



BACKGROUND:

Corporate Trade Deals Undermine Iowa's Sovereignty

- Today's international trade agreements deeply impact matters of state law. Pacts like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and NAFTA contain numerous policy obligations and constraints that bind U.S. federal, state and local governments to compliance.

These types of “trade” agreements are pushing an ever-increasing number of issues away from local or even national democratic decision-making and into inaccessible international venues where few citizens or even their elected representatives have legal standing.

Corporate trade deals jeopardize common policies deemed to be in the public interest, such as:

- Anti-offshoring policies designed to keep good jobs here;
 - “Green” purchasing policies that protect the environment or reduce global warming;
 - “Buy America” or “Buy Local” policies that help support local economies;
 - Policies targeting poor human rights, labor or environmental practices of countries or companies, such as “Sweat Free” policies or those banning products made with child or slave labor;
 - Pro-union, pro-public sector bidding policies, i.e, prevailing wages preferences and Project Labor Agreements that keep labor peace and bolster the local economy.
- **WTO service-sector trade rules threaten to undermine health care and higher education assistance.** Under current WTO service-sector rules, state health care policies, such as universal health care and prescription drug reform, could be labeled as “barriers to trade” interfering with corporate profit. The higher education sector could be next!
 - **Under NAFTA, corporations can sue the US government over democratically determined local, state or federal laws in closed tribunals.** A three-person panel of professional arbitrators listens to the case outside of the US court system, and has the power to either force the state to change its laws, or provide an unlimited amount of taxpayer dollars in compensation to corporations whose NAFTA investor privileges and rights they judge to have been impacted.
 - **Unfair trade rules undermine local control, zoning and land use policies.** Wal-Mart and other big box stores have argued, often successfully, that these restrictions are violations of trade deals. This is a dangerous precedent for Iowa communities fighting for local control to combat Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and other threats to local land and culture.

ASK THE CANDIDATES!

What's their *specific* plan for change? Don't forget to let us know the answers.

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Iowa Fair Trade Campaign: Victory in 2008!

The Iowa Fair Trade Campaign helps facilitate broad-based grassroots activism for a new, fair trade model.

The Race to the Bottom: The NAFTA/World Trade Organization (WTO) model is a proven failure. Iowa has lost thousands of jobs because these agreements reward companies that take jobs offshore wherever they find the lowest wages and the weakest environmental regulations. Meanwhile, wages stagnate and workers face the constant threat of having their jobs sent overseas. Current unfair trade rules hurt Iowa's family farmers by creating an uneven playing field that rewards the unsustainable practices of agribusiness and factory farms.

But We Are Winning: Fair Trade candidates won big in the 2006 Congressional elections, including here in Iowa. Current WTO talks are stalled. With momentum on our side, the election of the next president will likely prove the best hope in a generation to leave behind the NAFTA/WTO model forever.

A Whole New, Fair Model, and Nothing Less! We need candidates committed to reviewing and possibly renegotiating corporate trade deals like NAFTA and the WTO, to replacing Fast Track with a model allowing increased negotiating power to elected Members of Congress, and to implementing trade policies to bring our trade deficit back into balance. We will engage candidates to make specific commitments and to promise big changes that will put an end to the race to the bottom, for good!

Fight for Fair Trade in '08: The Iowa Fair Trade Campaign will question candidates at their public appearances, hold its own educational or visibility events, and engage the press to highlight how trade affects Iowa. *Help us turn up the pressure by volunteering to ask a tough question at a candidate event, or setting up a presentation or event with your union, church group, friends or neighbors.*

Straight Talk on Trade! Suggested Candidate Questions:

1. NAFTA has failed for the US and our trading partners. It has sent family-supporting jobs offshore and fuels environmental damage. NAFTA grants extra rights to investors, bans Buy America initiatives, and limits our ability to ensure the safety of children's toys or the food we eat. *Will you review and potentially renegotiate NAFTA to fix or remove these anti-democratic provisions?*
2. Fast Track is the Nixon-era model still used to negotiate failed trade arrangements like NAFTA and the WTO. It concentrates trade-negotiating power in a small agency where corporate lobbyists have set the agenda away from democratic oversight. Since Fast Track was enacted, we have run a steady and growing trade deficit and wages for American workers have been stagnant. *Will you commit to a new trade-negotiating model that allows our elected Congress increased negotiating power and authority?*
3. The failing "Doha Round" WTO talks seek to expand corporate investor rights and liberalize services – including possible privatization of public goods like education and water utilities. *Will your administration walk out of the Doha talks, and instead champion a new round of WTO negotiations that seeks to remove the many unfair and anti-democratic provisions?*

Don't Forget to Take Notes and Report the Candidates' Answers!
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