



AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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NEWS

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Don't Obstruct Trade Bill, Mr. Daschle

Powerful Senate Finance Committee passes Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) bill by overwhelming 18-3 margin, but will Tom Daschle bring it to the Senate floor?

WASHINGTON — The Senate Finance Committee today passed by an 18-3 margin what will soon be considered the largest tax cut of the next decade. And while the bill will surely stimulate the economy, it has not been properly lauded as a “stimulus” package.

Today's vote would give the president trade promotion authority (TPA), formerly known as “fast track.” Granted by Congress to each of America's last five Presidents, TPA allows trade negotiators to hammer out trade agreements with other nations. With a tentative trade agreement in place, Congress can then vote “up or down” on the agreement, accepting or rejecting – but not amending it. This ensures that negotiators will strike agreements that have broad political and public support, and are not tailored to special interests requests. Of 130 trade agreements currently in place around the globe, the United States is a partner in only three, with Israel, Jordan, and NAFTA. The House of Representatives passed similar legislation last week.

Taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, who heads Americans for Tax Reform, issued the following statement:

“This is by far the most important vote of the Bush Administration, and if Tom Daschle gives it a chance to pass the Senate, TPA will be the most significant tax cut legislation of the decade. It will create millions of jobs, boost the financial markets, secure democratic governments throughout the Western Hemisphere, reduce the pressures of mass immigration, and give the president a powerful tool to reward those nations who support us in the fight against terrorism and punish those who are slow to aid us.

“Tariffs are taxes – invisible ones on all consumers. And with 880 million consumers in the hemisphere who are begging to buy American goods, but inhibited by tariffs in their countries, **this legislation couples as the greatest economic stimulus we can ask for.** Opening foreign markets is a trademark of American foreign policy.

“American businesses and workers are the best in the world, and we can compete in any market across the globe. TPA will enable the creation of a hemispheric market stretching from the Bering Strait to the Tierra del Fuego – the greatest free trade zone in the history of civilization. **I heartily encourage the U.S. Senate, and especially Senator Daschle, to take up this legislation as soon as possible to free up foreign markets and promote democracy around the world.”**

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all federal and state tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jcollegio@atr.org