



**Consumers
Union**



**Union of
Concerned
Scientists**

**U.S.
PIRG**



April 17, 2015

Dear Senator:

We are writing to express our deep concerns with the Ryan-Hatch Fast Track bill (S. 995/HR. 1890) because we believe it will undermine Congress' ability to have a meaningful role in shaping trade agreement rules that will impact important federal and state consumer policies and protections. We urge you to consider a new form of trade authority that would help ensure that negotiated trade agreements do not jeopardize health, safety and financial protections important to consumers in the U.S. and abroad.

Today's pending trade pacts, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), extend far beyond tariffs and quotas. They would set terms binding on future Congresses and state legislatures that could limit critical consumer safeguards relating to food safety and consumer labeling, financial regulation, data privacy, energy, medicine patents, safety standards for products ranging from autos to toys, and more.

Given the expansive scope of today's agreements, a new trade authority mechanism must include negotiating objectives that promote high standards of consumer and environmental protection, and do not expose our existing policies to new threats. The Ryan-Hatch bill does not meet these standards. It includes problematic negotiating objectives, such as requiring that regulations be based on cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment, that could undermine our existing safeguards on financial services, food and product safety and that could require the U.S. to accept goods and services that do not meet U.S. standards. The objectives expressed in the legislation could also result in extending patents monopolies that increase consumer medicine prices and subjecting the United States to unnecessary and procedurally flawed investor-state tribunals.

A new form of trade authority should also include meaningful Congressional involvement, including providing Congress with an explicit role in approving prospective negotiating partners and setting enforceable objectives, and involving more committees implicated by today's trade pacts in the process of tracking negotiations. Congress should be able to have meaningful input into the negotiations while they are in progress. Finally, Congress should be allowed to certify that its negotiating objectives have been met before a trade pact can be signed.

We do not support the Ryan-Hatch Fast Track bill and urge you to create a new 21st Century form of trade authority that ensures America's future trade agreements harvest the benefits of expanded trade without undermining our critical consumer and environmental safeguards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rachel Weintraub'.

Rachel Weintraub
Legislative Director and Senior Counsel

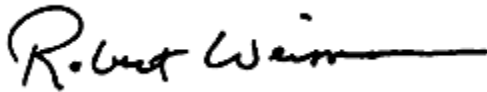
Consumer Federation of America



Ellen Bloom
Senior Director of Federal Policy & Washington Office
Consumers Union



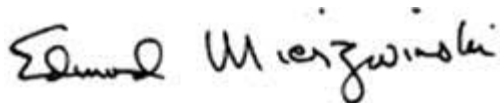
Sally Greenberg
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National Consumers League



Robert Weissman
President
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Edmund Mierzwinski
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