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To: Public Citizen

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Opposition to trade and TPP grows over course of campaign

Democracy Corps and GQR conducted a national survey for Public Citizen on attitudes towards trade and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the multi-nation trade agreement that President Obama may be sent to Congress for consideration immediately after the election.¹

The results are challenging for the proponents of the agreement, as the opposition of both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the general election campaign has raised awareness and increased opposition. The scale of change starts with Democrats, speeds up with independents and becomes a torrent with Republicans.

The proponents are losing the public debate. We tested the administration's argument as well as the opponents' argument against, and the results are dramatic across the board. The more the issue is debated, the more opinion moves against.

After hearing a simulated trade debate, 68 percent of Republicans say they are less likely to support a Member of Congress voting for TPP, 34 percent with intensity. This changes the ball game long-term for Republicans. While this sentiment is strongest among Republicans, it spans the political spectrum. Overall six out of 10 voters are ready to punish a "yes" vote on TPP, saying they are less likely to vote for a Member of Congress who votes to pass the TPP, and 28 percent saying they are much less likely to vote for that Member. That includes a plurality of Democrats who view TPP as a potential stain on President Obama's legacy and want their member to vote no in the lame duck.

Presidential campaign shifts views on trade

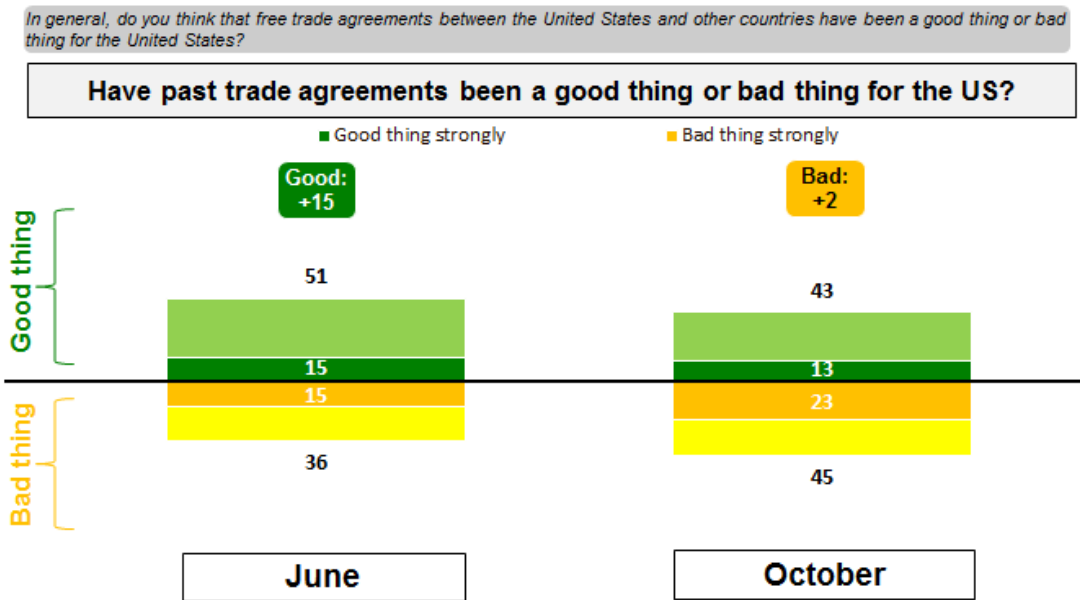
The attention on trade and TPP during the general election campaign has increased negativity about trade in principle and views of TPP. This spring, voters said that in general, free trade agreements had been a good thing for the United States by a 15-point margin; today, a plurality

¹ This national survey took place October 21-24, 2016. Respondents who voted in the 2012 election or registered since were selected from the national voter file. Likely voters were determined based on stated intention of voting next month. Margin of error for the full sample is +/-3.27 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Of the 900 respondents, 65 percent were interviewed via cell phone to accurately sample the American electorate.

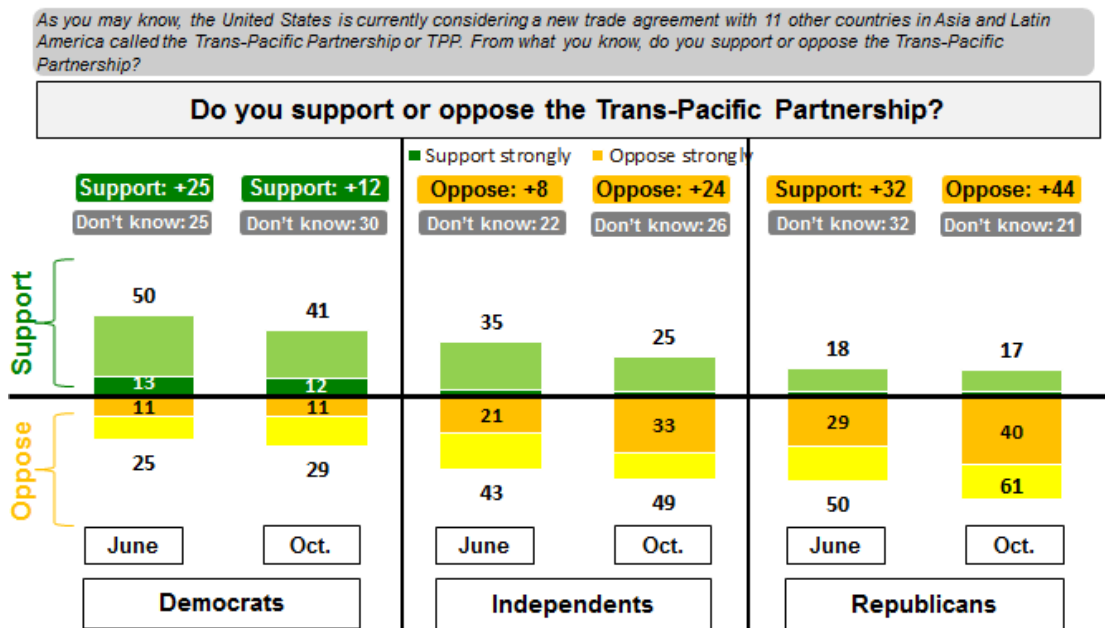


of voters say past trade deals have been a bad thing for the United States (45 percent) and there is growing intensity as well.

When it comes to their family’s financial situation, voters say trade agreements have been more harmful than helpful by a 7-point margin (38 percent harmful, 31 percent helpful). More impressively, there is agreement across class, race and party lines that trade deals cost American jobs. A 53 percent majority say free trade agreements lead to job losses and only 14 percent say they create American jobs.



There has also been a significant shift against TPP, both in terms of overall feeling and support. As knowledge of TPP has risen 10 points, unfavorable views of TPP have also risen 10 points to 37 percent (24 percent don’t know, 20 percent remain neutral, and 20 percent support). Accordingly, the advantage for opponents of TPP has risen from 3-points to 15-points since June, with one-quarter strongly opposed. The shift is evident across the electorate, particularly with Republicans, but also independents and even Democrats – their margin of support has been cut in half.



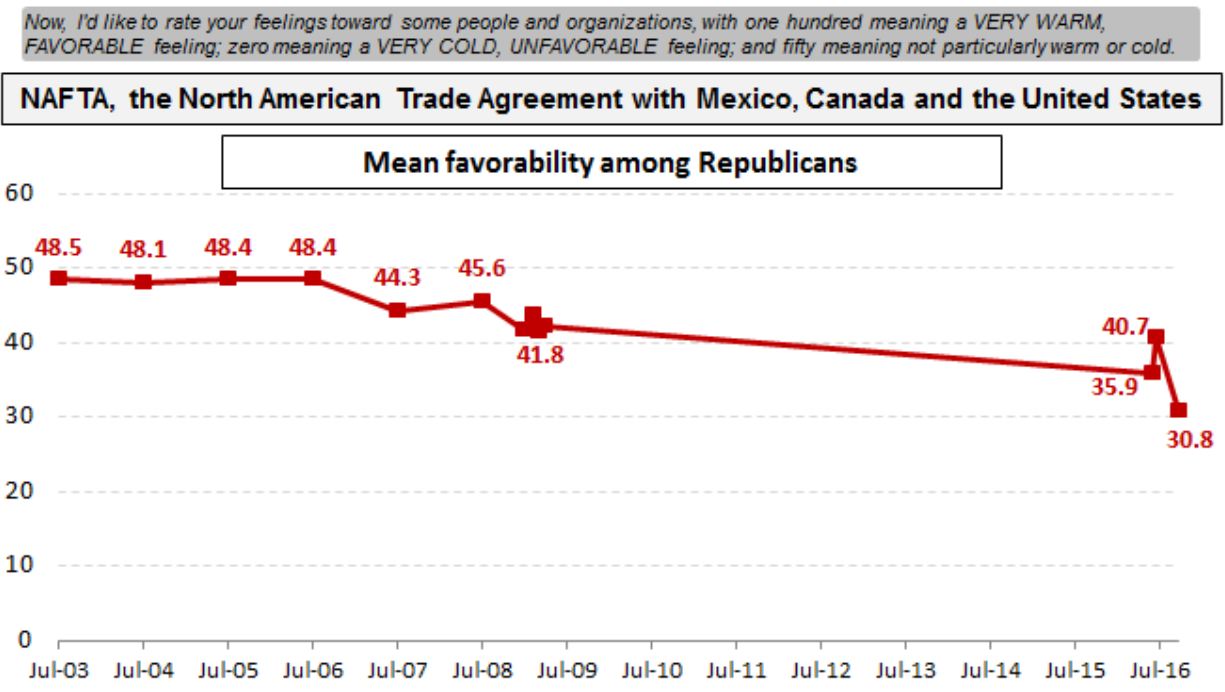


Growing and intensifying opposition among Republican voters

While the growing negativity about trade agreements in principle and the TPP specifically is bipartisan, the biggest story is what is happening within the voting base of the Republican Party.

This spring, Republicans were already those most opposed to past trade agreements in principle and NAFTA and TPP in specific – but their opposition has moved to a new level. Almost two-thirds of Republicans say past trade agreements have been a bad thing, up from 48 percent in June, and negative views of NAFTA have risen sharply from 47 percent unfavorable to 58 percent unfavorable (47 percent strongly). Only 21 percent of Republicans are unsure about TPP, down from 32 percent this spring, and as their awareness has grown so has their opposition has deepened to 61 percent, 40 percent strongly, from 50 percent in June.

This is not a casual alignment with Trump, like on other issues. This reflects pre-Trump long-term trends in the GOP base starting back in 2006. The opposition within the GOP base has reached an intensity that would be hard to match on many issues.



Republicans are now ready to punish leaders who push new trade deals like TPP. After hearing a simulated trade debate, 68 percent of Republicans say they are less likely to support a Member of Congress voting for TPP, 34 percent with intensity. This changes the ball game long-term for Republicans.

TPP proponents losing the trade debate

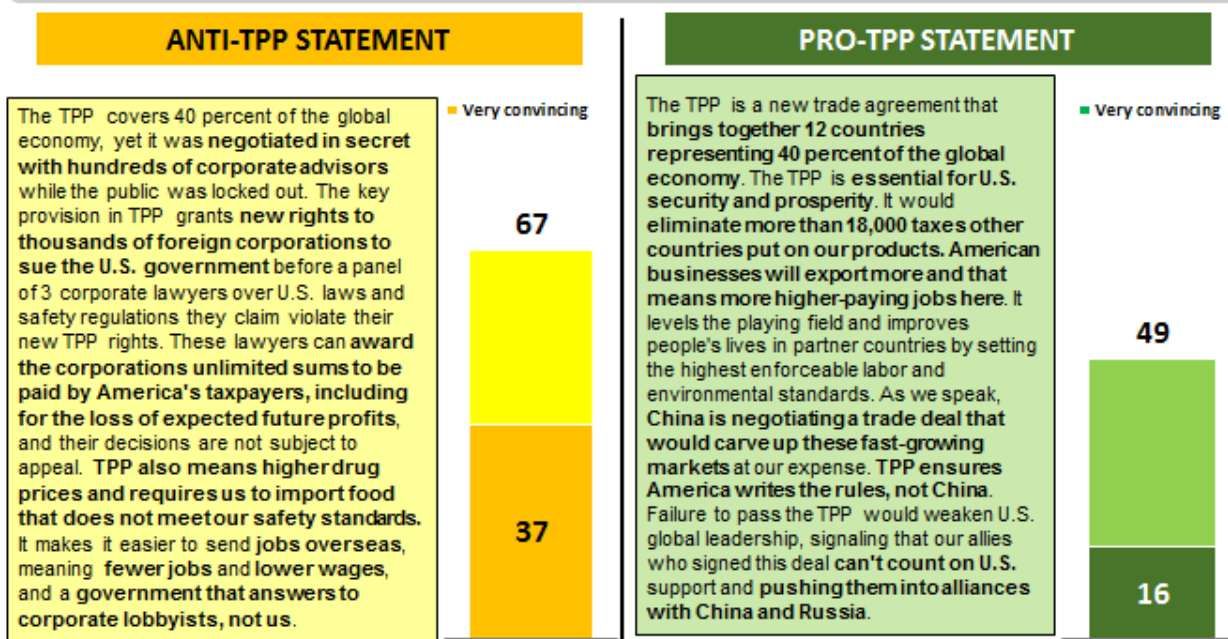
We read voters the strongest arguments put forward by TPP proponents and opponents, and the results were dramatic. Just as we have seen over the course of the general election, the more vot-



ers hear about the proposed new trade agreement, the more they side with the opposition. The arguments were of the same duration and the pro-TPP argument was provided first.

To reflect the intensifying shift in the proponents' case towards foreign policy arguments, the pro-TPP case uses the forceful language put forward in recent months by the administration that warns of the threat to America's global standing and security if we fail to pass this agreement. It also includes the often repeated language about the TPP eliminating tariffs and expanding markets for U.S. goods, creating more U.S. jobs, while establishing new labor and environmental standards. Even though this argument is attributed to President Obama (who has a 56 percent approval rating in this survey), the argument from opponents is much more powerful: two-thirds find the opposition argument convincing compared to just half who say so of the proponents' position.

Now, I'm going to read you what some economists, consumer groups and political leaders who OPPOSE the agreement / President Obama, some Republican leaders and major American businesses who SUPPORT the agreement are saying about it./Is that a very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE/SUPPORT the TPP?



In part, the public reaction to the opposition position is about undue corporate influence over government and U.S. laws through the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system and negotiation process. Opponents' arguments focus on how the TPP was negotiated in secret with hundreds of corporate advisors and that the TPP gives them new rights to sue the U.S. government in front of a panel of three corporate lawyers for unlimited sums paid by American taxpayers. In our earlier research on behalf of Public Citizen, introducing Investor State Dispute Settlement shifted an economic debate to one about corporate influence over government at the expense of ordinary Americans.

After hearing these arguments, opposition to TPP grows to 55 percent and one-third are intensely opposed. The biggest shifts come from the Republicans (+44 oppose to +55 oppose) and independents (+24 oppose to +35 oppose), white working class men (+40 oppose to +52 oppose),



white working class women (+31 oppose to +42 oppose) and college educated women (+4 support to +7 oppose).

Voters ready to punish congress for lame duck vote for TPP

After voters hear arguments from the president and congressional leaders in favor of TPP and from congressional leaders who oppose it, the results are not pretty for a Member of Congress casting a vote for the deal in the lame duck. The argument in favor says that passing this agreement is critical to our economic future, our national security and our nation’s standing in the world and failing to pass TPP will threaten America’s position as a global leader. The argument from congressional opponents from both sides of the aisle says TPP will rig the rules against Americans – and Democrats specifically argue it will tarnish Obama’s legacy and note that Hillary Clinton also opposes the TPP.

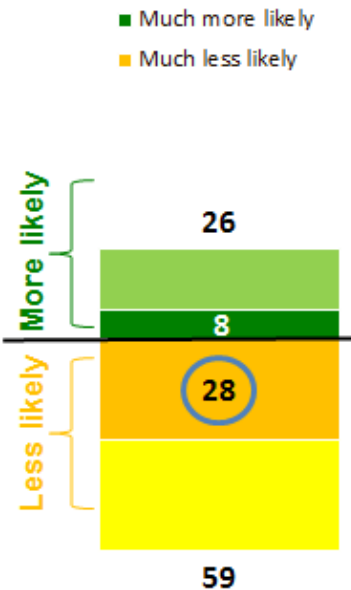
In the lame duck context, voters are ready to punish a “yes” vote on TPP, with 6-in-10 saying they are less likely to vote for a Member of Congress who votes to pass it and 28 percent saying they are much less likely to vote for that Member.

After the election and before the newly elected President and Members of Congress are sworn into office, President Obama is expected to submit the TPP agreement for a vote in Congress with the support of the Republican leaders of the House and Senate, Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell.

They say passing this agreement is important to our economy, our national security and our standing in the world. TPP opens the world's fastest growing markets to American exports, creating jobs here. And, it prevents China from setting the rules of the road. Failing to move ahead with this agreement would call into question America's leadership

But this agreement is opposed by most Democrats and many Republicans in Congress. They say TPP rigs the rules against American companies and workers. Democrats say TPP will tarnish President Obama's legacy, undermining the progress he made on the economy. TPP will lead to higher medicine prices and give corporations new powers over our lives, which is why Hillary Clinton opposes it too.

Imagine that your Member of Congress were to vote TO PASS the Trans-Pacific Partnership when Congress considers it after the election. Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that Member of Congress?

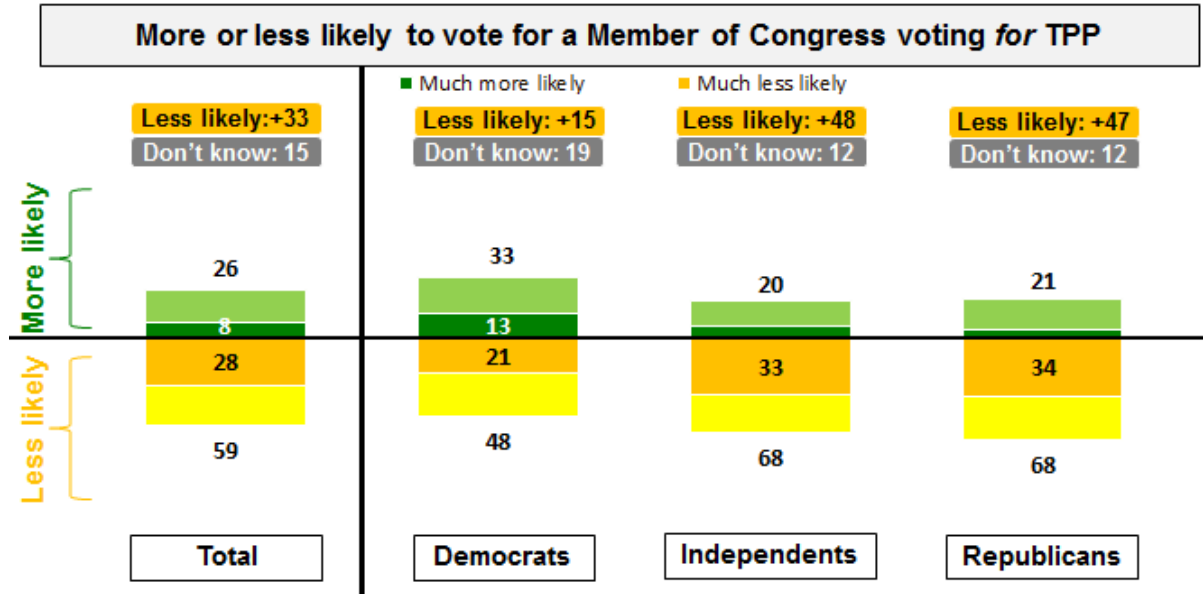


This is an especially challenging result for the Republican leadership if they do go through with their plan to bring a vote on TPP during the lame duck session: two-thirds of Republican voters say they will punish such a Member of Congress and one-third say so with intensity. A TPP vote is sure to further isolate the GOP leadership from its base after a divisive presidential election. Paul Ryan’s speakership, should Republicans keep the House, may be the first casualty.



Democrats are also sending a signal to any lame-duck TPP supporter. After witnessing the first black president face years of unprecedented political opposition, many Democratic Members may feel conflicted about opposing him in the twilight of his presidency. But Democratic voters are sending a clear signal that passing the TPP would in fact undermine Obama’s legacy because it will undo the progress he has made on the economy. By a 15-point margin, a near majority of Democrats say they are less likely to vote for a candidate casting a pro-TPP vote.

Imagine that your Member of Congress were to vote to pass the Trans-Pacific Partnership when Congress considers it after the election. Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that Member of Congress?



Across the partisan divide, the message is clear to a Member of Congress considering voting for TPP after the election.