



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

June 10, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to vote against the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) proposal that will be considered during the Fast Track debate. Although the AFL-CIO supports renewal of a comprehensive and well-funded TAA, a vital program to help retrain workers who lose jobs to trade, the version being considered falls short in several areas.

First, the proposed TAA bill is significantly underfunded. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is the largest free trade agreement ever negotiated. The Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) are waiting in the wings. It defies logic that while the U.S. pursues agreements of this scope, Congress would at the same time scale back to \$450 million a program that the Administration previously said would require at least \$575 million a year (the amount included in the FY 2015 budget request and contained in H.R. 1088—the Smith/Levin TAA Bill).

This version of TAA also excludes public-sector workers from coverage. With the ever-evolving nature of trade and globalization, workers in all sectors have become vulnerable to trade-related job loss. Congress should not exclude workers based on the sectors in which they work, but based on whether the job loss was related to trade.

Finally, you should vote no because, for the first time, the TAA program would be funded by a cut in Medicare. This \$700 million cut would erode Medicare's capacity to ensure access to medical services, and it would pit working families who need assistance from TAA against Medicare beneficiaries. We understand that the pay-for could be changed in a separate vote in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) that you will cast at a different time. But Members would still be on record for cutting Medicare—and promises to fix legislative concerns through other vehicles that require additional Senate action often prove illusory.

The pay-for promise, along with promises to “fix” Fast Track's numerous other problems in the customs bill—including misguided proposals to weaken the human trafficking language, prohibit trade agreements from addressing climate change, and dropping the currency provisions—are likely to cause this whole process to collapse under its own weight. We urge you to oppose these sleight-of-hand maneuvers and instead reject TAA based on the inadequate proposal on the table.

It is imperative that a robust and well-funded TAA program, such as that provided by H.R. 1088, be enacted into law. Unfortunately, the version being considered falls far short, and we urge you to oppose it.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department