

## Bad trade agreements

To the editor:

We, as citizens, need to start holding our elected officials accountable for the votes they cast in Washington, D.C. These so called Free Trade Agreements based on the NAFTA model have failed us and yet the Bush administration and Congress continue to pass and sign more of the same agreements. The Peru Free Trade Agreement, like all the others, is creating a global race to the bottom for wages, workers rights and environmental practices.

Our two senators, Susan Collins and Olympia Snow, voted in favor of the Peru Free Trade Agreement, even though it is against the best interest of Maine workers, the environment and small farmers in Peru, just to list a few. It is time to stop passing these new trade agreements, to do a serious analysis and to come up with a new fair trade model that remedies the negative impacts on workers and the environment.

Through free trade policy like NAFTA, Peru and others, consumer safety is considered a barrier to trade. This means that toxic toys and unsafe food that has not met our safety standards and other products we don't know enough about are on our stores shelves. We strive to protect our children and citizens from unsafe products, but how are we going to this with these types of trade agreements. Sens. Collins and Snow need to listen to the people of Maine and cast votes that reflect our views and protect the lives and economy of the people of Maine.

Gary S. Sainio  
Washington

# YOU can write a letter to the editor!

This election season, make sure your voice is heard **LOUD AND CLEAR**

Both candidates and voters will be paying close attention to the editorial pages of our Maine newspapers between now and November 4<sup>th</sup>. One of the best ways to raise the profile of fair trade on the election radar is write a letter to the editor for your local paper.

Trade is one of the most important issues in this election. We need to make sure voters know which candidates are on the side of fair trade, and which are not.

**Join our *BLITZ* of Maine papers between now and Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>!**

It's easy to write a letter to the editor. To the left is a sample of the letter Gary Sanio (of the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 716) sent to the Courier Gazette in January about the Peru FTA.

Your letter can be about any aspect of trade agreements- job loss in Maine, environmental degradation, lack of sovereignty and democracy, or corporate power. Make it personal to you and your town. Most letters can only be 300 words long or less.

**Let's publish 20 letters across the state**

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207-777-6387

Sarah and Daphne at the Maine Fair Trade Campaign can help, so call or email us for **sample letters, tips** on writing a letter, and **contact info** for your local paper on how to submit a letter.

*Let the voters know where the candidates stand on trade!*

**Check out talking points you can use in your letter on the other side of this page**

## **To the Editor: Trade must be fair!**

- Trade is one of the most important issues in the election.
- The Colombia Free Trade Agreement, an expansion of the devastating NAFTA (North America Free Trade Agreement) model, is proposed in Congress right now. Rep. Tom Allen has come out against it. Senator Susan Collins refuses to take a position, although she has had over 21 months to decide where she stands.
- Free trade agreements like NAFTA have been devastating for Maine. We've lost 24,000 jobs since NAFTA and we will lose more if we keep expanding this trade model.
- Senator McCain wants to expand NAFTA and thinks it has been good for workers. Ask the Mainers and their families who have been laid-off how it has been.
- Since NAFTA, average wages and working conditions have gone down both here in Maine and in Mexico. Nobody is winning except the multi-national corporations.
- This trade model is contributing to global warming because it encourages companies to move off-shore. They set up in countries where they pollute all they want without being held accountable to environmental laws.
- Under this trade model, our right to democratically govern is given away to foreign companies who can sue if they find one of our state laws "burdensome." This means that necessary public health laws, like the ban on lead in children's products which passed last year in the Maine Legislature, could be challenged by other countries who want to make toys with lead in them.
- Senator Obama has pledged to review and re-negotiate NAFTA to include enforceable labor and environmental protections.
- Senator McCain wants to keep on expanding this model of trade agreements.
- Maine voters should pay attention to the issue of trade, because it shows who is on the side of working families, the environment, and our ability to make local public policy, and who is on the side of the corporate agenda.
- Susan Collins refuses to take a position on the Colombia FTA. In a meeting with Maine citizens interested in the Colombia FTA, she said that it isn't her "priority" to take a position. What kind of a leader can't evaluate a bill after 21 months?

Feel free to use these points or any others.  
Call Sarah at 777-6387 if you will submit a letter. Thanks!