

A VISION FOR BLACK LIVES:

POLICY DEMANDS FOR BLACK POWER, FREEDOM, & JUSTICE

An End to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and a Renegotiation of All Trade Agreements to Prioritize the Interests of Workers

What is the problem?

- Global trade policy, strongly supported by the U.S., is structured almost exclusively around the needs of capital, rather than people. So trade barriers are lowered through changes in tariffs to ensure easier flow of capital and goods or regulations that protect local economies, workers or the environment are often weakened to address the needs of an international competitor in a market.
- Workers in the global economy and the environment are both at best secondary considerations in global trade agreements. Wages are pulled down internationally by the trade scheme and labor standards are weak with little protection for unionization.
- The rules for trade determine who benefits or suffers losses in the global economy, often privileging some countries, companies or sectors over others. For example, rules such as those governing intellectual property rights enrich some, while depriving groups of people of even fundamental needs such as essential medicines because it puts costs out of reach.
- Existing trade agreements also tend to increase inequality providing greater mobility for those with high-paying jobs but not those with low-paying jobs who cannot easily travel to new locations for higher pay.
- While low-wage workers face barriers and costs to mobility, the increasing ease of mobility of capital leads to a race to the bottom where capital follows the lowest wage levels and worst working conditions. – and low wage workers with barriers and costs to mobility.
- The TPP, like most free trade policies, will destroy economic opportunity for Black people and the working class.
- The TPP will decrease access to health care and exacerbate an already exploding health crisis facing Black people and poor people throughout the world.
- The TPP will grant corporations control over the online platforms essential to the Black Lives Matter Movement
- The TPP will allow corporations to avoid domestic courts and challenge economic and social reforms won by the Black Lives Matter Movement in a corporate-driven foreign tribunal.

What does this solution do?

- Trade agreements have successfully standardized how products, such as automobiles, are made. This power to create standards should be utilized to ensure the human rights of people here and around the world, beginning with the rights and needs of Black people everywhere because our communities have faced the most severe marginalization globally. The United States should announce its intention to withdraw

A VISION FOR BLACK LIVES:

POLICY DEMANDS FOR BLACK POWER, FREEDOM, & JUSTICE

from its current trade agreements within five years unless they are renegotiated to include:

- Higher labor standards and wage minimums as a condition of participating in free trade;
- Protection for the ability to organize and unionize, including across borders
- Stringent environmental standards
- Racial equity standards in the sectors covered
- Transparency in all trade agreements so the public is fully aware of all of an agreements' components at every stage of the treaty development process
- An effective enforcement scheme that would penalize and exclude companies, and countries where appropriate, when worker rights and environmental standards are violated. Enforcement shall including standing for those impacted by violations of the agreement to challenge the company or country at issue.

Federal Action:

- Call on the Executive Branch and Congress calling for renegotiation of agreements including but not limited to, FTAA, CAFTA, and NAFTA and a call for renegotiation the terms of TPP prior to any ratification by the United States.

State Action:

- Call on state legislatures to demand federal action renegotiating treaties according to the goals described above.

Local Action:

- Call on City Councils and Mayors to demand federal action renegotiating treaties according to the goals described above.

How does this solution address the specific needs of some of the most marginalized Black people?

- Black people have been forced into the lowest wage work available, when they have been afforded work at all. By transforming the trade framework, Black people will enjoy higher wages and dignified conditions of work, as well as be afforded some protection against environmental injustice, which disproportionately sickens Black communities.

Resources:

- <http://www.aflcio.org/content/download/158221/3936941/TPPandworkersofcolor-Updated.pdf>,
- <http://www.aflcio.org/Issues/Trade/Trans-Pacific-Partnership-Free-Trade-Agreement-TPP/Report-on-the-Impacts-of-the-Trans-Pacific-Partnership>
- What does the Trans-Pacific Partnership Mean for Black People, Rachel Glimmer (Ebony) See:
<http://www.ebony.com/news-views/what-does-the-trans-pacific-partnership-mean-for-black-people-503#axzz4Der6qMZ9>



A VISION FOR BLACK LIVES:

POLICY DEMANDS FOR BLACK POWER, FREEDOM, & JUSTICE

Organizations Currently Working on Policy:

- Global Exchange
- AFL-CIO

Authors & Contributors of this Policy Overview

- Cathy Albisa, National Economic & Social Rights Initiative
- Marbre Stahly Butts, Center for Popular Democracy
- Patrick Mason, Ph.D., Florida State University, National Economic & Social Rights Initiative