

TOP 5 REASONS NURSES OPPOSE FAST TRACK & THE TPP

National Nurses United, the largest U.S. organization of nurses representing 185,000 RNs across the nation, opposes fast track authority for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and two other pending trade agreements, as a serious threat to public health and democracy. Here are five reasons why:

1. Reducing Access to Affordable Medications

Pharmaceutical corporations would be given years more of monopoly pricing practices on their patents for high priced brand name drugs to block distribution of competitive, cheaper, life saving generic medications. That is especially critical for people suffering from cancer, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and other illnesses in developing countries as well as in the U.S.

The TPP would allow drug companies the legal authority to challenge and overturn national laws and regulations that permit governments to negotiate lower drug prices through bulk purchases, which cuts costs for everyone. Presently many nations enjoy a competitive advantage with the U.S. through such bulk negotiations; the TPP would undermine the years of effort to bring that ability to the U.S.

2. Exposing Americans to Unsafe Food Products

U.S. food safety laws on use of pesticides and additives on meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetables that are stricter than rules in other nations would be threatened as “illegal trade barriers” that could subject American consumers to unsafe food.

Food labels, providing information on the source of origin and how the food was produced would also be subject to successful challenge by wealthy corporate interests, as Public Citizen has noted. Under World Trade Organization rules, U.S. seafood and poultry labels have already been successfully attacked. U.S. taxpayers can even be forced to pay compensation to companies for “unfair” trade restrictions.

“The whole world may come to pay a price in the form of worse health and unnecessary deaths.”

— Nobel Economics Laureate
Joseph Stiglitz
The New York Times, Jan. 30, 2015

3. Eroding Public Health Laws and Services

According to leaked documents, the separate Trade in Services Agreement includes provisions that would allow global healthcare corporations to challenge public health services provided in the U.S. or other countries. Through international courts and corporate trade tribunals, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, a European equivalent to the TPP, permits corporations to sue governments to overturn laws that protect public health on the charge that they limit competition from private corporations. Countries with national health systems as well as the U.S. Medicare, Medicaid and Veterans Administration would all be threatened by legal challenges and privatization.

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Eli Lilly sued the Canadian government after Canadian courts invalidated Eli Lilly's monopoly drug patents, and U.S. private investors sued to overturn Canadian restrictions on for-profit surgery centers. Large tobacco firms have used global trade rules to sue governments, and in several cases successfully quash, national laws promoting public information and labeling laws about health hazards associated with smoking.

4. Curbing Limits on Pollution and Other Environmental Hazards

Environmental toxins, including air and water pollutants, as well as industrial accidents have been linked to a broad range of serious illnesses, including pulmonary and cardiovascular disease, cancer, damage to the eyes and skin, impairment of neurological function and ability to learn, and reproductive and developmental problems.

Under the proposed trade agreements, fossil fuel and other corporations would have greatly expanded legal authority to sue governments and work to nullify environmental protections. Under NAFTA, for example, Canada lifted a ban on a gasoline additive banned in the U.S. as a suspected carcinogen after a corporate challenge, and a gas and oil company challenged a moratorium on fracking in the Canadian province Quebec.

5. Undermining Democracy and National Sovereignty

Hundreds of large corporations have participated in the drafting of the trade agreements being negotiated in secret with restricted access even to members of Congress. The Obama administration and Republican leaders of Congress are seeking fast track authority for approval of the pacts, which would bar amendments and even limit floor debate.

Through the legally binding mechanisms that provide for corporate-dominated trade tribunals and international courts, corporate interests will have enormous leeway to invalidate federal, state, and even local laws enacted by elected representatives. Corporations will also have expanded ability to sue governments and demand hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer-funded settlements over laws they argue are barriers to trade or profits. National sovereignty and democratic rights for people of all the affected nations will be substantially damaged if these deals are approved.

#StopFastTrack

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AND STOP THE TPP!***

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