



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 10, 2025

## Years-old Democrat Pro-tariff Tirades Go Viral as Dems Fight Trump Tariffs

The Democrats' once-vociferous endorsement of high tariffs on foreign countries has evaporated. Fizzled. Gone kaput.

The reason: President Donald Trump's recent imposition of tariffs, and particularly high tariffs on China, something Trump has advocated for years. Yet if Trump is for it, Democrats must oppose it, even if opposing it makes no sense.

Thus did White House spokesman Karoline Leavitt read back Representative Nancy Pelosi's pro-tariff tirade of 1996, while others pulled up quotes from Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and socialist Bernie Sanders of Vermont.



AP Images  
Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi

REPORTER: "Schumer and Pelosi have been talking tariffs for decades. How come when these Democrat elites want tariffs, everything's hunky-dory, but when Trump wants tariffs, all hell breaks loose?"

TRUMP: "I love this guy, whoever the hell that is."

□  
[pic.twitter.com/GiTReoXE3j](https://pic.twitter.com/GiTReoXE3j)

— Benny Johnson (@bennyjohnson) [April 9, 2025](#)

### Tariff Tussle

Trump is taking heat for imposing tariffs on Mexico, Canada, and other nations in an [executive order on April 2](#). The president laid out the reasons the targets of the import tax must pay up:

Citing the World Trade Organization, Trump explained that "the United States has among the lowest simple average [Most Favored Nation] tariff rates in the world at 3.3 percent, while many of our key trading partners like Brazil (11.2 percent), China (7.5 percent), the European Union (EU) (5 percent), India (17 percent), and Vietnam (9.4 percent) have simple average MFN tariff rates that are significantly higher."

And some tariffs, such as those on cars, are worse than others, [he continued](#):

Moreover, these average MFN tariff rates conceal much larger discrepancies across



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economies in tariff rates applied to particular products. For example, the United States imposes a 2.5 percent tariff on passenger vehicle imports (with internal combustion engines), while the European Union (10 percent), India (70 percent), and China (15 percent) impose much higher duties on the same product. For network switches and routers, the United States imposes a 0 percent tariff, but for similar products, India (10 percent) levies a higher rate. Brazil (18 percent) and Indonesia (30 percent) impose a higher tariff on ethanol than does the United States (2.5 percent). For rice in the husk, the U.S. MFN tariff is 2.7 percent (ad valorem equivalent), while India (80 percent), Malaysia (40 percent), and Turkey (an average of 31 percent) impose higher rates. Apples enter the United States duty-free, but not so in Turkey (60.3 percent) and India (50 percent).

Trump also explained that the nation lost five million manufacturing jobs between 1997 and 2024, a trend that must be reversed.

Thus did Trump order reciprocal [ad valorem tariffs](#) on trading partners that start at 10 percent and [rise accordingly](#).

China's was 34 percent. Yesterday, [Trump boosted](#) the tariff on China, and [today punished](#) the nation with a 125-percent tariff and suspended other import taxes for 90 days. The [stock market](#) jumped 9.5 percent.

## **Deranged Democrats**

Democrats are beside themselves. A symptom of Trump Derangement Syndrome is opposing anything Trump does.

Though Schumer says Trump must be tough on China, he can't be too tough. Thus the effort to stop Trump's tariffs with legislation.

"Make no mistake — the president's ill-conceived and chaotic trade war is nothing but a tax on American families," [Schumer complained](#):

Trump is leading America headfirst into a recession, with no plans on how to right the cratering economy. The Senate has the power and authority to stop this madness and we have a duty to act in a bipartisan way to repeal these tariffs, which is why I am proud to co-sponsor this legislation. It's time for Republicans to stand up for American families, lower costs, save seniors' retirement funds, and prevent a global economic crisis.

[Schumer is](#) particularly concerned about the tariff's effect on New York.

Pelosi clubbed Trump with words from former President Reagan.

"The Trump Administration's flagrant ineptitude is tanking our economy in a self-inflicted disaster that leaves hardworking American families bearing the brunt of the pain," she said. "Make no mistake: President Trump's senseless tariffs will drive prices higher, drain retirement savings and push us to the brink of recession."

Reagan, she noted, proclaimed that the Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930 triggered the Great Depression. "We should beware of the demagogues who are ready to declare a trade war against our friends — weakening our economy, our national security, and the entire free world — all while cynically waving



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the American flag,” said Reagan, [who imposed](#) a 45 percent tariff on imported motorcycles to save Harley Davidson, the last motorcycle manufacturer in America.

“President Reagan’s words were true then and they’re true today. Hopefully Trump and our Republican colleagues will heed his wisdom,” Pelosi concluded.

[Sanders complained](#) that tariffs on Canada would harm Vermont.

## Words From the Past

Years ago, the three warbled a different tune, as Leavitt noted in a presser.

“In fact, Democrats have long said that the United States of America has been ripped off by the countries around the world,” she said. “They just don’t want to admit it now because it’s President Trump who is saying that.”

Continued Leavitt:

In June of 1996, Nancy Pelosi spoke on the House floor. She urged her colleagues at the time to fight against the status quo trade policies that had contributed to America’s trade deficit with China. In fact, Nancy Pelosi said, “How far does China have to go? How much more repression, how big a trade deficit, how many jobs have to be lost for the American workers, how much dangerous proliferation has to exist, before members of this House of Representatives will say, ‘I will not endorse the status quo.’”

Those are the words of Nancy Pelosi in 1996. Well, President Trump is finally answering her call 27 years later. Nancy Pelosi can thank President Trump today for the 104% retaliatory tariff that will be going into effect on China.

☐SHOCKING: Senator [@ChuckSchumer](#) passionately advocates for a 27.5% tariff on China in 2005!

"It says to the Chinese that their unfair trade policies have got to end. The Chinese have enjoyed a yuge trade surplus with the U.S. Every year it gets larger and larger."

"Much of... [pic.twitter.com/IzjFbHPih](https://pic.twitter.com/IzjFbHPih)

— KanekoaTheGreat (@KanekoaTheGreat) [April 7, 2025](#)

Schumer expected a nearly 30-percent tariff on China.

“It says to the Chinese that their unfair trade policies have got to end,” Schumer said on the Senate floor. Schumer wanted to threaten the Chinese with “dramatic consequences.”

“The Chinese have enjoyed a huge trade surplus with the United States.... Every year it gets larger and larger and larger,” he continued.

That trade surplus, he said, “is because the Chinese don’t play fair”:

They don’t let our goods into their country. I can tell you company after company in New York who cannot sell goods in China or can only sell the goods under impossible conditions.



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Schumer said the Chinese steal American intellectual property as well, and rig their currency to get an advantage in trade, which in turn means huge job losses for Americans, notably in manufacturing.

“We are fed up,” Schumer said. “How can we stand by as millions of American workers lose their jobs? As thousands of American companies can’t compete fairly?” he added. “As our country as a whole has wealth drained from it?”

Sanders denounced free-trade ideology in a Senate floor speech in 2008.

Conservative free-traders want a policy of “unfettered free trade,” he said. “We don’t need tariffs. What we need is to allow corporate America the freedom ... to throw American workers out on the street ... because somehow ... we are going to create wealth in America, and good paying jobs in America, as we shut down plants, we move to China — corporations there pay workers 20, 30 cents an hour and we bring the product back into this country.

- 1) 1996 Nancy Pelosi encourages all of Congress to back reciprocal tariffs
- 2) 2008 Bernie Sanders wants tariffs, says jobs are going overseas
- 3) 2018 Barack Obama calls for reciprocal tariffs
- 4) 1988 Donald Trump says foreign countries must pay tariffs

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— Wall Street Apes (@WallStreetApes) [April 4, 2025](#)

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