

May 19, 2015

U.S. Senators  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators,

The undersigned organizations representing manufacturers, farmers and service providers across America urge your rejection of the amendment (SA 1251) offered by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) that would require Congressional votes to approve new negotiating partners to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks. This amendment would damage the United States' ability to seek out new trading partners that could open their markets to support and create jobs in the United States.

Already, the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 requires the Administration to consult with Congress and other stakeholders before initiating negotiations with any trading partner. Pursuant to this provision, the Administration conducts detailed negotiations with Congress and seeks input both through the U.S. International Trade Commission and the Office of the United States Trade Representative from all interested stakeholders on whether to initiate a negotiation and the issues that such a negotiation would need to address. The Administration then decides whether to proceed with the negotiations. Congress would continue to provide input into the negotiations, if initiated, and would rightly retain the ultimate authority to vote on whether a potential entrant could join the TPP or other trade agreements. This process would apply to the TPP and all other trade negotiations moving forward.

The Brown amendment seeks to create additional hurdles to the trade agreement negotiating process by requiring a vote on whether the Administration could use its own Constitutional authority to initiate negotiations with any potential new entrant to the TPP. Given the substantial consultation procedures in place under this legislation and Congress' final authority to decide by a vote whether a country could join the TPP after it is completed, this amendment is unnecessary and would undermine the TPA framework.

Furthermore, this amendment would damage the ability of the United States to seek out new trading partners with which negotiations could move forward. Such negotiations are critical to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers and set in place rules that will protect innovation and property and set in place new disciplines from transparency to fair competition that will improve the ability of manufacturers, farmers, service providers and their workers to compete on a more level playing field in overseas markets.

In short, the Brown amendment would undermine the TPA legislation and the ability of the U.S. government to open markets and promote new growth and job creation here at home. We urge you to reject Brown amendment 1251.

Sincerely,

American Coatings Association  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Frozen Food Institute

American Peanut Product Manufacturers, Inc.  
Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM)  
Business Council of Alabama  
Business Roundtable  
Coalition of Service Industries  
Global Cold Chain Alliance  
Grocery Manufacturers Association  
Hardwood Federation  
International Dairy Foods Association  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Chicken Council  
National Council for Advanced Manufacturing  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Foreign Trade Council  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Turkey Federation  
North American Equipment Dealers Association  
North American Meat Institute  
SPI: The Plastics Industry Trade Association  
Sweetener Users Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
United States Hide, Skin and Leather Association  
Vinyl Building Council  
Vinyl Institute  
Western Growers