



ATR Urges Support & Co-sponsorship of H.R. 723, the Global Trade Accountability Act

January 29, 2019

Dear Members of Congress,

I write to urge support and co-sponsorship of H.R. 723, the Global Trade Accountability Act, introduced by Representative Warren Davidson (R-Ohio). Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate foreign commerce. This legislation would reaffirm Congress' authority by requiring all tariffs proposed by the Executive Branch to be approved by the legislature.

Article II of the Constitution gives the President the power to negotiate international trade agreements, not implement tariffs. Over time, Congress has increasingly allowed the Executive Branch to establish and raise tariffs and restrict imports, under certain conditions.

Tariffs are another form of tax on American citizens, and therefore should be voted on by Congress. Domestically, tariffs harm jobs and the economy. The prices of imported goods increase, and the cost falls on consumers. Internationally, a trade war could ensue as other countries retaliate with their own trade barriers.

Free trade is critical to the American economy and is essential to guaranteeing a high standard of living for Americans. International trade directly affects millions of jobs across all 50 states. In 46 of the 50 states, trade-related jobs account for more than one-quarter of all jobs. In total, more than 1 in 5 jobs, or close to 41 million, are reliant on trade.

Historically, protectionist trade policies have failed in America. They worsened and prolonged the Great Depression. The 1931 Smoot-Hawley Act, which increased tariffs by 20 percent, caused American exports to fall 75 percent. Since World War II, the United States has decreased trade barriers with bipartisan support and great success. This has paid enormous dividends both domestically and abroad. The United States needs to continue free trade trends, made possible through Congress reclaiming its Constitutional powers.

Congress should reassert its authority with all who serve in the Executive Branch, today and in the future. Members of Congress can demonstrate their support for Congressional authority and their opposition to increased tariffs by co-sponsoring the Global Trade Accountability Act.

Onward,

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