

# 10 Presidential Candidates Criticize the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Upping Political Costs of Supporting the Pact

As the 2016 presidential campaign ramps up, so do the political costs of support for the already-controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which would expand the status quo trade model [broadly opposed by Democratic, Republican and independent voters in repeated polls](#). As presidential candidates push anti-TPP messages, stoking voters' ire about the pact, on-the-fence members of Congress facing upcoming elections will find it even more difficult to vote for the unpopular pact. Given the extremely narrow margin of House passage of Fast Track, every vote will count.

Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton's rivals have made TPP opposition a central part of their campaigns. This has forced Clinton to express concerns about the pact. Meanwhile, TPP criticism from at least seven of the Republican candidates stokes conservative voters' opposition to more-of-the-same trade deals.

## **Leading Democratic Candidates' TPP Positions: From Criticism to Adamant Opposition**

### ***Hillary Clinton Sides with Democratic Congressional Leaders Critical of TPP, Criticizes Controversial TPP Provision as "Anti-Democratic"***

"I think I have a pretty good idea of what we can do to meet the tests that I believe any trade agreement, especially the TPP, must meet. It needs to, number one, protect American workers. Number two – it needs to raise wages and create good jobs at home. Number three – it needs to be in our national security interests. I've been saying that for months. Now, here's what I think should happen now. In order to get a deal that meets these high standards, the president should listen to and work with his allies in Congress, starting with Nancy Pelosi, who have expressed their concerns about the impact that a weak agreement would have on our workers to make sure we get the best, strongest deal possible. And if we don't get it, there should be no deal. [Cheers from the audience]"

--Hillary Clinton, [Iowa campaign speech](#), June 14, 2015

"When I raised a little bit of an alarm in my book, "Hard Choices," about the Investor-State Dispute Settlement, I did so because **it is a fundamentally an anti-Democratic process.**"

--Hillary Clinton, [news conference](#), June 15, 2015

### ***Bernie Sanders Blasts TPP, Pushes Other Candidates to Take a Stand, Vows to Make TPP Criticism "Central Part" of Campaign***

"The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a disastrous trade agreement designed to protect the interests of the largest multi-national corporations at the expense of workers, consumers, the environment and the foundations of American democracy. It will also negatively impact some of the poorest people in the world ... During my 23 years in Congress, I helped lead the fight against NAFTA and [Permanent Normal Trade Relations] with China. During the coming session of Congress, I will be working with organized labor, environmentalists, religious organizations, Democrats, and Republicans against the secretive TPP trade deal."

--Bernie Sanders, [TPP policy position](#), 2014

"This is a key issue. If I run, trade is a central part of the campaign."

--Bernie Sanders, [MSNBC interview](#), April 18, 2015 (12 days before announcing his candidacy)

“I frankly don't understand how you could be a major candidate for president of the United States – Hillary Clinton, or anybody else – and not have an opinion on that issue.”

--Bernie Sanders, [Charlie Rose Show interview](#), June 11, 2015

### ***Martin O'Malley Lambasts TPP, Pressures Other Candidates to Oppose the Deal***

“...it's my concern that the Trans-Pacific Partnership, this deal which is urged by big corporations, many of whom have off-shore jobs and many of whom have off-shored their profits, is bad for America's economy because it's bad for our middle class and it is a race to the bottom, a chasing of lower wages abroad, and I believe that that does nothing to help us build a stronger economy here at home. And I am appalled by the notion that we're not allowed, as Americans to read this agreement before our so-called representative institution of Congress votes on it.”

--Martin O'Malley, [NPR interview](#), April 20, 2015

“To me, opposing bad trade deals like TPP is just common sense ... American workers whose jobs could be on the line right now are owed more than lip service. They deserve to know where leaders stand.”

--Martin O'Malley, [campaign e-mail](#), April 22, 2015

## **Seven GOP Candidates Proclaim TPP Distrust, Skepticism or Outright Condemnation**

### ***Donald Trump Denounces TPP, Warns It “Might Not Pass” Under Bipartisan Opposition***

“The Trans-Pacific Partnership is an attack on America's business. It does not stop Japan's currency manipulation. This is a bad deal.”

--Donald Trump, [tweet](#), April 22, 2015

“The trade deal is a disaster for many reasons ... On its face it's no good. You have plenty of Republicans against it and you have plenty of Democrats against it. You have Democrats and Republicans—and this thing might not pass. It's a horrible deal for the United States and it should not pass. It doesn't cover currency manipulation. If you don't have currency manipulation as part of this transaction, you're wasting your time because that's the single easiest way these foreign countries take advantage of the United States.”

--Donald Trump, [Breitbart News interview](#), May 8, 2015

### ***Mike Huckabee Calls TPP a “Punch in the Gut,” Highlights Republicans' Distrust of Obama***

“Obamatrade is a secret deal that most members of Congress who support it admit they haven't been to the secret room to read the secret deal ... Free trade is a great thing, but if we fail to enforce the current trade deals, what makes us Americans think we'll enforce this one. Haven't we made the workers of other countries rich enough? Shouldn't we be focusing on good jobs for American families? Maybe this would be a great deal for the donor class on Wall Street and the political class in Washington, but I think **someone needs to be fighting for the working class because they're getting punched in the gut with these great deals.**”

--Mike Huckabee, [email to Breitbart News](#), June 5, 2015

“President Obama can't be trusted to negotiate a deal on a secondhand Subaru, let alone a trillion dollar trade deal like TPP.”

--Mike Huckabee, [WND interview](#), June 8, 2015

### ***Rick Santorum Voices TPP Distrust, Concern with Lack of Currency Manipulation Disciplines***

“I reserve the right to desist, to make sure we are negotiating deals that remain in the best interest of our American workers and our country. That’s what bothers me about this trade deal. We are trusting someone who is not worthy of trust. This president has clearly betrayed the American people on most occasions.”

--Rick Santorum, [Breitbart News interview](#), May 17, 2015

“[The TPP] ignore[s] some of the bigger problems, which is nontariff barriers, like for example currency manipulation. Those are things that we have to start looking and doing old style trade deals in a new style world in which the countries use lots of different things to disadvantage us.”

--Rick Santorum, [Fox News interview](#), June 7, 2015

### ***Rick Perry Moves from TPP Support to Newfound TPP Concern***

“I would rather Barack Obama not be negotiating for me right now, but he’s going to be there for about 20 more months, and this deal needs to be transparent, and that’s my greatest concern — is the lack of transparency in this piece of legislation.”

--Rick Perry, [campaign speech in Iowa](#), May 19, 2015

### ***Lindsey Graham Warns of Bipartisan TPP Opposition Without Binding Currency Disciplines***

Regarding the TPP’s non-inclusion of binding disciplines on currency manipulation despite [demands from bipartisan, bicameral majorities in Congress](#): “This is the place to take a stand. I will be voting no if this is not part of it.”

--Lindsey Graham, [Washington Post interview](#), November 13, 2013

“I believe there is bipartisan opposition to any trade agreement that doesn’t deal with currency.”

--Lindsey Graham, [public statement](#), February 10, 2015

### ***Carly Fiorina Announces Discomfort With TPP***

“I believe that free and fair trade advantages the U.S. **But I am very uncomfortable with this deal** ... partners can cheat on these deals, and we have evidence of partners cheating on these deals ... this is an extremely complicated deal, a multilateral deal with a lot of details that we don’t know about. And Obama and his administration has demonstrated their inability to negotiate a good deal.”

--Carly Fiorina, [The Laura Ingraham Show interview](#), May 7, 2015

### ***Bobby Jindal Expresses TPP Doubts***

“We don’t know what’s in the deal. **Too much of this deal has been negotiated in private** — in secret. I think Congress needs to maintain more oversight over this president. There’s been a lot of speculation about what could or could not be in there. For example, I want to make sure this is not a back-door way for him to try and impose the kinds of environmental regulations he’s trying to do through the [Environmental Protection Agency] around Congress .. I worry, is he going to strangle our economy?”

--Bobby Jindal, [Washington Examiner interview](#), May 10, 2015