

Fast Track TPP Passes: Wall Street And Big Corporations Got What They Wanted - This Time

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People rose up in protest against the Trans-Pacific Partnership, but the corporate interests still got their way. (Photo: Saul Loeb / AFP/Getty Images)

Fast track passes. Our Congress – the supposed representatives of We the People – voted to cut themselves and us out of the process of deciding what “[the rules](#)” for doing business “in the 21st Century” will be.

How do the plutocrats and oligarchs and their giant multinational corporations get what they want when a pesky democracy is in their way? They push that pesky democracy *out* of their way.

Because of fast track, when the secret Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and any other secretly negotiated “trade” agreements are completed Congress must vote in a hurry with only limited debate, cannot make any amendments no matter what is in the agreement, and they can’t be filibustered. Nothing else coming before our Congress gets that kind of skid-greasing, only corporate-written “trade” agreements – and it doesn’t matter how far the contents go beyond actual “trade.”

Fast track takes Congress out of the picture, just in case the checks arrive late and our Congress decides to act like it is supposed to. Fast track means that representatives of Wall Street and giant corporations and our plutocrats negotiate with the plutocrats and corporate interests of other countries to divide up the economic pie, and Congress agrees not to “meddle” with the result, only to rubber-stamp it.

Public Rising Up

In spite of a near-blackout of information in the major media, majorities of the public opposed fast track. Word got out anyway and “left” and “right” activists and grassroots and media were against it. Calls and letters to the offices of representatives and senators were running heavily, heavily against it. People were appealing to representatives and senators with petition after petition containing hundreds of thousands of names each. People were even showing up and protesting at the offices of representatives and senators all around the country.

Wall Street and giant, multinational corporations and the big business lobbying organizations were for it. Every single labor union and literally thousands of other organizations representing the interests of citizens were against it.

Companies that don't make things in the U.S. were for it. Companies that still try to make things in the U.S. were against it.

It almost didn't make it through and this was [a sea change](#). Those opposed to this corporate takeover rallied and won battles. Each time The Money pushed back and forced it onward.

It passed.

Fast Track Vote Marks A Change

This vote marks another change in the relationship between We the People of the United States and our government and the giant corporations.

Previously our corrupt system had "our" Congress simply ignoring what the people want, and doing whatever The Money class wants. You might recall [the study](#) by Princeton's Martin Gilens and Northwestern's Benjamin Page showing that "business interests have substantial independent impacts" while "average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence" on our government's policies. In other words, the Congress did what the rich and powerful want and ignores what the public wants.

We knew that.

This fast track push was different, more aggressive, less concerned with how it looked. Facing increasing awareness of the money-corrupted nature of the system and a rising populist movement The Money was much more in-your-face and blatant than the system had been. This wasn't just the corporations slipping something past the public with no regard to what the public wants; this was about pushing it through with the public engaged in opposition. Old corrupt system: sneaking it through; new corrupt system: pushing it through.

This time it is The Money telling Congress to set aside our democratic deliberative process, to pass something that says they – the bodies that represent the people – can't amend, can't have extended debate. They are doing this for a secretly negotiated agreement, the result of a rigged corporate-dominated process. They are afraid of We the people so they are trying to find ways to get us out of their way.

Fast Track is The Money directing Congress to go utterly against what vast majorities of people actively say, going utterly against what movements of people are fighting for. This goes beyond the Iraq War vote because there were blocks of the public on both sides of that fight – even if the "pro" block was largely manufactured by propaganda. This goes beyond the public bailout of Wall Street (but not the rest of us) because there was no time for opposition to rally, and there was no crisis or panic to manipulate. This time they just went ahead and did it and didn't care how it looked.

Is this how business will be done in the 21st century? Maybe, but maybe not. We the People came close to winning this time. We will come closer and closer, then we will start winning again.

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