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Despite Fast Track Vote, Americans Know Trade Deals Fail Miserably, Will Oppose Trans-Pacific Partnership

Statement of Robert Weissman, President, Public Citizen

Following elaborate legislative contortions and gimmicks designed to hand multinational corporations their top priority, today the U.S. Senate paved the way for Fast Track legislation that aims to advance the corporate wish list known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), as well other trade deals.

Those contortions were necessary because the American people overwhelmingly oppose these deals, notwithstanding an endless barrage of propaganda.

They oppose these deals because they know from personal experience that the NAFTA model fails miserably.

They know that these deals will mean more export of jobs, more downward pressure on wages. They know that these deals will undermine our ability to maintain and adopt strong environmental and consumer protections. They know that these deals are designed to help giant corporations, and not communities.

Today's action means that Congress will tie its hands to prevent it from exerting positive influence over negotiations of the TPP. It means that the final TPP agreement will very likely include provisions empowering foreign corporations to sue our own government for policies that they claim impinge on their expected future profits. It means that the final TPP will very likely include provisions that will extend Big Pharma monopolies, raising prices for consumers and health systems – and, even in the United States, and especially in the poorer TPP countries, denying people access to needed medical treatment. It means that the final TPP will very likely include provisions undermining our food safety.

What it doesn't mean is that Congress must pass such a TPP. When the inexcusable and anti-democratic veil of secrecy surrounding the TPP is finally lifted, and the American people see what is actually in the agreement, they are going to force their representatives in Washington to vote that deal down. Members who fail to do so can expect their constituents to hold them accountable.

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