



# PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO

RICHARD W. BLOOMINGDALE  
*President*

FRANK SNYDER  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

May 13, 2019

Dear Representative:

The Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, on behalf of the 700,000 hardworking women and men we represent, asks that you **OPPOSE** House Resolution 248. House Resolution 248 was introduced by Mark Keller and it calls upon Congress to ratify the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement on Trade (USMCA). The House Commerce Committee has scheduled a voting meeting for this resolution this Wednesday, May 15.

Initially, reports that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would be renegotiated raised workers' hopes. To this day, such hopes remain dashed. The business community is all too content to ramrod its successor, USMCA, through Congress without due input from labor. So presently without changes to create enforceable labor & environmental standards, and reduce medicine costs, the AFL-CIO will have no choice but to try to defeat USMCA, much as we did with the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

That the choice is simply between corporate-dominated trade rules and xenophobic economic isolation is what logicians call a false disjunction. Provisions for trade rules lifting wages and treating all countries fairly are certainly feasible. The AFL-CIO's priorities are threefold:

First of all, a truly robust economy is one accommodating the living standards and well-being of citizens generally. The defenders of corporate-dominated trade rules all too often portray trade as an end in itself. But far from being something to be valued on its own account, trade is merely a *means*, not an end. By that criterion, NAFTA was a catastrophe, resulting in the outsourcing of many quality jobs.

Second, you cannot fault countries for making their own national interests a priority. USMCA hardly improves much upon NAFTA in stemming the flow of U.S. jobs to Mexico across all sectors, including aerospace, electronics, appliances, food processing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) products, paint finishing systems and booths, and other manufacturing.

Third, it is not reasonable to blame the public in any country for its concern that powerful private interests will be intent on their own narrow gains at the expense of those of the citizens generally. Since NAFTA's inception a quarter of a century ago, workers in all three NAFTA countries have witnessed a race to the bottom, finding it more challenging to form unions. Income inequality continues to grow. Monopolies become ever more formidable, and the United States is confronting a growing trade deficit contrary to this Administration's assurances otherwise.

In addition to stipulations providing for trade rules lifting wages and treating all countries fairly, it is crucial that USMCA include upfront guarantees of sufficient resources for enforcement, mandatory monitoring and reporting, and assuring prompt action should violations occur. This entails a guaranteed funding stream. Workers must also have the means to intervene in those circumstances where governments take no initiative to do so. USMCA is devoid of all these requirements, and so we have no confidence that there will be any real changes in the terms of trade.

The AFL-CIO is more than willing to be at the table with the Administration and Congress to improve trade for working people. However, our support for any final deal is conditional upon our confidence that the eventual pact will sufficiently accommodate working families and the American economy generally. At present, the labor movement is united in its judgment that USMCA does not sufficiently improve upon NAFTA.

Please **OPPOSE** House Resolution 248. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact our Legislative Director, Chad Trainer, at 717-231-2842, or via email at [ctrainer@paaficio.org](mailto:ctrainer@paaficio.org).

Sincerely,  
Richard W. Bloomingdale, President  
Frank Snyder, Secretary-Treasurer

600 NORTH SECOND STREET, HARRISBURG, PA 17101 - (717) 238-9351 - (717) 238-8541

WEBSITE: [www.paaficio.org](http://www.paaficio.org)

E-MAIL: [info@paaficio.org](mailto:info@paaficio.org)