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# CWA news

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{WWW.CWA-UNION.ORG}

## TPP: THE LARGEST CORPORATE POWER GRAB YOU NEVER HEARD OF

TOP SECRET  
MEETING



Larry Cohen, CWA President

## WORKING *Together*

### GETTING IT DONE

**W**e have a victory to celebrate. All of us in CWA should be proud of the work our union did, with our allies, to help restore democracy to the U.S. Senate. The procedural change that Senators adopted last month means that, finally, President Obama's nominations to executive branch positions and the judiciary (with the exception of the Supreme Court) will get the up-or-down vote they deserve.

That's what the U.S. Constitution calls for, in Article II, Section 2, Clause 2, which clearly states that the Senate's obligation of advice and consent is based on majority support, not a 60-vote super majority.

Now, President Obama can fulfill his constitutional obligation to nominate judges and administrators to carry out his programs. Far more than any other president, President Obama's nominations have been blocked by a Republican majority not because of the merits of those individuals, but because of the Republican obstructionism and purposeful gridlock. Just seven of President George W. Bush's executive

nominations were blocked; so far, 83 of President Obama's nominations have been blocked. There are at least 100 executive nominations still waiting for their confirmation vote, as well as 93 additional judicial vacancies. Now, at least, those have an opportunity to move forward to an up-or-down vote.

We need real filibuster reform that requires senators to take the Senate floor and debate legislation. That will require organizing for more fundamental rules reform in January 2015 when the new Congress begins.

In this issue, we focus on the Trans-Pacific Partnership. CWA and our allies are working to spread the word that "what you don't know will hurt you."

Over the past three years, negotiators from 12 countries have met mainly in secret, to put together a massive trade deal that is bad news for U.S. workers and consumers. About 600 corporate advisors from the biggest multinational corporations are at the table, but unions, the public, in fact, most members of Congress are shut out of the process.

Instead of trade policy that will benefit and improve the lives of 350 million Americans, for the past 20 years, our government has pursued trade deals that allow so-called national security interests to trump those of American working families. TPP follows that pattern.

That's why there's such a big push to have the Vietnam government included in TPP, from policy makers and corporations alike. Vietnam pays workers about 28 cents an hour, working conditions are repressive and environmental standards non-existent. U.S. corporations are very eager to set up shop there; earlier this year, General Electric and Procter & Gamble told the Vietnamese government that they planned to expand operations in Vietnam. UPS said it appreciated the Vietnamese government allowing the company to set up its business there.

It's shameful that our nation is negotiating to enter into a complicated trade deal with yet another government that suppresses its people's basic worker and human rights. And it's equally shameful that there is no focus on U.S. working families. It's no wonder negotiators don't want to talk about what's in TPP. As Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass) said, "I have heard the argument that transparency would undermine the U.S. Trade Representative's policy to complete the trade agreement because public opposition would be significant. In other words, if people knew what was going on, they would stop it."

We are building a coalition to stop fast track, also called Trade Promotion Authority, that would prevent members of the House or Senate from making any amendments to TPP. This is a fight we can win.



**HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO WIN TWO ROUND-TRIP AIRLINE TICKETS.**

Go to:

**[cwa-union.org/contest](http://cwa-union.org/contest)**

and enter your personal email address.

Winning name/entry will be drawn from those who enter. The winner will be announced in **May 2014**.

Email address must be valid at time of drawing. Value of prize cannot exceed **\$500** per ticket. CWA employees and their families are not eligible.



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## CWA TELEPHONE TOWN HALL CALLS

If you haven't joined CWA's monthly telephone town hall call, you're missing a lot. The 30-minute calls are held the third Thursday of every month, at 7:30 pm ET.

Every month, President Cohen and CWA activists and leaders discuss what's happening in our union, from bargaining challenges to organizing.

We're sometimes joined by our coalition partners: Richard Cordray, the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau joined the December call. Others have included House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senators Sherrod Brown and Elizabeth Warren, NAACP President Ben Jealous, MSNBC Host Ed Schultz and more.

**TEXT CWACALL TO 69866 OR GO TO [WWW.CWA-UNION.ORG/CWACALL](http://WWW.CWA-UNION.ORG/CWACALL).**



# WHEN IT COMES TO THE TPP WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW WILL HURT YOU

## TRANS - PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a massive, secret trade deal that's being negotiated among 12 countries on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. Participating in the talks now are representatives from the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Chile, Brunei, Singapore and Vietnam. Countries like the Philippines and South Korea also have indicated they want to join.

Negotiations have been going on behind closed doors for more than three years and are nearing their end. The round in Salt Lake City in November was the most secretive yet, with only chief negotiators and "experts" allowed to be part of the discussion. The latest round took place this month in Singapore.

About 600 U.S. corporate lobbyists are acting as official advisors and working with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. They are making huge decisions about jobs and workers' rights, environmental standards, food safety, patents and intellectual property rights and so much more, and all in secret.

The agreement then must be approved by all participating countries. For the U.S., that means both the House and Senate must approve the trade deal. The Obama administration and TPP supporters want a process called "fast track authority or Trade Promotion

Authority," which would allow only an up-or-down vote with no amendments to the TPP. CWA and our coalition allies are fighting hard to stop fast track. It's a fight we can win.

**Why all the secrecy? Why aren't we hearing about what TPP would do?**



Because U.S. corporations desperately want this deal, and they know that it's a corporate and Wall Street giveaway. The TPP is much more than a "free-trade" agreement. It's designed to make the world safe for corporate investment and profits by reducing labor costs and undercutting workers' rights; dismantling labor, environmental, health and financial laws and regulations that

could affect profits; and setting up a process to resolve any disputes by going through special international tribunals rather than our own court system.

U.S. workers are on to the fact that trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement, the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, trade deals with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and now TPP benefit the 1 percent at the expense of the rest of us. Workers' jobs go overseas as corporations chase subsistence wages, like Vietnam's 25 cents an hour, and seek out places with little or no regulation.

Most members of Congress don't even know what's in the proposed agreement. That's why Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) has called TPP, "the largest corporate power grab you never heard of."

What we do know, through leaks of the various chapters, is that TPP is a bad deal for workers in every country.

That's why CWA has joined together with our coalition partners – Sierra Club, Citizens Trade Campaign, Public Citizen and others – to stop this attack on working conditions. None of us can win this fight alone. But together we can stand up and fight back.

“ I would characterize TPP as a punch in the face to the middle class of America but I'm not allowed to tell you why.” – Rep. Alan Grayson (D-Fla.)

5

Number of the 29 chapters that actually have anything to do with traditional trade issues.

4

Number of years that negotiators want TPP papers to remain secret after it's signed into law.

TPP

means forever. Once signed, it would have no expiration date, and more countries could sign on.

0

Number of union, public interest, environmental, consumer and other groups that have seen the entire document.

600

Number of corporate lobbyists – "trade advisors" – who have seen the entire document.

## Just the Facts

# SHIPPING OUR JOBS OFFSHORE

## WHY U.S. WORKERS WANT FAIR TRADE, NOT FREE TRADE

American workers know that free trade means lost jobs. It happened under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiated 20 years ago. It happened under the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement negotiated last year. Overall, NAFTA resulted in a loss of nearly 700,000 jobs. Promoters of the Korean trade agreement promised that 70,000 new U.S. jobs would be created; instead, U.S. workers already have lost 40,000 jobs. It's not only manufacturing jobs that are at risk. U.S. corporations already are projected to shift 3.4 million service sector jobs offshore between 2003 and 2015 in their pursuit of the lowest possible labor costs, non-existent workers' rights and little or no workplace regulation. The TPP trade deal would make an already bad situation far worse.

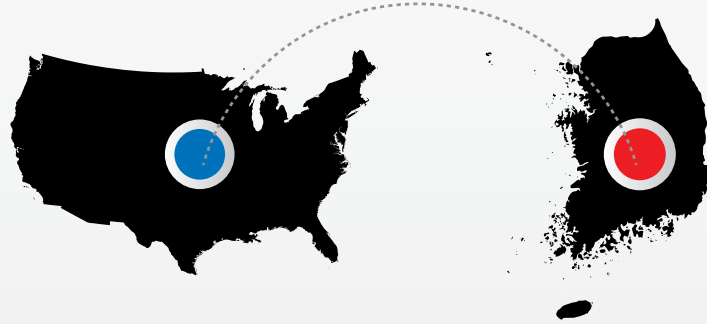
More than 500,000 U.S. call center jobs have gone overseas just in the past five years. And countries like the Philippines, which is building a huge base of 700,000 call center agents primarily serving the U.S. market, are looking to join the TPP too.

One way we can stop this hemorrhaging of good American jobs is by convincing Congress to pass the U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protect Act of 2013 (H.R. 2909 and S. 1565). We call it "Press One for America." The legislation would require all call center employees to identify the country from which they are taking each phone call, and if they are outside the United States, they must offer the consumer the opportunity to be transferred back to an operator based in the U.S. In addition, it would create a publicly available "bad actor" list of all employers that relocate their call center or customer service work overseas; these businesses would be barred from receiving federal loans, grants or subsidies for three years.

The bill has support from both Democrats and Republicans, though last year House Republicans blocked it from being considered in Congress.

### THE U.S.- KOREA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (KORUS)

70,000 JOBS PROMISED  
40,000 JOBS LOST



### NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA)

200,000 JOBS PROMISED  
682,900 JOBS LOST

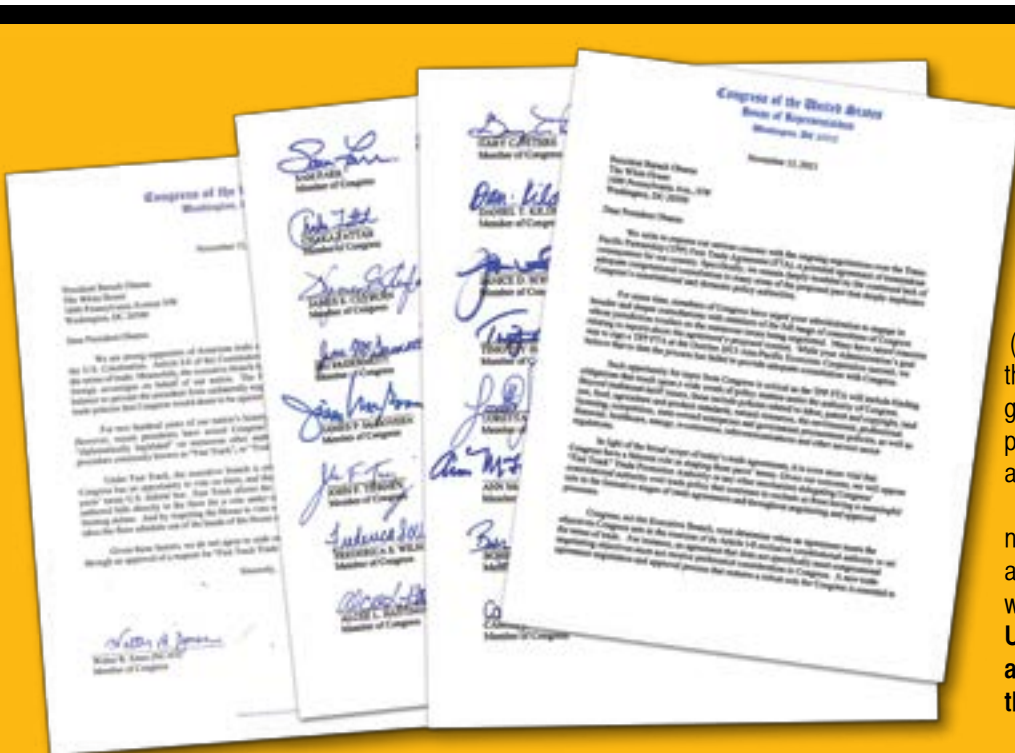


The call center bill won't mean anything unless Congress kills "fast track" authorization for the TPP. If the TPP is ratified, legislation like the call center bill that would protect U.S. jobs could be challenged and invalidated by foreign corporations and countries. Even more tech, IT and call center jobs will head offshore. Leaks of some of the chapters have given us a look at what TPP would mean for jobs.

#### How bad is TPP for U.S. jobs?

- *Corporate rights would be greatly expanded, with new protections for investment.* The goal: to make it even safer for corporations to invest offshore in lower-wage countries. (Covered in the TPP Investment Chapter).
- *The U.S. government – and possibly state governments – would be barred from giving any preference to U.S.-based firms and workers when awarding contracts.* As a result, corporations in any of the 12 TPP countries would have equal rights to bid on U.S. taxpayer funded contracts. (Covered in the TPP Procurement Chapter).
- *TPP would explicitly forbid the U.S. – or any country – from requiring that a foreign firm set up a domestic operation to provide services.* This would allow call centers in foreign countries to supply services to the U.S. without employing any U.S. workers. (Covered in the "trade in cross border services" texts.)
- *Corporations would be able to challenge U.S. laws that don't closely follow any of these and other TPP provisions.* For example, under the investment chapter of the TPP, corporations could challenge the call center bill based on an adverse impact on "expected future profits." It would be heard in international UN or World Bank tribunals, bypassing our democratic legislative and judicial system. And U.S. taxpayers could be forced to pay up. (Covered in the TPP Investment Chapter).

## SAY NO TO TPP FAST TRACK: A FIGHT WE CAN WIN



Some members of Congress are trying to put the brakes on the TPP.

In a series of letters to the White House, at least 194 members of Congress have publicly expressed their concerns about the secretive trade deal, bringing plans for a speedy ratification to a screeching halt.

Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and George Miller (D-Calif.) have led the effort to spotlight the lack of congressional input during the TPP negotiating process and to take a stand against "fast track," also known as Trade Promotion Authority.

"Twentieth Century 'Fast Track' is simply not appropriate for 21st Century agreements and must be replaced," said their letter, which was signed by 151 House Democrats. **"The United States cannot afford another trade agreement that replicates the mistakes of the past. We can and must do better."**

Democrats aren't alone. Twenty-seven

House Republicans also offered their own objections to "fast track." And a number of companion letters authored by individual members of Congress are helping to build momentum against this massive trade deal.

"Our 20 years of experience in trade deals, going back to North American Free Trade Agreement, has proven that we lose far more jobs than we gain, and that our pay and benefits are pushed down with global competition as the excuse," said CWA President Larry Cohen. "That's not the future we want for ourselves or our children. We must pursue economic and trade policies that are best for American workers – not multinational corporations."

The loud opposition of these 194 lawmakers is only the beginning. We're adding our voices to this fight to say, "Down with fast track!" Together, we'll pry open these closed-door negotiating sessions and actually have a say in the future of our country.

This is a fight we can win.



# AN EXPLOSION OF FRACKING: One of the Dirtiest Secrets of the TPP



Sierra Club and CWA join forces in Addison, Tex., to protest the 12th round of negotiations. Right, union, environmental and community activists demonstrate in California.

**“ Using fast track is like removing the seatbelts and airbags from a vehicle and racing it toward its final destination.”**

– Michael Brune, Sierra Club

The Sierra Club has worked on trade issues for nearly two decades, because “trade rules have a huge impact on environmental protections.” In 1998, for example, the World Trade Organization ordered the U.S. to weaken Endangered Species Act protections for sea turtles being killed in shrimp-fishing nets.

In an ongoing dispute, a U.S. corporation, Renco Group, is suing the government of Peru for \$800 million under the free trade agreement between the U.S. and Peru. Why? Because Peru wouldn’t give the corporation a third extension on its obligation to clean up pollutants

and contaminants from a metallic smelter that Renco invested in. Another company, Lone Pine Resources, is using investment rules under NAFTA to sue Canada for \$250 million. Why? Because a Canadian moratorium on hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, might slow down the company from raking in more profits, said Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune.

Fracking is a dirty and violent process that dislodges gas deposits from shale rock formations. Many communities and activists are protesting the damage being done to their health, water supply, homes and living conditions as a result of current levels of fracking. TPP is an enormous threat to efforts to stop the destruction being caused by oil and gas unconventional drilling and could lead to a significant increase in dirty fracking in communities across the U.S., Sierra Club says.

How?

The Department of Energy now reviews the export of natural gas to other countries but would lose that authority under TPP. There is growing demand from other countries for the natural gas that is obtained by fracking in the U.S. The TPP could mean automatic approval of natural gas export permits to TPP countries without any U.S. review at all.

## TAKE ACTION NOW ON TPP



The only way we can change the Trans-Pacific Partnership is if we stop fast track.

It’s a fight we can win. But it will take all of us, working together, contacting our senators and representatives, to make sure our voices are heard.

**TAKE ACTION. SIGN UP AND GET MORE INFORMATION AT [WWW.CWA-UNION.ORG/NO-TPP](http://WWW.CWA-UNION.ORG/NO-TPP)**

## Behind Closed Doors

With negotiations around TPP winding down, secrecy is at an all-time high.

At the Salt Lake City, Utah, round, only “chief negotiators and key experts” were at the table, even though negotiations covered a broad range of topics, including e-commerce, the environment, labor, financial services, intellectual property, investment, legal issues and more.

“Every time I think it’s impossible for the TPP negotiations to become any less transparent, the U.S. Trade Representative proves me wrong,” said Arthur Stamoulis, executive director of Citizens Trade Campaign. “The only thing about the TPP that’s not a secret is who is stands to benefit: big corporations.”

Over the three years of negotiations, unions and public interest groups, including CWA, Citizens Trade Campaign, Public Citizen, Sierra Club and others – have been left in the dark.

And the few lawmakers who are permitted to read the draft texts are only permitted to see just a small part of the picture.

When Senator Ron Wyden – chair of the Senate’s Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs and Global Competitiveness – sought access, he had to go down to the U.S. Trade Representative’s offices, where he sat alone in a private room with a copy of the negotiating text. He was not allowed to make any copies or take notes. Wyden wasn’t even allowed to bring a trade expert on his staff to look at the technical language, despite the fact that the staffer had obtained the necessary security credentials.

Afterwards, members of Congress have to keep their lips zipped about what they read.

Representative Alan Grayson, who viewed an edited version of the negotiation texts, told The Huffington Post the TPP is “a punch in the face to the middle class of America.” He added, “But I’m not allowed to tell you why!”

Meanwhile, “stakeholders” like GE, Verizon, Chevron, PHRMA and Motion Picture Association of America – essentially big business and trade groups – get a seat at the table and full access to all the documents.

**“ If people knew what was going on, they would stop it.”**

– Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.)

TRANS-PACIFIC  
PARTNERSHIP



## WATCH WHAT YOU EAT



The TPP will threaten food safety because both countries and corporations will be able to challenge food standards, labeling programs, pesticide regulations and more.

● **DAIRY STANDARDS COULD BE CHALLENGED.** New Zealand-based Fonterra, the world's largest dairy exporter, has been banned from a number of countries because of products tainted by botulism. The ability for U.S. products to be sold

as "antibiotic-free" or "hormone-free" would be challenged.

● **SEAFOOD STANDARDS COULD BE CONTESTED.**

The FDA has detained hundreds of seafood exports from TPP countries because they were contaminated. For example, in 2012, the FDA detained 206 imported seafood products from Vietnam alone because of salmonella, E. coli, methyl mercury, filth and drug residues.

● **LABELING LAWS COULD DISAPPEAR.** Country-of-origin labeling now required on packages of meat, fruit, vegetables and some nuts sold in U.S. stores would be challenged. Canada and Mexico already have challenged these and other food standard rules under previous trade agreements. The TPP would allow more challenges to our laws.

Consumers who may want to avoid genetically modified foods won't be able to determine what they can buy.

## INTERNET CENSORSHIP

Wikileaks recently published the secret negotiated draft text for the entire TPP Intellectual Property Rights Chapter. If ratified, the trade deal would

- **CRIMINALIZE THE DIGITAL UNLOCKING OF MOBILE PHONES.** U.S. consumers recently gained more choice and the right to unlock their phones and use other service providers with their devices. The TPP would undo those changes.
- **PREVENT COPYRIGHTED WORKS** – textbooks, music, art, literature, scientific research, journals — from reaching the public domains for 70 years after the author's death. For corporate-owned works, it would take 95 years.

READ THIS CHAPTER AT  
[WWW.WIKILEAKS.ORG/TPP/#EFMKCKKEK](http://WWW.WIKILEAKS.ORG/TPP/#EFMKCKKEK)

- **MAKE INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS MORE LIABLE FOR COPYRIGHT-INFRINGEMENT MATERIAL** posted to their sites, incentivizing companies like Verizon and Comcast to police the Internet.
- **ENACT STRINGENT COPYRIGHT ENFORCEMENT MEASURES** that would make users afraid to view, share and interact with digital content online.



## A BAD DEAL FOR WORKERS AND TAXPAYERS

Manufacturing and service sector jobs are at risk, because TPP would provide special benefits to companies that relocate investment and jobs, especially to places like Vietnam and other extremely low wage countries. Wages in Vietnam are about 25 cents an hour.

- **FOREIGN FIRMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE GIVEN EQUAL ACCESS TO U.S. federal government contracts,** and



provisions like "Buy American," "renewable/ recycled" or "sweat free" could be challenged.

- **COMPANIES WITH POOR SAFETY OR WORK RECORDS COULD NOT BE BARRED FROM GETTING U.S. CONTRACTS,** nor would the horrible human rights or other conditions in participating countries be a factor.
- **PRIVATE CORPORATIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE ABLE TO CHALLENGE U.S. LAWS AND REGULATIONS,** including the call center bill and those dealing with telecom, health and the environment, if they think our laws limit their "expected future profits."
- **WAGES, BENEFITS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS WOULD BE ERODED.** We know that trade agreements have helped drive down wages and benefits and increasingly erode our collective bargaining rights. The TPP will speed up this race to the bottom by expanding corporate rights.

The message from CWA President Larry Cohen honoring and recognizing our veterans also pointed out an important truth:

## OUR VETERANS DESERVE MORE THAN TICKETS TO A FOOTBALL GAME

Every year we honor the tens of thousands of CWA veterans among our active and retired members. We honor them not simply on Veterans Day, but by ensuring they have the essential health care and other services they need, whether they are working or retired.

But, as Congress begins to take up the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), we need to ask ourselves, "What does patriotism mean in the 21st century? What is the nature of our democracy, as we recall the sacrifices of so many?"

Vietnam is a major focus of the TPP. Vietnam has a population of 90 million and a minimum wage of 25 cents per hour. Yes, there are 11 other nations involved in the talks, but a major focus of the National Security Council, State Department and the U.S. Trade Representative is increasing U.S. influence in Vietnam.

Manufacturing jobs are already moving from China to Vietnam, as multinational corporations seek lower wages and fewer environmental regulations. Since NAFTA, Presidents Clinton, Bush and now Obama have all told us that exports would grow, yet now we see services jobs, as well as manufacturing jobs, devastated by these deals, as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and multinational corporations cheer on new places to maximize profits.

Why should we expect better from the TPP and a process that includes 600 multinational corporations and no labor, environmental or elected representatives?

We need economic policy, not foreign policy that pretends to be economic policy.

Fair trade means workers' rights to organize and bargain, not just investment rights. It's not just about the loss of our jobs, it's about the effects on our standard of living, as we are forced to choose between cutting pay or exporting our jobs to lower wage nations.

Why have three presidents negotiated terms and conditions that Americans would overwhelmingly reject if we had a voice? Why do we see our veterans honored at an increasing number of events, but not when it comes to their jobs and standard of living?

There are real answers to these questions, and they all start with fighting back. We must say no to trade deals that don't prioritize our rights, our communities, our living standards and our environment. Investment should be based on that platform, not a belief that the sum total of policies benefitting multinational corporations and U.S. foreign policy work out for the rest of us.

Most Democrats and many Republican members of Congress have already told the president that they will oppose the TPP and democracy means transparency, openness and real inclusion of public interests. They have stated they will only support a process with real debate, not fast tracking another trade deal through the Congress without lawmakers' involvement or amendments.

We won't forget the irony of the Vietnamese government becoming a leading party to the TPP negotiations, 40 years after the peace agreement and the sacrifice of so many. This is not about the Vietnamese people, but a government that thinks that workers' rights and environmental and safety concerns are not issues. Let's make this Veterans Day a time to recommit to our values, as we honor those who served and those who work hard every day, whose jobs, living standards and rights are on the line.

Take Action at [cwa-union.org/tpp-veterans](http://cwa-union.org/tpp-veterans)

“ If you read, write, publish, think, listen, dance, sing or invent; if you farm or consume food; if you're ill now or might one day be ill, the TPP has you in its crosshairs.”

– WikiLeaks



## THE TIME IS NOW



RALLIES WERE HELD IN 40 STATES ON THE NATIONAL DAY OF IMMIGRANT DIGNITY AND RESPECT.

CWA and the Democracy Initiative are fighting for comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship.

We've joined forces with the Alliance for Citizenship, a national coalition of unions and community, faith-based, immigrant and civil rights groups, and CASA de Maryland, a large community-based immigration rights and Latino advocacy organization.

Together, we helped organize the historic April 10th rally, which brought out more than 100,000 supporters to the West Lawn of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. And our coalition partners have held lobby days, fly-ins and vigils and initiated 60,000 patch-through calls to 29 targeted senators.

On June 27, the Senate finally passed S.744 by a bipartisan vote of 68-32. But when the House left for its August recess without taking action on immigration reform, the coalition prepared for home district mobilizations targeting 41 Republicans during the summer recess. On Aug. 1, following an act of peaceful civil disobedience, Capitol Hill police arrested 41 immigration reform leaders from CWA, CASA de Maryland, Campaign for Community Change, CHIRLA, AFLCIO, Sierra Club, SEIU and others. Then, over the Labor Day weekend, the labor movement held 170 more events. More than 600,000 people – including 18,000 CWA activists — signed petitions demanding that Boehner move to a vote on immigration reform.

As a direct result of the summer actions, House Democrats introduced H.R. 15, a comprehensive immigration bill modeled after S.744.

House Speaker John Boehner is expected to adjourn without taking any action on immigration reform. On December 12 all Republican members of Congress were visited by activists who delivered this message: Congress failed America but we will be back in 2014.



CWA PRESIDENT LARRY COHEN JOINS FAST4FAMILIES.

# Democracy that Works for All of Us: The Democracy Initiative

One year ago, on Dec. 10, 2012, International Human Rights Day, CWA, Sierra Club, Greenpeace and NAACP launched the Democracy Initiative. Since then, other large membership organizations have signed on, representing 20 million activists.

The Democracy Initiative is focused on three of our four democracy blocks: voting rights, money in politics, and Senate rules reform.

### Senate Rules

CWA and Fix the Senate Now coalition members, a project of the Democracy Initiative, have pushed hard to end obstruction and gridlock in the U.S. Senate and gain reform of the Senate rules.

We won a big victory this past summer, with the confirmation of a fully functioning five-member National Labor Relations Board and leaders for other key agencies, including Richard Cordray to head the Consumer Financial Protection Board.



The Republican minority made no secret of the fact that it didn't want the new financial agency to be able to effectively safeguard consumers' rights; in fact, Republicans didn't want the agency to exist at all.

This summer, our coalition mobilized 2 million activists to contact their Senators to get these nominations through.

In November, mobilization by members of all our organizations resulted in an even bigger win: a change in Senate procedure that means executive and most judicial nominations will be confirmed by majority vote, not the 60 vote supermajority that has been blocking President Obama's nominations for the past five years. [Read more on page 8.]

### Voting Rights

Moral Mondays, led by the NAACP in North Carolina, are demonstrating the power of a broad coalition around voting rights and other democracy issues.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Shelby* decision in June 2013, which struck

down a key part of the Voting Rights Act, many states have been working overtime to restrict voting rights.

The Brennan Center for Justice, which closely follows changes and attempted changes in voting laws, released a list earlier this month of what's been happening in the year since the 2012 presidential election. Among the findings:

- At least 90 restrictive bills have been introduced in 33 states.
- 18 of those bills are still pending in seven states.
- Eight states have already passed nine restrictive bills this session.

North Carolina, Texas, Ohio and other states are looking at new restrictions on voting, including limiting early voting, restricting students from voting in the state they're attending school and other measures aimed at stopping citizens from voting.

We need a system of universal registration in the United States, similar to what most other democracies have.

### Money in Politics

The U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision in 2010 opened the

floodgates to limitless corporate contributions and secret money in elections. During the 2012 election cycle, candidates, parties and outside groups spent \$7 billion.

Citizens United also overturned laws prohibiting employers from forcing employees to listen to their political views. Corporations are not people and shouldn't be extended the rights of individuals.

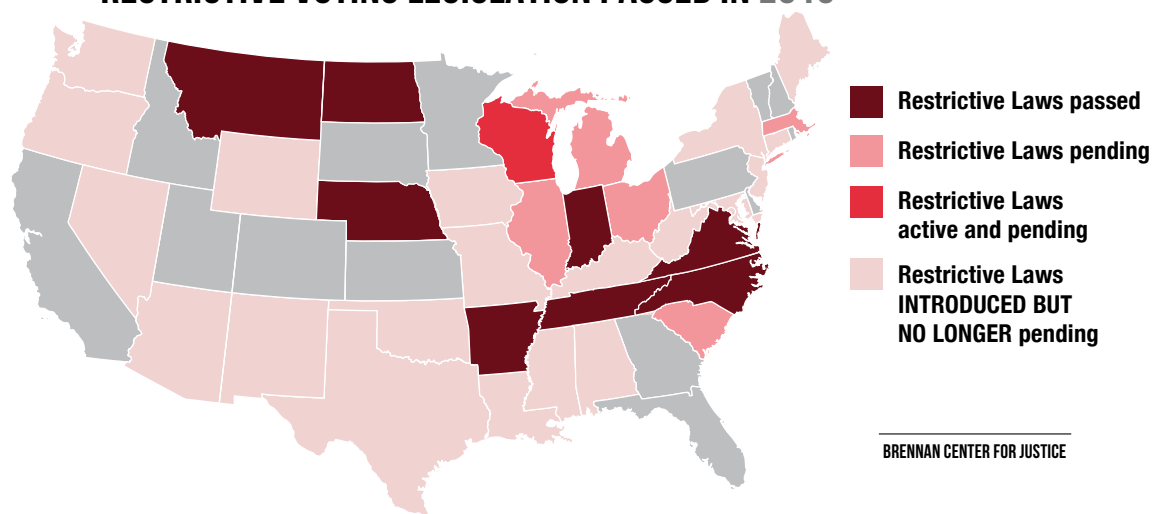
To get rid of this pervasive and corrupting influence of money in politics, elected officials at every level are looking at ways to provide for public financing of candidates.

In New York's state legislature this year, we came close to passing a state public financing law that would have encouraged candidates to seek small donations with public matching funds.

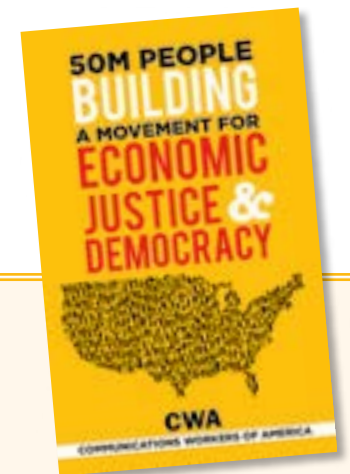
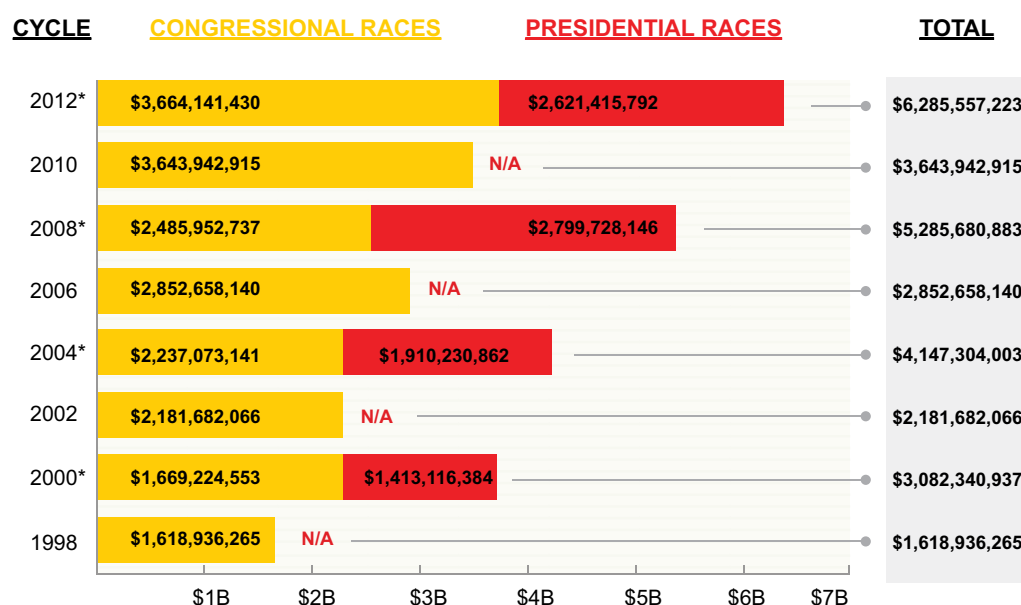
The Democracy Initiative also links national organizations to both state and federal reform efforts. All organizations don't necessarily work on all the campaigns, but do share a broad commitment to breaking through the blocks to democracy to gain economic justice and democracy for all.

Keep up with the latest at [www.democracyforum.org](http://www.democracyforum.org)

## RESTRICTIVE VOTING LEGISLATION PASSED IN 2013



## Total Cost of US Elections (1998 - 2012)



## A HOW-TO FOR ACTIVISTS

Want to learn more about how CWA activists are helping to build a movement for economic justice and democracy? Check out the latest version of our movement building booklet. Download it at [www.cwa-union.org/economicjustice](http://www.cwa-union.org/economicjustice).

This booklet is filled with graphs and charts that make it clear that working families are losing ground, unless we join together with other membership organizations to fight back. Case studies spotlight our successful campaign to mobilize millions and save the NLRB, along with fights we still need to win, on bargaining rights and comprehensive immigration reform.

It also includes more stories to inspire activists. All the stories can be found at [www.cwa-union.org/stories](http://www.cwa-union.org/stories).

## CWA, COALITION HELP RESTORE DEMOCRACY TO U.S. SENATE

**In November, Senate Majority Leader Reid and nearly every Democratic Senator acted to end Senate gridlock and obstruction on Presidential nominations.**

Republicans had continued to block votes on qualified executive and judicial nominees as part of a larger strategy to undermine laws and agencies they disagree with, and to deny President Obama his constitutional authority to fill vacancies.

Finally, Reid and most Democrats said “enough” and followed a procedural action that now calls for majority votes on the President’s executive and most judicial nominations, not the 60-vote supermajority that has been abused and applied to nearly all Senate business, including a motion to recess.

CWA President Larry Cohen pointed out that “the Senate action re-enforces the intent of Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution, which clearly states that the Senate’s obligation of advice and consent is based on majority support, not super majority support. This is a good first step toward restoring a Senate that functions as an integral part of our democracy.”

Contrary to Republican claims, the procedure used by Leader Reid isn’t new and there’s nothing “nuclear” or revolutionary about it. Instead, it is the Republicans’ recent strategy of preventing up or down votes on qualified nominees without respect to their merits that has been a radical departure from Senate history.

Most recently, the Republican minority has refused to move to an up-or-down vote on President Obama’s nominations to the D.C. Circuit Court and there are at least 100 other nominations awaiting Senate action.

Patricia Millett, Nina Pillard, and Judge Robert Wilkins have all received the highest possible rating from the non-partisan American Bar Association. They have broad bipartisan support, and no one has questioned their qualifications. Senate Republicans have blocked all three from getting a yes-or-no vote and have made no secret as to why: Senate Republicans don’t want any appointments by President Obama to this court.

The same is true for executive nominations, including that of Rep. Mel Watt (D-N.C.) to head the Federal Housing Finance Administration, an agency whose work is critical to the effort to stop unfair foreclosures. The Senate minority’s refusal to go forward on Watt’s nomination marks the first time that has a sitting member of Congress has been blocked from getting an up-or-down vote on a nomination.

# Senate Rules: How We Got It Done

After months of Republican empty promises and broken agreements and with hundreds of nominations still waiting for a vote, Leader Reid and most Democrats decided that something had to give.

Last summer, 2 million members of Fix the Senate Now organizations mobilized to make sure the Senate confirmed a full, five-member National Labor Relations Board and leaders for top agencies including Richard Cordray to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and Gina McCarthy to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

Now, with the Senate minority again refusing to move forward on qualified nominations to the D.C. Circuit court, activists from CWA, Alliance for Justice, Sierra Club, Common Cause, USAction, Daily Kos, NAACP, UAW, NY Citizen Action, Working Families Party and others again revved up mobilization, with 200,000 members of those groups generating calls and emails to their Democratic senators with the message: “enough is enough, it’s time to fix the Senate.”

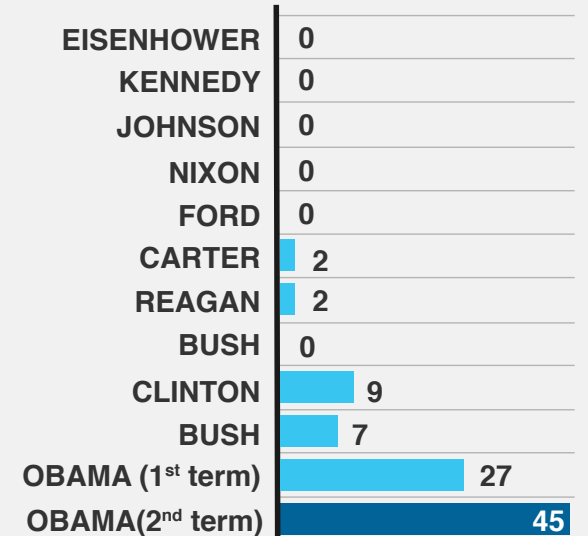
It worked.

Now, CWA President Larry Cohen said that the Democracy Initiative will continue the fight to real reform of the filibuster.

**“Senators who want to filibuster should have to talk, for hours, at the minimum, like Wendy Davis did in the Texas legislature. Under the current rules, an individual senator can hold up the Senate’s business and deny filibuster cloture without even speaking on the Senate floor. That’s not what democracy looks like,”** Cohen said.

Fix the Senate is a project of the Democracy Initiative, a group representing 20 million members.

## CLOTURE VOTES ON EXECUTIVE NOMINEES



Source: People for the American Way

Cloture votes are taken to move legislation and nominations to the Senate floor for discussion and a final vote.



## What They’re Saying

“It’s now the Republicans who will have to do the persuading. And that’s the way it should be. If you are the minority party, it means you have failed to win adequate public support. The burden naturally should fall to you, as the minority party, to argue your case persuasively.”

- Dallas Morning-News

**“Today’s vote...was necessary to turn the Senate back into a functioning legislative body.”**

- New York Times

“Now a minority of senators will be free to vote against a president’s nominees but not to prevent a vote from being taken. That’s a victory not just for the Democrats but for good government.”

- Los Angeles Times

**“That no deal was possible this time shows the depth of Senate dysfunction. It was time to give rule by a simple majority a try.”**

- Newsday

**“Both parties have abused the filibuster rule over the past decade, but Republicans have raised the abuse to an art form ... We’re not fond of invoking the Founding Fathers at every turn, but we think they’d have been on Reid’s side Thursday.”**

- San Jose Mercury News

“By abusing the filibuster to an unprecedented degree, Senate Republicans brought about the reasonable changes they are now fuming over. Throughout President Barack Obama’s administration, Republicans have used the filibuster to keep judicial seats vacant and federal agencies leaderless by denying nominees an up-or-down vote for confirmation. This is contrary to the Senate’s constitutional advise-and-consent role, and it erodes the authority of the president.”

- Tampa Bay Times