

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates and Chesapeake Beach Consulting
DATE: January 27, 2014
RE: National Survey on Fast-Track Authority for TPP Trade Pact

From January 14 to 18, 2014, Hart Research Associates and Chesapeake Beach Consulting conducted a national survey among 816 registered voters on behalf of Communication Workers of America, Sierra Club, and the U.S. Business and Industry Council. The poll's margin of error is ± 3.5 percentage points. The survey measures voters' views on proposed fast-track negotiating authority for the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, and this memo reports the survey's key findings.

1) The voting public strongly opposes having Congress pass fast-track authority for consideration of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal. By more than two to one, voters say they oppose (62%) rather than favor passage of fast-track negotiating authority for the TPP deal. Among those with a strong opinion, the ratio climbs to more than three to one (43% strongly opposed, just 12% strongly favorable). Demographically, opposition is very broad, with no more than one-third of voters in any region of the country or in any age cohort favoring fast track. Sixty percent (60%) of voters with household incomes under \$50,000 oppose fast track, as do 65% of those with incomes over \$100,000.

As you may know, the Obama administration is now negotiating a new free trade agreement with 12 Pacific nations called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Congress will soon decide whether to give the president "fast-track" authority for these negotiations, which would mean that once the administration's negotiations are completed, Congress must take an up-or-down vote on the agreement as a whole, and could not make any amendments or changes in the agreement. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose having Congress give the president fast-track authority for a new Pacific trade agreement?

While opposition is relatively uniform both geographically and demographically, the survey data reveals a sharp partisan divide on the issue. Republicans overwhelmingly oppose giving fast-track authority to the president (8% in favor, 87% opposed), as do independents (20%-66%), while a narrow majority (52%) of Democrats are in favor (35% opposed).

The survey goes on to simulate a public debate over the merits of fast track and the proposed TPP trade deal, by presenting each respondent with an equal number of arguments made by organizations supporting and opposing fast track. Respondents indicate whether they find each argument convincing, and then have the opportunity to express a more fully informed judgment on the issue of fast-

track authority. **However, voters' informed judgment is the same as their initial response: overwhelming opposition to fast track.**

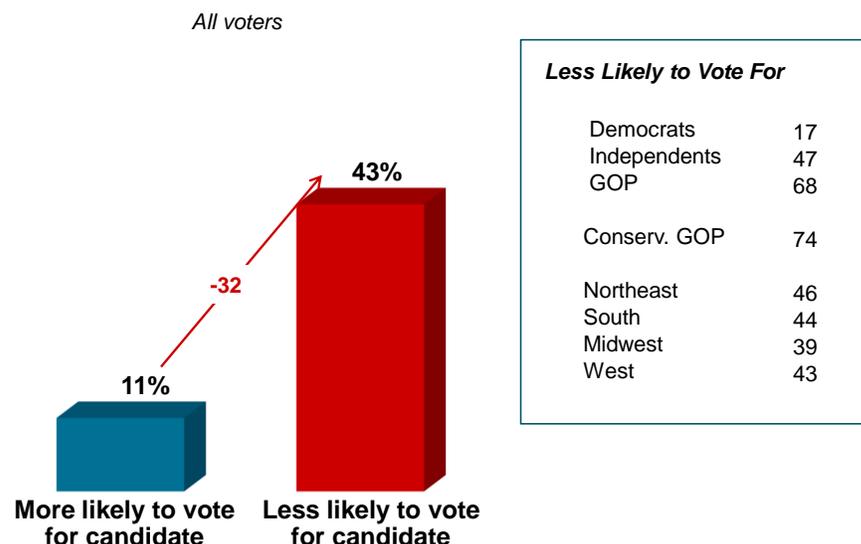
- At least 50% of voters find eight different opponent arguments to be very or fairly convincing (more than 60% for four of them), but not a single argument by supporters meets that standard.
- After hearing this extensive debate, the public rejects fast track by a slightly larger margin: 65% express opposition, including 45% who are strongly opposed.

2) Members of Congress who vote to approve fast-track authority—especially Republicans—are taking a substantial political risk. Fully 43% of voters say they are less likely to vote to reelect a Member of Congress who supports fast-track authority, while just 11% feel more motivated to vote for this candidate (the remainder say it will not affect their vote either way). A vote for fast track constitutes a clear political liability among the kind of voters who will determine the outcome of 2014 races. Those less likely to vote for a fast-track supporter include these groups:

- 47% of independents (10% more likely)
- 48% of undecided 2014 voters (6% more likely)
- 53% of non-college white voters (8% more likely)

Political Risk for Members of Congress Who Support Fast Track

If a Member of Congress voted in favor of giving the president fast-track negotiating authority for the Pacific trade agreement, in the next election I would be:



Even before having to defend a vote for fast track before general election voters, Republican candidates in contested primaries may find this a hard position to defend. Two-thirds (68%) of Republicans say they are less likely to vote for a Member of Congress who votes to give President Obama fast-track authority. Among the conservative Republicans who dominate many primary electorates, this figure is an extraordinary 74%.

3) Voters are deeply troubled by the fast-track process, beyond any concerns they have with a prospective Pacific trade deal. The argument against approving fast track for the TPP deal that proves most convincing to voters focuses on the fast-track process itself: "Fast track gives the president too much power. Congress should meet its constitutional responsibility to review trade agreements carefully and make sure they are in the best interests of American workers and consumers." Fully 69% of voters say this is a convincing reason to oppose fast-track authorization.

And when voters hear a debate over the merits of the fast-track process, the case for fast track proves completely unpersuasive:

Congress should approve fast-track authority, as it has several times before, because it's impossible to negotiate a deal among 12 nations if each country's legislature can amend the agreement. Fast-track authority allows the president to negotiate agreements while preserving Congress's crucial role in reviewing and ratifying agreements, just as the Constitution calls for (27% agree), OR

Fast-track authority has been denied before, and should be denied now because it would give the president too much power by forcing Congress to make a take-it-or-leave-it decision on a 29-chapter, 1,000-page agreement. Congress should meet its responsibility, review the agreement carefully, and make sure it is in the best interests of American workers and consumers. It's more important to do trade deals right than fast (68% agree).

Republicans and conservatives especially believe that fast-track authority gives the president too much power. Among Republicans, 87% find the argument that fast track gives the president too much power a very or fairly convincing reason to oppose fast-track authority (85% among conservatives). Similarly, 61% of Republicans say their single greatest concern about Congress giving the president fast-track authority is that it would give the president too much power (64% among conservatives).

4) Americans believe that fast track will yield a TPP pact that will lower American wages and cost the United States jobs.

- Two-thirds (66%) say a convincing reason to oppose fast-track authority for TPP is that "workers in countries like Vietnam and Malaysia are exploited and paid as little as 28 cents an hour, which creates unfair competition that drives down wages for American workers."

Hart Research Associates

- By a 35-point margin, the voting public believes the TPP deal would make things worse (56%) rather than better (21%) in terms of American wages and salaries.
- Three in five voters (62%) feel this is a convincing argument against fast-track authority: "This is a NAFTA-style trade deal, and since NAFTA, the United States has run up an eight-trillion-dollar trade deficit, resulting in millions of lost manufacturing jobs."
- Voters are three times as likely to say that preventing U.S. jobs moving overseas should be a top goal for trade deals as they are to cite opening foreign markets to U.S. exports.
- By a five-to-three ratio, voters anticipate that the TPP deal would make things worse (52%) rather than better (30%) for American jobs.

5) Americans worry that TPP will undermine environmental protections and put consumer safety at risk.

- By a substantial margin (30 points), voters believe that the TPP deal would make things worse environmentally (48%) rather than better (18%). Among voters under age 35, 54% feel that TPP would have an adverse environmental impact.
- Half (50%) of voters nationally say that a convincing reason to reject fast-track authority is that "the proposed trade deal would allow foreign corporations to attack U.S. environmental laws and public health laws that protect clean air and clean water."
- Two-thirds (66%) of voters find this statement to be a convincing argument against fast-track authority: "The trade deal would greatly expand food imports from Vietnam and Malaysia, even though hundreds of exports have already been detained due to health threats like salmonella and E. coli, and the FDA is only able to inspect 2% of these imports."
- Fully 63% think TPP will do more harm than good when it comes to the safety of imported food products.

6) Voters worry that the TPP deal would be a boon for large corporations, but would harm America's small businesses.

- American voters overwhelmingly expect TPP to be a good deal for large corporations: 72% say it will help these corporations and just 17% say it will hurt them.
- However, voters have the opposite expectation when it comes to a vastly more popular institution: America's small businesses. Just 24% feel that TPP would help small firms, while 64% think TPP will mostly hurt small businesses.

- Significantly, voters in small business households (in which a voter either owns or works for a small business) believe that TPP will harm small firms: 61% say they expect TPP to hurt more than help small businesses.

Voters Believe TPP Will Help Large Corporations, But Hurt America's Small Businesses

