

NELP URGES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO PASS SENATE'S TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE REAUTHORIZATION BILL WITHOUT DELAY OR CHANGES

Washington, DC – Thousands of American workers put out of their jobs because of trade deals could be stranded without job re-training and income support if Congress fails to reauthorize the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA) before it expires early next year.

This week, the House of Representatives is expected to take up reauthorization of TAA, which the Senate overwhelmingly approved in September, with 70 senators voting in favor. The Senate-passed measure is the result of a bi-partisan compromise reached between Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) and Representative Dave Camp (R-MI). The bi-partisan support in the Senate mirrors public sentiment and the strong desire of business and labor for reauthorization of this critical program.

“Congress should not play games with the lives and livelihoods of American workers affected by trade or hold this vital program and the workers it serves hostage to new trade agreements,” said **Christine Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project**. “Workers harmed by trade have no control over trade agreements or trade policy; the least they are entitled to is for Congress to put their interests first and act promptly to protect them, independent of action on new trade agreements.”

The immediate stumbling block in the House is insistence by some members that the president submit pending free trade agreements before the House votes on TAA. The Senate rejected this approach in approving TAA, and the administration has made clear it will submit the FTAs when the House approves TAA reauthorization.

The Senate-approved measure updates and renews TAA through 2013, restoring several improvements adopted in 2009 that modernized the law to reflect changes in the nature and impacts of trade. These amendments extended coverage to trade-affected service-sector workers and to those adversely affected by trade with non-FTA countries—chiefly, China and India. It also provided more realistic training and income supports. When these improvements were allowed to sunset earlier this year, the TAA program reverted to outdated 2002 rules, but even those will expire unless Congress reauthorizes the program.

Comprehensive recent research by [economists](#) confirms that rapid expansion of trade with China and other developing nations is taking a substantial toll on American communities, and job losses associated with trade are more pernicious than normal labor market turnover experienced throughout the country. Under current TAA rules, many of these workers affected by trade with

China will never qualify for TAA; allowing the entire program to sunset will shut the door on all workers.

“The bill recently passed by the Senate will not address our trade imbalance with developing nations, but it will reduce some of the social costs associated with U.S. trade policy by offering workers an opportunity to regain independence after trade-related job losses,” Owens said. “Most stakeholders recognize that it makes sense to move on trade assistance promptly. It’s time for members of the House to reach the same conclusion.”

The National Employment Law Project is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts research and advocates on issues affecting low-wage and unemployed workers. For more about NELP, visit www.nelp.org.

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