



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 4, 2015

GOP Senators Isakson and Sessions Duel Over TPP “Trade” Scheme

In the Weekly Republican Address on May 2, Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) made a case for congressional passage of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), asserting that would give U.S. trade negotiators authority to complete the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement with Japan, as well as other agreements.



Two days later, Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), shown, posted a “Critical Alert” on his Senate webpage, articulating his top five concerns with Trade Promotion Authority, which he said must be fully understood and addressed before the TPA legislation can be passed.

The legislation, the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015, was introduced in the Senate (as S. 995) by Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) on April 16. The House version (H.R. 1890) was introduced by Representative Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) on April 17.

In his address, Isakson said: “Trade promotion authority is good for America. It’s good for our country and it’s good for our economy. And it’s good for middle-class American families who will reap the benefits of more jobs.”

Isakson said that when work on the Panama Canal is completed next year to accommodate larger ships, the port of Savannah will reap the benefits:

We are racing in my state to complete the expansion of the Savannah Harbor to accommodate those larger ships bringing goods and service from the rest of the globe to America.

This project will make the city of Savannah, the state of Georgia, and the entire Southeast a hub of global imports and exports.

But if we don’t pass trade promotion authority, we will risk losing all those goods and services they carry — going elsewhere around the world.

I am thrilled the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 is coming to the floor of the Senate.

Its passage will help promote American workers and American jobs.

The promise of more jobs and more dollars is generally waved in front of U.S. legislators to entice them to vote for so-called free-trade pacts, which, in reality, could better be described as managed or corporatist trade. Their chief beneficiaries are generally multinational corporations and actual job growth rarely materializes, partially because U.S. corporations ship job overseas, and also because liberalized immigration policies bring more immigrants to America to take jobs here.



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As Curtis Ellis, executive director of the American Jobs Alliance, noted in a recent post for *The Hill*: “The Trans-Pacific Partnership includes an entire chapter on immigration. It is a Trojan horse for Obama’s immigration agenda. House members who were ready to defund the Department of Homeland Security to stop President Obama’s executive action on immigration must not give him TPA, which he will use to ensure his immigration actions are locked in when he leaves office.”

Sessions, who is one of the Senate’s most outspoken opponents of unrestricted immigration, generally because of the impact of such immigration on U.S. workers, listed immigration among his five cautionary warnings concerning TPA.

The five warnings that Sessions cited were:

1. Consolidation of Power in the Executive Branch.

This warning addresses “fast track” authority and notes that “TPA eliminates Congress’ ability to amend or debate trade implementing legislation and guarantees an up-or-down vote on a far-reaching international agreement before that agreement has received any public review.” Furthermore, “This applies not only to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) but *all* international trade agreements during the life of the TPA.

2. Increased Trade Deficits.

Citing estimates from Barclays, Sessions warns, “History suggests that trade deals set into motion under the 6-year life of TPA could exacerbate our trade imbalance, acting as an impediment to both GDP and wage growth.”

3. Ceding Sovereign Authority to International Powers.

According to the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (which TPA would expedite) notes in the “Key Features” summary that the TPP is a “living agreement.” Sessions explains that the “living agreement” provision means that “participating nations could both add countries to the TPP without Congress’ approval (like China), and could also change any of the terms of the agreement, including in controversial areas such as the entry of foreign workers and foreign employees. Again: these changes would not be subject to congressional approval.”

4. Currency Manipulation.

Sessions notes that other countries have been devaluing their currencies “to artificially lower the price of their exports while artificially raising the price of our exports to them. The result has been a massive bleeding of domestic manufacturing wealth.” A chief danger is that the Obama administration could send Congress “unamendable trade deals that expose U.S. workers to a surge of underpriced foreign imports.”

5. Immigration Increases.

This is a topic that Sessions frequently addresses in his messages to Congress and the media. He stated: “There are numerous ways TPA could facilitate immigration increases above current law — and precious few ways anyone in Congress could stop its happening.”

“Every year, tens of thousands of foreign guest workers come to the U.S. as part of past trade deals,” he continues.

Summarizing how this or a future administration might use TPA to increase the number of foreign workers admitted to our country, Sessions states:



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The President has already subjected American workers to profound wage loss through executive-ordered foreign worker increases on top of existing record immigration levels.... Thus, at any point during the 6-year life of TPA, the Administration could send Congress a trade deal — or issue an executive action subsequent to a trade deal as part of its implementation — that increased foreign worker entry into the U.S., all while claiming it has never changed immigration law.

The opponents in the debate over TPA and the TPP include on one side establishment Republicans such as Senate Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker John Boehner, who have formed an unexpected alliance with the president to advance Obama’s immigration agenda and also serve the interests of anti-sovereignty internationalists and corporatists who want more visas for foreign workers and a trade flow that often goes against America’s best interests. One corporate trade association cited in *The Hill* said it hoped to abolish all barriers: “The TPP should remove restrictions on nationality or residency requirements for the selection of personnel.” This would effectively create de facto open borders.

Standing against such agreement are an alliance of constitutionalists who are resisting any and all efforts to take away the U.S. sovereign authority to defend its borders and restrict immigration, along with American workers threatened by losing their jobs to overseas outsourcing and replacement by immigrants with work visas.

Sessions deserves credit for explaining the issue thoroughly and providing documentation useful to all who want to defend a prosperous, sovereign United States.

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