



Written by [Larry Greenley](#) on April 27, 2016

## Movement to Stop TPP by Canceling Lame Duck

Given the anti-TPP presidential campaign rhetoric from the leading candidates of both major political parties this year, supporters of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact are concluding that [their only chance of getting Congress to approve the TPP](#) will be during the lame-duck session after the November elections.



They know that during these lame-duck sessions of Congress, customarily held every two years after congressional elections and before a new Congress begins in the following January, accountability to the voters is at a minimum. First of all, many of those attending a lame-duck session have already retired or been defeated. They're not going to be very concerned about what the voters back home will think of their votes. Secondly, even those congressmen who will still be serving in the next Congress won't have to worry much about what their constituents think, because all of the representatives and one-third of the senators won't stand for election again for nearly two years, and the other two-thirds of the senators won't face the voters again for either four or six years.

In light of the greatly reduced accountability to voters during lame-duck sessions, they should not be held at all except for true national emergencies, and then only to take appropriate action for such emergencies. A vote on approving a trade deal should never be held during a lame-duck session. Such trade agreements should be either voted on before the two-year elections or after the new Congress is seated in January following the elections.

The reason why we shouldn't allow a vote on the TPP agreement to happen in the easier-going environment of a lame-duck session is that the TPP is so dangerous to our national sovereignty and our jobs.

Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) [has warned about the global governance danger posed by the TPP:](#)

Among the TPP's endless pages are rules for labor, environment, immigration and every aspect of global commerce — and a new international regulatory structure to promulgate, implement, and enforce these rules.... This new structure is known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership Commission — a Pacific Union — which meets, appoints unelected bureaucrats, adopts rules, and changes the agreement after adoption.



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*The New American* [has exposed just how inaccurate the deceptive rosy economic “forecasts” were](#) about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and how the very same forecasters are now projecting rosy economic outcomes for the TPP:

As with NAFTA and every other pseudo-free trade agreement, there are many politicians, lobbyists, and think tanks making pie-in-the-sky claims that TPP ... will usher in new prosperity and a wave of good-paying jobs. We’ve been there before. In 1993, the Peterson Institute for International Economics [PIIE] released its influential study, “NAFTA: An Assessment,” which predicted that “with NAFTA, U.S. exports to Mexico will continue to outstrip Mexican exports to the United States, leading to a U.S. trade surplus with Mexico of about \$7 (billion) to \$9 billion annually by 1995.” It also predicted that the U.S. trade surplus with Mexico would increase to \$12 billion annually between 2000 and 2010. The actual result was quite different.

In 1993, the year before NAFTA went into effect, the United States had a \$1.66 billion trade surplus with Mexico; by 1995, the first year after NAFTA had entered into force, that changed to a \$15.8 billion deficit. By 2000, that annual deficit had soared to \$24.5 billion, and by 2007 it hit \$74.7 billion. For 2014, our trade deficit with Mexico dipped to only \$53.8 billion.... Our trade deficits with Canada have followed a similar path since adoption of NAFTA.

The PIIE authors and other pseudo-free trade propagandists had cherry-picked data and simply invented statistics to fraudulently sell their product: NAFTA. If they were car salesmen, they would have gone to jail for fraud and misrepresentation. Instead, they are back doing the same thing, concocting rosy statistics to sell the TPP.

Although Republican congressmen currently support so-called free trade agreements to a much greater extent than Democratic congressmen, a [recent Pew poll](#) shows that only 40 percent of Republican voters think “free trade” agreements are a good thing versus 52 percent who think they’re a bad thing. For Democratic voters, 60 percent think “free trade” agreements are a good thing versus 30 percent who think they’re a bad thing. Obviously, anti-TPP Republican voters need to make the Republican representatives and senators running for election this year more aware of just how unpopular such “free trade” agreements are among Republicans.

In March and April there have been a spate of articles about an encouraging movement among conservatives in Congress that is being supported by various conservative organizations to cancel this year’s lame-duck session in order to prevent congressional approval of the TPP. An example of this is [“Why conservatives want to cancel Congress’s lame-duck session, explained,”](#) published by the *Washington Post* on March 30. According to the *Post* article,

Former House historian Ray Smock says canceling the lame-duck session would be unprecedented but not illegal. Congress can set its own schedule, so if both House and Senate leaders agree not to meet, they can simply not meet.

That a congressional approval of the TPP could still happen this year in spite of all the anti-TPP presidential campaign rhetoric was shown by [President Obama’s remarks during a press conference](#) in Germany on April 24:

With respect to Congress and Trans-Pacific Partnership, I think after the primary season is over the politics settle down a little bit in Congress, and we’ll be in a position to start moving forward. Because I know that we have had a majority of members in the past who were in favor of this deal. Otherwise we wouldn’t have gotten the authority for me to go ahead and fast-track this agreement.



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So, the task for supporters of this movement to prevent approval of the TPP in a lame-duck session this year is simply to generate enough pressure on the House and Senate leaders to get them to cancel this year's lame-duck session. One way to do this would be to find a way to insert into the presidential campaigns this idea of stopping the TPP by canceling the lame-duck session, which would make it possible for the new president in 2017 to veto any TPP approval in the new Congress.

[The John Birch Society has set up a legislative alert](#) to enable anti-TPP citizens to easily phone and e-mail their representative and senators and request their support for stopping the TPP by canceling this year's lame-duck session.



*This is a revised and updated version of "[No Lame Duck TPP Trade Deal](#)," which was originally published at [JBS.org](#) and is reposted here with permission.*



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