

How to use the Fair Trade for Our Future Resolution to lobby your Members of Congress

What to say in your lobby visit:

“Thank you Rep so and so for meeting with us. We are the X Fair Trade Coalition and we represent X groups. We wanted to meet with you today to talk to you about several trade agreements currently in negotiation. We believe, as you yourself have stated many times, that the NAFTA model of trade agreements, which has cost 300,000 jobs, driven family farmers off the land, and created mechanisms for foreign corporations to challenge our domestic environmental and safety regulations, doesn't work for positive economic development.

The Administration, however, is currently pursuing policies in CAFTA, the FTAA, and the WTO which repeat the NAFTA mistakes, and in many cases are significantly worse. We know that trade policy can work for people in Indiana and people in Central America, or South America, or China, but not if we keep negotiating backward trade agreements.

A Concurrent Resolution has been introduced in the House and Senate by Representatives Waxman (D-CA), Quinn (R-NY), Peterson (D-MN), LaTourette (R-OH), Miller (D-CA), and Brown (D-OH) and Senator Feingold which lays out a trade policy that would work. [Hand him or her the fact sheet for Members of Congress (attached) and a copy of the resolution (www.citizenstrade.org/marker.php).]

H. Con. Res. 276/S. Con. Res. 276 lays out the baseline for trade agreements that we could support. We feel it's critical that we have something like this to put forward as a workable alternative- to be able to point to the specifics of a trade policy we could say “yes” to rather than waiting for the Administration to continually put forth agreements we're forced to be against. We'd like you to sign on as a co-sponsor.”

At this point you can use the attached fact sheet to briefly go through the policy points included in the resolution, highlighting the points that are most important to you and most important to move the Member.

Additional Pointers:

- Tailor your message to the Member's recent voting record or public statements about requirements for future trade agreements e.g. statements such as there must be enforceable labor and environmental protections in trade agreements, or that the policies in the Chile and Singapore free trade agreements aren't sufficient for future agreements. Use this resolution as a way to make your Member of Congress “put their money where their mouth is”.
- Lead with the co-sponsors who resonate most for your target i.e. highlight Rep. Quinn (R-NY) or LaTourette (R-OH) if you're approaching a Republican, Rep. Peterson (D-MN) if you're approaching a Member concerned about agriculture.
- The Member likely won't give you an answer on the spot. Tell them that you will follow up with his or her trade staffer in a week after they've had a chance to look it over. Make sure that you do this. In the follow-up, reference your last meeting and ask if they'll be signing on. You will likely have to prod them a few times to get them to consider it seriously. Offer to answer their questions, or provide additional information.
- If your Member says no, be sure to find out why. Ask them to identify which specific policies in the resolution they disagree with and why.

- Tell the Member that to sign-on they should contact Brett Gibson in Rep. Brown's office [or Sumner Shlicker in Sen. Feingold's office. Those offices can also provide additional information.
- Be sure to let us know what response you are getting from your Member including the areas where the Member is in agreement, disagreement, or has questions. Note this information on the lobby report form. Combining your efforts with those of ours here on the Hill as well as with Rep Brown's office, we can follow up with the staff to provide additional lobbying on specific points where needed.

The Fair Trade for Our Future Resolution (H. Con. Res. 276, S. Con. Res. 69) states that all future trade agreements must meet the following minimum standards:

1) Investment

- must not include investor-to-state lawsuits for challenges to public interest protections that are non-discriminatory

2) Services

- must exclude essential public services and services which require extensive regulation or have an inherently social component
- must make no new commitments on the temporary entry of workers
- must preserve the right of governments to regulate foreign investors and other service providers in order to protect public health and safety, consumers, the environment and workers rights.

3) Government Procurement

- must preserve the right of Federal, state, and local governments to maintain or establish government procurement, loan, and subsidy policies to support local workers, and small or minority or women-owned businesses.

4) Environmental, Labor, and other Public Interest Standards

- must not supercede rights and obligations under multilateral environmental, labor, and human rights agreements
- must include labor and environmental provisions, including the five ILO core labor standards, and non-derogation from existing domestic labor and environmental standards
- These provisions must be subject to the same enforcement as that for commercial provisions

5) Trade Remedy Laws

- must not weaken existing US trade remedy laws or the existing terms of the trade remedy protections provided within the GATT and the WTO.

6) Food Safety

- must not restrict ability of US to maintain food safety standards necessary to protect public health
- must not restrict the ability of governments to ensure the right of consumers to know where and how food is produced.

7) Agriculture and Food Security

- must allow measures to guarantee competitive markets for family farmers
- must not prevent countries from developing necessary sanitary and phytosanitary standards to prevent invasive species

8) Transparency

- must require prompt disclosure of full negotiating texts
- must require disclosure of requests and offers that involve sensitive areas
- civil society must have equal access to that afforded to business interests
- dispute resolution must be open and transparent

9) Governmental Authority

- measures which bind state and local governments must have explicit and informed consent from those bodies

10) Access to Medicines and Seeds

- must not prevent countries from taking measures to protect access to medicines and seeds

11) Development

must grant special and differential treatment to developing countries in implementing the agreement