



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on January 16, 2015

Say No to Dangerous Trade Pacts

A recent survey conducted by the Pew Research Center sought the public's attitude about the [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#) (TPP) intending to greatly link the United States with 12 Pacific nations and the [Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership](#) (TTIP) that would deeply tie our nation with the bloc of nations known as the European Union. Both pacts will soon be considered by Congress. To say the least, the Center's findings were mixed.



Two-thirds of those polled favored trade in general, while fewer than 25 percent believed that trade pacts created jobs and boosted wages. Yet, asked about the TPP and TTIP specifically, about half of the respondents expressed approval and half were skeptical.

Facts are more important than the attitudes of the public, however, especially when the public has little awareness about the loss of jobs because of previous trade pacts. Most Americans know that jobs have indeed been lost but few know that a 20-year-old trade pact largely led to the losses. The 1995 [North American Free Trade Agreement](#) (NAFTA) paved the way for saying good-bye to approximately five million jobs. It also established judicial tribunals whose rulings now supersede decisions handed down by American courts, a development that has shocked even some of NAFTA's previous supporters. A hard look at both TPP and TTIP shows that they threaten to worsen both of these problems.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders is an admitted socialist. Yet he is cautioning colleagues about the TPP because he sees in it a great deal more than just tariffs on goods. The liberal *Washington Post* correctly claims that the agreement deals with "a broad range of regulatory and legal issues," that can impact foreign policy and even domestic lawmaking. Sanders rightly insists that TPP "is much more than a free trade agreement." If he understands this, other senators and congressmen can see it as well. But most think only in terms of increased trade, which is what the Business Roundtable and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce stress. Numerous labor unions, environmental groups, and global health organizations have also registered opposition because the pact deals with matters of concern to them.

A further complicating factor regarding these pacts is President Obama's desire to be awarded "fast-track authority" for speedy approval of both. Such a grant of power would bar Congress from debating and amending the pacts, allowing only a "Yes" or "No" vote on each. Sanders reminds colleagues that the Constitution grants Congress sole authority "to regulate commerce with foreign nations," not the Executive branch.

The Socialist from Vermont might be dead wrong on some issues but he's correct in this instance. And the high and mighty so-called capitalists at the Business Roundtable and [Chamber of Commerce](#) are wrong. Congress should never cede its constitutional prerogatives by granting "fast-track authority" to the president. And both the job-threatening and foreign-entangling TPP and TTIP should be rejected. [Let Congress know today!](#)



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