



How You Can Have an Impact During the August Recess

Thank you for pledging to visit your representative during the August recess. Here is what you can do to have an impact this summer:

- Find your representative's local office by going to his or her official website. The site should have addresses and contact information for all of the representative's offices.
- Sign the cover letter included in the left folder pocket. Include your address so your member of Congress knows where to address a response.
- Visit your member's office to deliver this lobby packet. Tell the front desk staff person that you are a constituent, and that you would like your representative to support the legislation discussed in the packet.

That's all! The following additional tips are optional, but can make your visit more impactful.

- Take some time to customize your packet. We included a blank note that you can use to explain why a particular piece of legislation matters to you. You can also use this note to thank your representative if he or she already co-sponsors a piece of legislation. You can use this website to look up a bill's current co-sponsors (thomas.loc.gov).
- Before you visit your member's office, call ahead and try to schedule a meeting with your representative or a member of his or her staff. Be persistent! Your member's schedule is likely to be packed. When you call it is helpful to ask to speak with your member's scheduler.
- If you do get a meeting, break the ice with a bit a small talk, but keep in mind that the meeting is likely to only last 10 or 15 minutes. Be friendly, but quickly get to the purpose of the meeting. The person you're meeting with may disagree with you. Be polite, but firm in your support for the bills. If you don't know the answer to a question, let the person know you can find out the answer and follow up. Feel free to bring a friend along to share your experience or help take notes. Always inform the office if a group will be attending.
- Always follow up. Even if you don't get a meeting, ask the person at the front desk for an email address you can contact to send a thank you note. Email your representative and ask if he or she has decided to co-sponsor any of the legislation. Follow up via phone to see if the office needs any more information, or to answer a question you may have left unanswered during your meeting or visit.

If you have any questions about the visit or any of the legislation, please contact us at action@citizen.org. We would also love to get a report back from you on how your visit went. Please make sure the subject line of any email you send us is "August Action".



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August 2013

RE: Please Co-sponsor the Wall Street Trading and Speculators Tax Act (H.R. 880), the Arbitration Fairness Act (H.R. 1844), the Shareholder Protection Act (H.R. 1734) and the Expanded & Improved Medicare For All Act (H.R. 676)

Dear Member of Congress,

As your constituent and on behalf of Public Citizen, a public interest organization with more than 300,000 members and activists nationwide, I have delivered this packet of information to encourage you to co-sponsor the following bills:

- The **Wall Street Trading and Speculators Tax Act (H.R. 880)**, which would instate a miniscule tax to rein in Wall Street's reckless high-speed trading while raising more than \$350 billion in federal revenue over the next 10 years.
- The **Arbitration Fairness Act (H.R. 1844)**, which would eliminate binding mandatory (or "forced") arbitration from consumer and employee contacts, thereby stopping corporations from using take-it-or-leave-it terms to evade accountability and limit Americans' constitutional rights.
- The **Shareholder Protection Act (H.R. 1734)**, which would introduce commonsense disclosure requirements in order to prevent publicly traded corporations from hiding their political spending from shareholders, investors and the public.
- The **Expanded & Improved Medicare For All Act (H.R. 676)**, which would provide real universal health care for all Americans by improving the Medicare system and expanding the program to cover the entire U.S. population.

For more detailed information about each of these pieces of legislation, please see the attached information sheets.

By sponsoring these four pieces of legislation, you will demonstrate to your constituents your willingness to stand with the public and against corporate interests that seek to distort our economy, our civil justice system, our democracy and our health care system.

Thank you for listening to a constituent. I look forward to your reply.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Wall Street Trading and Speculators Tax Act (H.R. 880)

Lead sponsor: Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.)
Co-sponsors as of July 2013: 24

The Problem

Wall Street recklessness has cost Americans trillions in lost wages, savings and household wealth.

The Wall Street practice of using high-speed computers to trade thousands of times a second, known as high-frequency trading, introduces dangerous volatility to the financial market while serving no productive purpose for our economy. The risks are real: On May 6, 2010, the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 1,000 points and \$1 trillion in a matter of minutes due to a computing error on the part of high-frequency traders.

Unchecked high-frequency trading will lead only to more pain for average Americans at the hands of the financial industry.

The Solution

By charging a miniscule 0.03 percent tax (3 pennies on \$100) on the sale or transfer of stocks, bonds and derivatives, **The Wall Street Trading and Speculators Tax Act** would reduce the threats to market stability that high-frequency trading presents by discouraging high-speed, high-volume trades.

According to the non-partisan Joint Committee on Taxation, the tax would generate approximately \$352 billion in revenue over the next nine years. This revenue can be used to bolster programs like Medicare and Social Security, which serve valuable social purposes.

When Americans buy everyday items from a candy bar to a car, we pay sales tax, yet Wall Street traders buy and sell millions of dollars of securities a day and pay almost nothing. The financial sector is woefully under-taxed, accounting for roughly 30 percent of corporate profits, but only paying 18 percent of corporate taxes. **Americans have paid the price for Wall Street's reckless actions in the past, and it is only fair to put Wall Street to work rebuilding Main Street.**

What You Can Do

On behalf of myself and Public Citizen, a public interest organization with more than 300,000 members and activists nationwide, I ask that you co-sponsor H.R. 880. We believe it will contribute to stability in the financial markets while also generating revenue that could be put to good use for the American people.



Arbitration Fairness Act (H.R. 1844)

Lead sponsor: Rep. Hank Johnson Jr. (D-Ga.)
Co-sponsors as of July 2013: 48

The Problem

Corporate America is chipping away at the rights of average Americans, one consumer contract at a time. Buried in the fine print of everyday, mostly non-negotiable consumer contracts for products and services such as credit cards, cell phones, car loans, nursing homes and employment contracts, to name a few, are forced arbitration clauses. These clauses eliminate consumers' access to the courts and force them to resolve disputes with businesses in a private arbitration system that favors the corporations that write the terms.

The clauses allow corporations to escape accountability for everything from discrimination, harassment and negligence to fraud, as well as violations of numerous consumer protection laws. Forced arbitration clauses also provide a disincentive for corporations to treat their customers fairly, since the clauses enable corporations to avoid being held legally responsible for wrongdoing. Corporations use these clauses to deny consumers' and employees' right to band together in class actions, instead forcing individuals to go it alone against corporate giants, which few consumers and employees have the time or resources to do.

The Solution

The **Arbitration Fairness Act** would eliminate forced arbitration and restore consumers' ability to choose how to resolve a dispute after it arises.

This legislation ensures that the decision to arbitrate is truly voluntary, and that individuals' right to remedies provided by the civil justice system is not waived by the fine print of a contract. It would also ensure that arbitration, if selected as the dispute resolution method, is a fair process that both parties would agree to willingly.

Signing away your rights should never be a condition of service, and no entity should be able to put itself outside of the law with a clause in a contract.

What You Can Do

On behalf of myself and Public Citizen, a public interest organization with more than 300,000 members and activists nationwide, I ask that you co-sponsor H.R. 1844. We believe consumers should have the right to choose how to resolve disputes, and that we will all be better served when corporations can be held accountable to the law.



Shareholder Protection Act (H.R. 1734)

Lead sponsor: Rep. Mike Capuano (D-Mass.)
Co-sponsors: 30

The Problem

American corporations are spending more than ever to influence the outcomes of elections, but the American people are unable to hold these companies accountable because corporations are not required to disclose their political spending – to the public or to their shareholders.

In the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* decision, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that disclosure would, “provide shareholders and citizens with the information needed to hold corporations and elected officials accountable for their positions and supporters.”

However, no mechanism currently exists to require companies to disclose their political spending. As a result, shareholder money is spent without their consent, and the American people are left to wonder who really funds the ads on their television screens.

Though many Americans don't consider themselves shareholders, anyone with a 401(k) or a pension does in fact hold shares in American companies. Public companies should not be able to spend freely in elections without first informing, and receiving approval from, their shareholders.

The Solution

The **Shareholder Protection Act** would require companies to disclose the amount and nature of political expenditures, and would allow shareholders to vote to authorize the spending. The bill would also make public, through the Securities and Exchange Commission's website, political spending reports by publicly traded companies.

What You Can Do

On behalf of myself and Public Citizen, a public interest organization with more than 300,000 members and activists nationwide, I ask that you co-sponsor H.R. 1734. We believe shareholders have a stake in how the companies they own spend money in elections, and that they deserve to know how their money is being spent to influence the political process.



Expanded & Improved Medicare For All Act (H.R. 676)

Lead sponsor: Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.)

Co-sponsors: 43

The Problem

While the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) took us a step in the right direction toward covering more Americans, more than 29 million Americans are expected to remain uninsured after its implementation.

Uninsured Americans are vulnerable, not only to catastrophic medical emergencies, but also to medical bankruptcies, which are a significant economic drag on individuals and struggling communities. The United States’ infant mortality rate (6.81 deaths per 1,000 live births) trails dismally behind the rest of the industrialized world.

Meanwhile, the chaotic, often unreliable, and incomplete system of employer-based healthcare wastefully siphons hundreds of billions away from our federal government. American taxpayers are paying more for their federal health care system than citizens of any other advanced democracy, yet getting far less in return.

The Solution

Expanded & Improved Medicare For All Act would improve the Medicare system and expand it to cover the entire U.S. population.

A single-payer, Medicare for all system would provide universal coverage for all Americans and eliminate the wasteful administrative costs of the private, for-profit health insurance industry, saving an estimated \$400 billion in federal taxpayer dollars annually.

What You Can Do

On behalf of myself and Public Citizen, a public interest organization with more than 300,000 members and activists nationwide, I ask that you co-sponsor H.R. 676. We believe health care is a human right, and that the benefits of universal coverage by far exceed any advantages of our current wasteful and incomplete system.

