



March 15, 2018

Support the Global Trade Accountability Act, H.R. 5281

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to support the Global Trade Accountability Act, H.R. 5281, introduced by Rep. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio). In January 2017, FreedomWorks released a letter of support for Senate version of the Global Trade Accountability Act, S. 177, introduced by Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah). The bill would require congressional approval for any unilateral trade measures, including tariffs, carried out by the executive branch.

The concept behind the Global Trade Accountability Act is not too different from that of the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act. At the heart of both of these legislative initiatives is the need for Congress to reclaim its proper role under Article I of the Constitution. Under the REINS Act, this would mean taking back lawmaking authority surrendered to bureaucrats in the executive branch. Under the Global Trade Accountability Act, it means ensuring that there is a check on executive actions related to tariffs or other trade actions.

A tariff is just another form of taxation, the costs of which are passed along to consumers at the point of sale. The ramifications of tariffs don't end at higher costs to consumers; such measures can also lead to retaliatory trade measures, potentially leading to a trade war, and other unintended consequences, including job losses. In 2002, for example, then-President George W. Bush imposed tariffs on steel imports that led to retaliatory tariffs put in place by other countries and the loss of some 200,000 jobs.

The Global Trade Accountability Act would require Congress to review and approve any unilateral trade action carried out by the executive branch, including a prohibition of an import and the imposition of a tariff. If Congress doesn't approve a trade action, it cannot take effect.

Although the bill would make an exception for a national emergency or national security, such an exception may take effect for only 90 calendar days, without an option for renewal.

The Global Trade Accountability Act is necessary to put control of trade back in the hands of Congress, as obligated under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. Because such actions can result in negative consequences for businesses and consumers, as well as damage foreign relations, this bill is a necessary step to ensure that there is a proper check on the power of the executive branch. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to support the Global Trade Accountability Act, H.R. 5281.

Sincerely,

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

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks