



February 1, 2019

Support the Bicameral Congressional Trade Authority Act, H.R. 940 and S. 287

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the Bicameral Congressional Trade Authority Act, H.R. 940 and S. 287. Introduced by Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) and Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), the Bicameral Congressional Trade Authority Act would ensure that all tariffs imposed by the executive branch in the name of national security must first be approved by Congress.

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution establishes that Congress “shall have the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises.” The framers, in their wisdom, made this the very first power they delegated specifically to the legislative branch of the United States. Tariffs are taxes, and they adversely impact American consumers. Such measures should be enacted only after thoughtful debate by the elected representatives most accountable to the people of the United States. They should not be handed down unilaterally from the White House.

Unfortunately, Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 allows the president to implement tariffs in the event of a national security threat. This provision has been abused by administrations to impose a protectionist agenda without a patently obvious national security interest being served by their actions.

Tariffs unilaterally imposed by the administration have already had harmed economic growth and will continue to negatively impact businesses and consumers. According to a recent study, unilateral trade actions already implemented, as well as those proposed and potential trade actions, would reduce gross domestic product (GDP) by 1.78 percent in 2019, households would lose \$2,357 of income, nearly 670,000 workers may have seek employment in another industry, and 2.75 million workers could lose their jobs.

Needless to say, it’s time for Congress to reclaim their enumerated Article I power over trade. The Bicameral Congressional Trade Authority Act will do just that. It gives lawmakers a 60-day window to review all trade action pursued by the White House under Section 232. The legislation provides for a fast-tracked process, which would allow it to get debate time and consideration in both houses within that window. The bill would also apply retroactively to

tariffs unilaterally imposed by the executive branch over the past two years, as well as all Section 232 action going forward.

FreedomWorks agrees with Rep. Gallagher and Sen. Toomey on the need to respect our Constitution and ensure Congress has full control over its Article I authority. Trade affects too many Americans to be left to the whim of any one person or administration. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the Bicameral Congressional Trade Authority Act, H.R. 940 and S. 287.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks