition means the average U.S. worker now makes only a nickel more per hour than in 1973 (before Fast Track), even as workers' productivity jumped 85%!
- ❖ **1 in 6 U.S. manufacturing jobs lost.** We've lost nearly 3 million good, high-paying manufacturing jobs, and the tax base that funded our schools and hospitals, since Fast Track stuck us with NAFTA and WTO.
- ❖ **Job off-shoring moving rapidly up the income and skills ladder.** Alan Blinder, a former Federal Reserve vice-chairman, estimates that 28 to 42 million service-sector jobs could be off-shored soon!

We are for *fair* trade. That's why Fast Track must be replaced. If we replace Fast Track, we can change the rules of the global economy, help raise living standards, and improve the quality of life in America and the world.