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NEWS RELEASE

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Growing Attention to Obama Trans-Pacific Trade Pact Threatens to Undermine Offshoring Attack on Romney as TPP Talks Wrap Up Today

SAN DIEGO – Growing congressional, state legislator and activist protests of closed-door negotiations on the Obama administration’s first trade pact, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), threatened to undermine the Obama campaign’s attack on Mitt Romney’s Bain Capital U.S. job offshoring activities. The latest round of TPP talks wrapped up today in San Diego following a week of protests outside the venue, growing concern about TPP in Congress, a letter warning of opposition from state legislators representing all 50 states and delivery of two different petitions with nearly 100,000 signatories each. A text of the TPP’s investment chapter that leaked last month shows that it includes an expanded version of the rules in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that incentivize investment and job offshoring by eliminating the risks of relocating to lower-wage countries and guaranteeing preferential treatment for relocated firms.

“U.S. negotiators have tried to keep TPP negotiations totally below the radar, but even so opposition to the current “NAFTA-on-steroids-with-Asia” approach is escalating, which is good news for the public but a serious complication for the Obama campaign’s attack on Romney as a U.S. job offshorer,” said Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch.

During last week’s secretive TPP talks in San Diego, state legislative leaders from all 50 states sent [a letter to President Barack Obama’s senior trade official](#), warning that they will oppose the deal unless the administration alters its current approach. “The lack of transparency of the treaty negotiation process, and the failure of negotiators to meaningfully consult with states on the far-reaching impact of trade agreements on state and local laws, even when binding on our states, is of grave concern to us,” the legislators wrote in their July 5 letter.

During the TPP negotiations, Internet freedom activists delivered [90,000 signatures](#) calling on U.S. negotiators to stop their insistence on pushing restrictive intellectual property programs similar to the controversial Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA). The AFL-CIO also delivered nearly [90,000 signatures](#) on another petition criticizing the TPP and calling for fair trade. [The text](#) of the petition stated, “Past FTAs have accelerated the shift of jobs overseas, made it harder for our own government to spend our tax dollars on Made in America products and put corporate profits before the interests of working families here and in other countries. It’s past time for our leaders to support trade rules that reward companies that invest in America so we can rebuild our nation.”

On June 27, an overwhelming majority of House Democrats (133 members), led by U.S. Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and George Miller (D-Calif.), [sent a letter](#) to the administration criticizing the secretive TPP negotiating process, demanding public release of the TPP text and raising alarm about TPP proposals that replicate past pacts and could [increase drug prices](#), undermine [Buy American policy](#) and expose U.S. [laws to attack in foreign tribunals](#). The letter, sponsored by two members of the House Democratic leadership, was signed by almost every Democratic full committee ranking member and Appropriations Committee ranking member, as well as many Ways and Means Committee members and a dozen lawmakers who supported last fall's free trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama.

“President Obama is facing a growing chorus of opposition to what his trade negotiators are up to on the TPP from his base and from other Democratic elected officials, and given that his campaign seems to be honing in on job offshoring as a winning theme, he needs to redirect his negotiators from their current TPP agenda of NAFTA-on-steroids with all of Asia,” said Wallach.

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