

Press Release for April 1, 2015

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Community and Advocacy Groups Call on Rep. Zeldin Stop Fast Track and Job-Killing Trade Deal

Fast Track legislation marginalizes Congress, puts trade deal on runaway tracks

Cuts Environmental, Consumer and Labor Protections

Today, hundreds from the Long Island Federation of Labor, tea-party, community and environmental groups demonstrated outside U.S. Representative Lee Zeldin's (NY-1) office calling on him to oppose "Fast-track" legislation as it is expected to be introduced to the 114th Congress. Various groups from both sides of the aisle have coalesced to make their voices heard and called on him to protect people over profits by opposing eventual "fast-track" legislation and the job killing Trans-Pacific partnership.

The community groups had met with Rep. Zeldin earlier this year to discuss the possibility of impending "fast-track" legislation, referred to as Trade Promotion Authority by its proponents, and the subsequent introduction of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. During the meeting and again during their demonstration working families have outlined the irreparable harm TPP will have on the American economy.

John Durso, President of the Long Island Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO said, "For too long Representatives like Congressman Zeldin have put the interests of multi-national corporations ahead of America's working families, particularly when it comes to trade deals. The labor movement will support these trade deals when they begin prioritizing raising wages, increasing transparency and encouraging shared prosperity."

Libertarian Party Members, Ken and Gigi Bowman said, "It's good to see so many factions working together to fight unconstitutional legislation which goes against America's sovereignty regarding the TPA & TPP. It shows that even the 'almighty' left/right paradigm can be challenged."

No trade deal has failed under "fast-track" no matter how bad it was for small businesses, jobs, wages or the environment. The TPP Investment chapter leaked earlier this year highlighting corporations' ability to "sue" governments over "expected future profits" through investor-state Dispute Settlements, also known as international tribunals, which would not be answerable to the American people or citizens of the any of the participating countries. These were the points the coalition echoed to Rep. Zeldin throughout the rally. They asked for a trade policy that strengthens labor and human rights, offers protections from unsafe imports, and promotes exports of goods rather than jobs.

Dan Fingas Organizing Director, LIPC said, "The Long Island Progressive Coalition stands with this diverse coalition of labor, community, environmental groups to reject the Fast Track of the Trans Pacific Partnership. Long Island doesn't need another NAFTA, or a trade pact that gives sweet heart deals to foreign corporations, Long Island needs investment in our communities that create jobs here."

"Fast-track" would diminish the ability of Congress to amend harmful trade agreements, like TPP, and would enhance the ability of corporations to move their products, money, and factories around the globe more quickly and with less regulations. Again and again we have been promised that these trade agreements 'create jobs' and grow the economy, but history tells us otherwise." said **Anita Halasz, Executive Director of Long Island Jobs With Justice.**

Chris Shelton, CWA District One, said "Lee Zeldin wants to fast track sending more jobs overseas. He should stand up for his constituents, not big corporations and wall street banks that want to eliminate labor, consumer and environmental standards while outsourcing more good jobs," said Chris Shelton, Vice President, CWA District One.

Joined by **Jane Fasullo, Sierra Club,** "Trade agreements in which a tribunal composed of corporate representatives, is the sole determiner of awards to foreign corporations when the enforcement of a country's laws interfere with corporate profits, should not be signed. Such agreements work to undermine the hard won laws of the citizens of those countries. She said that even "more egregious is "fast-track which limits our elected representatives to voting only yes or no, removing their ability to add or remove specific terms."

The group was also joined by **Emily Abbot from the Working Families Party,** who said "The TPP, written in secret by global CEOs, makes it easier for corporations to ship jobs overseas, roll back Wall Street reforms, and drive up the costs of medicine, while rolling back basic environmental protections. That's why the corporate interests behind the TPP want "fast track," meaning that the American people wouldn't get to see the details of the TPP until it's signed. We know that anytime someone says ignore the fine print, that's exactly when we should be looking and openly discussing it. Opposing this agreement puts us up against some of the biggest corporate players in the book; but they don't have popular support." - Emily Abbott, Long Island Political Organizer for the Working Families Party

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