

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

House Resolution

H.R. 16

House resolution relating to the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

Offered by: Representatives Berry of Manchester, Keenan of St. Albans City, Yantachka of Charlotte, Branagan of Georgia, and Masland of Thetford

Whereas, many U.S. trade deals have incorporated rules that skew benefits, requiring working families to bear the brunt of such policies, and

Whereas, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) reported that, from the date of China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 through September 30, 2013, the trade deficit with China had cost 2.7 million American jobs, and

Whereas, EPI also reported that, as of the United States–Korea Free Trade Agreement's third anniversary in March 2015, the loss of 75,000 American jobs was attributable to the Agreement, and

Whereas, on the North American Free Trade Agreement's (NAFTA) 20th anniversary in 2014, Public Citizen reported that NAFTA had cost one million U.S. jobs, and

Whereas, more broadly, according to the U.S. census, in 2000, there were 16,845,612 manufacturing jobs in the country, but, in 2014, the number had declined to only 11,021,476, and

Whereas, bad trade policies have undermined the American manufacturing base and threaten the nation's economic and national security, and

Whereas, the relocation of manufacturing and service jobs offshore deprives local and state governments of sorely needed revenue and jeopardizes the livelihoods of millions of Americans, and

Whereas, under NAFTA-style trade rules, the U.S. annual trade deficit, according to the U.S. census, has increased dramatically, from \$70.3 billion in 1993, the year before NAFTA went into effect, to \$531.5 billion in 2015, and

Whereas, the disproportionate voice of powerful global corporations in the formation of U.S. free-trade agreements has advanced an agenda that undermines the public interest and threatens democracy, and

Whereas, NAFTA and other U.S. trade deals include a special legal right for foreign investors, known as an "investor-state dispute settlement" (ISDS), allowing foreign firms to bypass state and federal courts and instead take legal disputes to international tribunals, and

Whereas, in October 2015, 12 nations, including the United States, agreed to the text of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is the multilateral trade agreement with the most nations as signatories other than the World Trade Organization, and

Whereas, U.S. accession to the accord still requires U.S. House and Senate approval, and

Whereas, promoting economic growth with equity in Vermont requires reforms to the trade negotiation process that ensure that voices of workers, farmers, small businesses, families, and communities are heard, and

Whereas, the TPP has been negotiated in secret, effectively shutting out the negotiating process from state and local governments, and

Whereas, given congressional enactment of fast-track trade negotiating authority, states, localities, and their citizens will have no opportunity to correct shortcomings in the TPP, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body urges Congress to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership and any similar trade deals if it fails to restructure the misguided and failed policies of the past, and be it further

Resolved: That this legislative body requests the Vermont Congressional Delegation to support new trade deals, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership, only if they will:

Exclude investor-to-state dispute settlement and other provisions that favor foreign companies over domestic ones and that undermine public choices;

Ensure that countries cannot undercut U.S.-based producers with weaker labor and environmental laws and enforcement;

Ensure that the United States will engage in robust enforcement of trade rules, including labor and environmental rules;

Include strong rule-of-origin language to promote economic growth and job creation in the United States;

Promote high standards of protection for workplaces, products, and natural resources rather than a race to the bottom; and

Put the interests of people and the planet over the interests of private profit, and be it further

Resolved: That the Clerk of the House be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.