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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Nov. 8, 2006 (Dec. 13 update)

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Nationwide Candidates Win by Fighting for New Trade Policies, Opposing NAFTA Model; No Fair Trader Loses, 37 “Free” Trade Seats Flip

Trade Helped Put Democrats Over Top, Emerges as National Electoral Issue with More Than 25 Paid Ads and 115 Races Using Trade as Differentiator, Major Public Citizen Report Shows; Exit Polls Show Voters’ Economic Anxiety a Top Concern

WASHINGTON, D.C. – From Florida to Hawaii and parts in between, pro-fair trade challengers Tuesday beat anti-fair trade incumbents, according to a major report on the 2006 midterm results conducted by Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch division. Incumbents who had voted for the U.S. trade status quo of NAFTA, WTO and Fast Track were replaced by fair traders rejecting these failed policies and advocating improvement in 37 congressional seats (7 Senate and 30 House).

“This election changed the composition of Congress on trade to more closely represent U.S. public opinion. Congress needs a system for negotiating U.S. trade agreements – with a steering wheel and emergency brakes on negotiators – that delivers on the public’s expectations for a new trade policy that wins for American workers and farmers and does not harm the environment or food safety,” said Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch division.

Trade and off-shoring were wedge issues actively used in 115 congressional campaigns nationwide with more than 25 paid campaign ads run on trade and off-shoring. (Visit <http://www.citizen.org/trade/articles.cfm?ID=15892>.) Election exit polls conducted by CNN and *The New York Times* revealed that Americans’ anxiety about the economy and job security trumped Iraq war concerns.

“This election evaporated whatever doubts remained that trade was a politically powerful issue,” Wallach said. “Given the national sweep of fair trade winners and the key races in which trade played a big role, trade and globalization issues will have major saliency in the 2008 presidential election and beyond.”

No incumbent fair trader was beaten by an anti-fair trader. The only Democratic incumbents seeking higher office who were defeated were anti-fair trade Rep. Harold Ford, Jr., running for Tennessee’s open Senate seat, and Rep. Jim Davis, running for Florida’s open governor slot.

Many GOP anti-fair trade leaders were defeated in surprise upsets: Clay Shaw (R-Fla.) the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee chair, and Ways and Means members Nancy Johnson (R-Conn.), Chris

Chocola (R-Ind.), Melissa Hart (R-Penn.) and J.D. Hayworth (R-Ariz.). Each was replaced by a fair trader: FL-22 Ron Klein; CT-5 Chris Murphy; IN-2 Joe Donnelly; PA-4 Jason Altmire; and AZ-5 Harry Mitchell.

“The election results show that campaigning for a new trade policy that benefits American workers and farmers is a winner,” said Todd Tucker, research director for Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch. “Failure to disassociate from the NAFTA-WTO status quo and its trade deficits and job losses was a liability, including in traditionally ‘free trade’ states.”

Public Citizen’s analysis shows that trade was a top issue used to win House seats in “free trade” states such as Iowa (IA-1: Democrat Bruce Braley won anti-fair trader Jim Nussle’s open seat. Trade was a top issue, with Braley ads calling for trade policy change and GOP ads calling for more of the status quo); Kansas (KS-2: Democrat fair trader Nancy Boyda defeated anti-fair trade incumbent Jim Ryan in a race where Boyda called for failed free trade deals to be replaced by fair trade agreements); and Missouri (Senator-elect Claire McCaskill beat anti-fair trade incumbent Jim Talent in a race featuring her promises to “block the outsourcing of Missouri jobs” and to “fight for fair trade policies.”)

No member of Congress with a consistent fair-trade voting record was defeated except Rep. John Hostettler (R-Ind.), who until too late repeated his past tactic of not running a modern campaign by disavowing fundraising, polling, paid political professionals or ads. Rep. Charles Taylor (R-N.C.) also had a fair trade voting record and had pledged to oppose CAFTA. At the last moment, however, he failed to cast his vote against the agreement, allowing the pact’s one-vote passage. Taylor’s non-vote may be the main reason for his loss to fair trader Democrat Heath Shuler, who made it a major campaign issue.

“The Democratic sweep is not the cause of the fair-trade pick up, although partisanship is relevant because trade is now a differentiating issue between the GOP and Democrats. Democrats’ call for trade reform connected to the public’s economic anxiety,” said Wallach. “Democrats have coalesced in favor of trade policy reform over the past decade as President Bill Clinton’s NAFTA, WTO and China trade deals not only failed to deliver the promised benefits but caused real damage. The GOP ‘stayed the course’ on a failed trade policy and conducted high-profile fights to expand a status quo most Americans reject.”

Indeed, despite the Democratic sweep, Democrats who consistently support the NAFTA status quo, such as Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Reps. Melissa Bean (D-Ill.), Ed Towns (D-N.Y.) and Henry Cuellar (D-Texas), faced difficult re-election campaigns after alienating their bases and enduring trade-related challenges in Democratic primaries and from Independents.

“Perhaps most interesting about the trade electoral trend beyond its national scope is that it busted the myth of the trade debate being divided into ‘pro-traders’ and ‘protectionists.’ The candidates who ran and won on trade explicitly advocated better trade policies. They were not against trade, but against the specific avoidable damage delivered by more than a decade of the NAFTA-WTO model,” Wallach said.

To read highlights of fair trade wins and anti-fair trade losses and an appendix of detailed candidate positions on trade in all tracked races, visit <http://www.citizen.org/documents/AppendixElection2006.pdf>. To read Public Citizen’s full election report, which includes analysis of 25 gubernatorial races, visit <http://www.citizen.org/documents/Election2006.pdf>.

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