BAD TRADE DEALS
CRUSH
GOOD U.S. JOBS AND CONTRACTS
The next few weeks are “do or die” in the fight by CWA and more than 100 other organizations to stop “Fast Track” authorization for the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

It all comes down to this final push to contact our representatives in the House, encouraging them to vote “NO” on Fast Track for the TPP.

Fast Track means members of Congress must vote on the 1,200+ page TPP bill with almost no debate and no ability to amend it.

This is a trade deal that’s being negotiated almost completely in secret, among the U.S. and 11 countries including Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. U.S. workers and communities deserve better than this trade deal that will disrupt communities, push more good jobs overseas and push down wages in the U.S. for any job that can be moved.

There’s a lot that’s wrong with the TPP and those issues are spotlighted in this issue of the News. You also can read more about what CWAers are doing to stop Fast Track now, and how you can join in.

More voices are being raised against the TPP deal. Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich is one of them. He was a supporter of NAFTA, but has come to see trade deals like the TPP for what they are: a giveaway to the 1 percent and multinational corporations.

The Huffington Post, President Cohen writes that “our trade framework is an unholy alliance between the geopolitical concerns of the State Department and the business interests of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Business Roundtable.” Read the full column, Fighting Fast Track: Is It Really China or Us?” at www.tinyurl.com/pcrbhec.

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich Takes on the Trans-Pacific Partnership

Robert Reich was a big supporter of NAFTA. Not any more. He acknowledges the damage that trade deals like NAFTA have caused, and is warning against Fast Track Authorization for the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Check out this short video by Reich that shows exactly why this trade deal would devastate U.S. jobs, our contracts, and our communities. Go to http://tinyurl.com/nifocxn.

Then take action.

At www.stopthetpp.org, you’ll find everything you need to send an email to your member of Congress, prepare and mail a handwritten letter and join with other CWA and coalition activists to stand up to this attack on our jobs and our standard of living.

Spread the word about Fast Track and the TPP.
The Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the League of Conservation Voters and 41 other environmental groups have called on Congress to oppose Fast Track.

In a letter to Congress, they wrote: “As leading U.S. environmental and science organizations, we write to express our strong opposition to ‘Fast Track’ trade promotion authority, and to urge you to oppose any legislation that would limit the ability of Congress to ensure that trade pacts deliver benefits for communities, workers, public health, and the environment.”

“The TPP would give big polluters broad new rights to attack climate and clean air and water protection in a secret trade court, forcing our government to pay millions in taxpayer dollars.”

—Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune
There’s so much to see at the new CWA/NETT Academy

Make 2015 the year you start to build a better you. Get the ball rolling by logging on to www.cwanett.org today!

Post this information on union bulletin boards

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<tr>
<th><strong>DESCRIPTION</strong></th>
<th><strong>COST</strong></th>
<th><strong>SAMPLE TITLES</strong></th>
<th><strong>TIME COMMITMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>HOW IT WORKS</strong></th>
<th><strong>GET MORE INFORMATION</strong></th>
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<td>Test your knowledge on a subject or prepare for an exam, we have developed this resource for our members. Participate immediately just by registering. Topics include TKT, TMT, A+, Wireless and more.</td>
<td><strong>FREE</strong> to members and their families</td>
<td>TKT, TMT, CCNA, A+, NET+, Security+, Mobility+, and Wireless core knowledge.</td>
<td>5 - 30 minutes.</td>
<td>Available anytime, just log in, register for the exam and take it immediately. Retake anytime.</td>
<td>Just log in at <a href="http://www.cwanett.org">www.cwanett.org</a>, and register for the exam.</td>
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<td>Lynda.com is a leading online learning company that helps anyone learn business, software, technology and creative skills to achieve personal and professional goals. Through CWA, members have access to the lynda.com video library of engaging, top-quality courses taught by recognized industry experts.</td>
<td><strong>FREE</strong> to members and their families</td>
<td>MS Office, Photoshop, HTML, 3-D Animation, CAD, Music, IT, Marketing, Developing, &amp; more. Thousands of courses to choose from.</td>
<td>From as little as 2 minutes to 15 hours. How much do you want to learn? You are provided access for two weeks per session.</td>
<td>Sessions begin every two weeks. Access to thousands of titles, just register for the two-week-long session that works best for your schedule. You get unlimited access to all courses during the two week period. Register for another session once completed.</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.cwanett.org">www.cwanett.org</a> select RESOURCES.</td>
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<td>A better way to learn Photoshop® and Photography®. KelbyOne is more than just training. It's a place where creative people come to learn, grow and inspire. Being a member means you get exclusive access to the world’s best instructors, thousands of self-paced classes and an inspiring community of creatives just like you.</td>
<td><strong>FREE</strong> to members and their families</td>
<td>Photoshop, Lightroom, Photography Only.</td>
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Presenting your complete professional training and personal enrichment resource center!

Here, your union provides all the tools necessary to pursue all your ambitions. Maybe you see yourself as a top Network professional in a few years. We have the courses to make that happen. You may have your eye on a pay raise that requires a certification you don’t have. Because CWA/NETT is an online Academy, you take the necessary courses on your time, right from home, from professional educators who want you to succeed.

These benefits extend to your family too. And many are FREE! CWA/NETT has several components designed to enrich you and your whole family. Say your son has always wanted to learn more about photography, or your college-age daughter needs to be fluent in Excel. At Lynda.com and KelbyOne they will find dozens of courses that will help them to succeed.

Focus On U
Focus On U is a comprehensive program that offers an integrated approach to exploring careers and their skill requirements and builds life-literacy through lessons about financial awareness, job searching, and more. A great resource for you and your family.

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<th>FREE to members and their families</th>
<th>$99-$150</th>
<th>Avg $550</th>
<th>Avg $237 per credit</th>
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<td>Financial Awareness, Business Writing, Job Search, Business Etiquette, Problem Solving, Communication Skills.</td>
<td>accounting to Web Design. Each course has a patient and caring instructor, lively discussions with your fellow students, and plenty of practical information that you can put to immediate use.</td>
<td>Through bargaining, CWA has made it to where you can get a higher craft job or extra pay by earning a certification. Check your contract for more specific information. There is no better way to prove your knowledge and skills than with an industry recognized certification.</td>
<td>CWA has partnered with Bismarck State College to assist our members with achieving their goal. With three sponsored degrees, members can transfer credits from other colleges, have life experience evaluated for credit, or just provide a great beginning to achieving a degree.</td>
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Explore - Ed2Go
Ed2Go offers you hundreds of engaging online courses, covering every topic from Accounting to Web Design. Each course has a patient and caring instructor, lively discussions with your fellow students, and plenty of practical information that you can put to immediate use.

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<th>Each topic is a few hours long on your own schedule. Access is provided for two weeks at a time.</th>
<th>6-week-long courses, 3-4 hours each week on your own schedule.</th>
<th>12-week courses, 4-5 hours each week on your own schedule.</th>
<th>Typical college course 16 weeks, 4-5 hours per week on your own schedule.</th>
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<td>Payment is due at checkout or select THIRD PARTY to allow time to work with our college to arrange payment.</td>
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<td>Review the courses available and add to your card and check out. Payment is due at checkout or select THIRD PARTY to allow time to work with our college to arrange payment.</td>
<td>Three degrees are spotlighted for CWA members, or look on your own at Bismarck. Begin a degree from scratch or transfer credits or life experiences you may have. Among the best value in the country for an AS Degree.</td>
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Industry Certifications
Through bargaining, CWA has made it to where you can get a higher craft job or extra pay by earning a certification. Check your contract for more specific information. There is no better way to prove your knowledge and skills than with an industry recognized certification.


College Degree
CWA has partnered with Bismarck State College to assist our members with achieving their goal. With three sponsored degrees, members can transfer credits from other colleges, have life experience evaluated for credit, or just provide a great beginning to achieving a degree.

|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
Across the country, thousands of CWAers and activists from Common Cause, Public Citizen, environmental and reform groups held actions and events to mark the fifth anniversary of the disastrous Supreme Court Citizens United decision.

“Money out, voters in” was the message, and across the country, activists pressed for a small donor financing system, accountability and transparency in political contributions and congressional action to make it clear that money is not speech.

So far, more than 5 million activists signed a petition calling for a constitutional amendment to get money out of politics. The Democracy Initiative – a broad coalition of 50 environmental, community, labor and citizen organizations representing more than 30 million activists – is fighting to restore the political voice of ordinary Americans.

In its Citizens United decision in 2010, the Supreme Court affirmed that money equals speech and corporations equal people. That decision, combined with last year’s McCutcheon decision that allowed virtually unlimited political spending, has enabled a flood of dollars from corporations and the wealthiest Americans to cripple our political process and drown out the voices of ordinary citizens.

Five years ago, Justice Anthony Kennedy assured Americans that disclosure requirements would ensure that “citizens can see whether elected officials are ‘in the pocket’ of so-called moneyed interests.”

No one believes that today. Today, our political process is marked by secret contributions, stealth donations and very little transparency in who is spending these big bucks at the federal, state and community levels.

A record $4 billion was spent in the 2014 congressional elections.

In 2012, $7 billion was spent on presidential and congressional elections, a record that likely will be broken, especially with the pledge by billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch who said they will spend nearly $1 billion – $899 million – in the 2016 elections.

This is not what democracy looks like.

What’s the Solution?

► Democracy for All. An amendment to the U.S. Constitution that overturns Citizens United and other obstacles to campaign finance reform. Its point is clear: corporations aren’t people and money isn’t speech.

► The DISCLOSE Act would require disclosure from all groups making political donations.

► Legislation to establish a publicly financed, small donor matching system. New York City and other communities already have adopted this model for elections. It works. Bills already proposed include the Government by the People Act and the Fair Elections Now Act, and the Empowering Citizens Act.

► The Sunlight for Unaccountable Nonprofits Act would require tax-exempt groups to disclose the names of donors who give more than $5,000.

Since 2010, 16 states and more than 500 local governments have called on Congress to overturn Citizens United through ballot initiatives, resolutions or other measures. We’re growing stronger every day in the fight to take back our democracy.

It’s past time to act to put elections back in the hands of the voters – and get them out of the hands of billionaires and special interests.

—Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM)
Notice Regarding Union Security Agreements and Agency Fee Objections

As a general matter, employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement containing a Union security clause are required, as a condition of employment, to pay an agency fee equal to normal Union dues (and, where applicable, initiation fees). While the wording of these clauses is not perfectly uniform, none requires more than the payment of this agency fee to retain employment. The Communications Workers of America policy on agency fee objections is the Union’s means of meeting its legal obligations to employees covered by Union security clauses and of effectuating those employees’ legal rights as stated in the applicable decisions of the United States Supreme Court (including Beck v. CWA) and the companion lower court and labor agency decisions. Under the CWA policy, employees who are not members of the Union, but who pay agency fees pursuant to a Union security clause, may request a reduction in that fee based on their objection to certain kinds of Union expenditures.

The policy provides an objection period each year during which a new bargaining unit member begins paying agency fees prior to the commencement of such payments and for the duration of the current annual objection period. The letter of objection should include name, address, CWA Local number, and employer. Objections must be sent to the Agency Fee Administrator, CWA, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001-2797.

1. Briefly stated, CWA’s objection policy works as follows:

   1. The agency fee payable by objectors will be based on the Union’s expenditures for those activities or projects “germane to collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment” within the meaning of applicable United States Supreme Court decisions. Among these “chargeable” expenditures are those going for negotiations with employers, enforcing collective bargaining agreements, informal meetings with employer representatives, discussion of work-related issues with employees, handling employees’ work-related problems through the grievance procedure, administrative agencies, or informal meetings, and Union administration. In the past, approximately 70-75% of the International Union’s expenditures have gone for such activities. The percentages of Local Union expenditures on “chargeable” activities have generally been higher. Among the expenditures treated as “nonchargeable,” which objectors will not be required to support, are those going for community service (including participating in charitable events), legislative activity, cost of affiliation with non-CWA organizations, support of political candidates, participating in political events, recruitment of members to the Union, and members-only benefits (including members-only social events). In the past, approximately 25-30% of the International Union’s expenditures have gone for such “nonchargeable” expenditures. The percentages of Local Union expenditures on “nonchargeable” activities have generally been lower.

2. Objectors will be given a full explanation of the basis for the reduced fee charged to them. That explanation will include a more detailed list of the categories of expenditures deemed to be “chargeable” and those deemed to be “nonchargeable,” and the independent certified public accountants’ report showing the Union’s expenditures on which the fee is based. In addition to any other avenue of relief available under the law, objectors will have the option of challenging the Union’s calculation of the reduced fee before an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association, and a portion of the objector’s fee shall be held in escrow while he or she pursues that challenge. Details on the method of making such a challenge and the rights accorded to those who do so will be provided to objectors along with the explanation of the fee calculation.

3. Objectors for the period of July through June must be sent during May. Objectors will be honored for one year unless the objection specifically states that it is continuing in nature. Continuing objections will be honored for as long as the agency fee payer remains in the bargaining unit. Agency fee payers who are new to the bargaining unit, or who are returning to the bargaining unit, may object within thirty days of receiving this notice. In addition, employees who resign Union membership may object within thirty days of becoming an agency fee payer. Employees filling these objections in either circumstance should so state that circumstance in their letter of objection. New bargaining unit members are to receive this notice prior to any demand being made upon them for the payment of agency fees. If, however, for any reason a new unit member begins paying agency fees prior to the receipt of this notice, he or she may object retroactively to the commencement of such payments and for the duration of the current annual objection period.

The letter of objection should include name, address, CWA Local number, and employer. Objections must be sent to the Agency Fee Administrator, CWA, 501 Third Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001-2797.
This is it. Time to stand up and fight back. Join other CWAers who are emailing, calling and writing their Members of Congress with this message:

Say “No” to Fast Track and the TPP.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

www.StopTheTPP.org has all the information you need.

CURRENCY MANIPULATION

‘Let’s Export Our Products, Not Our Jobs’

Several of the 12 TPP countries – particularly Japan – have engaged in a process called currency manipulation. The short explanation is this: Japan manipulates the value of its currency, the yen, so that Japanese products are less expensive and those of the U.S. are much more expensive. That gives Japan a growing trade surplus. It’s a big reason why the U.S. trade deficit with Japan hit $78.3 billion in 2013.

This manipulation has cost the U.S. 896,600 jobs, directly because of Japan’s currency manipulation. The majority of these are manufacturing jobs, especially in the auto industry, but not exclusively. U.S. workers lost more than 400,000 jobs in administrative positions, health care and social assistance, retail trade, professional, scientific, and technical services and hospitality and food services.

Senators, Representatives and allies that oppose Fast Track have been pushing the administration and U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman hard on whether TPP addresses this issue. (It doesn’t.) Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) has called for “strong and enforceable rules” in the TPP deal to prevent currency manipulation.

MORE BROKEN PROMISES

The Commerce Department’s latest report on the U.S. trade deficit is out. No surprise, the numbers contradict all the promises that supporters of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other trade deals have made over the past 20 years.

BROKEN PROMISE #1 Trade deals with China, Korea, Central American countries and others create jobs.

FALSE. The U.S. has lost 4 million jobs as a result of just three trade deals – China, Korea and NAFTA.

BROKEN PROMISE #2 Trade deals will boost exports and reduce our trade deficits.

FALSE. The deficit hit $505 billion in 2014, and imports to the U.S. last year were a record $2.9 trillion. Corporations already are lining up to move jobs to Vietnam, where wages average about $1 an hour. That will make imports soar even higher.

Leaked text – the only way we’ve learned anything about the negotiations – revealed that the U.S. Trade Representative is pushing for language that would extend the patent monopolies of the big pharmaceutical companies to 12 years or more. This would severely restrict the development and marketing of generic drugs. Prices for critical prescription drugs would rise, profits for Big Pharma would skyrocket and millions of people would have little or no access to affordable medicine.

AARP, Doctors Without Borders, the Generic Pharmaceutical Association, Oxfam and the AFL-CIO warned that this giveaway to the pharmaceutical industry could lock in higher prices for drugs. “Biologic drugs” have been developed to treat diseases like multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer and other conditions. Insulin and vaccines are biologics, too. Giving drug makers 12 years of exclusive rights to the test data for these drugs blocks generics from being developed and keeps them out of the hands of millions of people who could benefit.

Consumers Union and other groups have warned that TPP provisions could undermine Medicare and Medicaid, by blocking cost saving initiatives and drug rebates in those programs.

Pharmaceutical companies claim they need to charge high prices to fund their research and development. This just isn’t so. Drug companies spend more on marketing and advertising than on new ideas.

— Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in Economics, Columbia University