

# **Citizen Trade Policy Commission**

**Thursday, September 6, 2007**

Room 126, State House, Augusta

9:00 AM Commission Meeting

## **Meeting Summary**

**Members present:**, Sen. Margaret Rotundo (co-chair), Rep. John Patrick (co-chair), Sen. Bruce Bryant, Rep. Jeffery Gifford, Carla Dickstein, John Harker (standing in for Jane Aiudi), Leslie Manning, Wade Merritt, Cynthia Phinney and Matt Schlobohm.

**Staff present:** Curtis Bentley, Legislative Analyst.

- I. Bill Warren, Forum on Democracy and Trade** – Provided an update on recent developments involving international trade and provided suggestions about areas the commission may want to focus on over the next year. More specifically:
- Mr. Warren stated that with the lapsing of the Trade Promotion Authority, Maine and other states are in a good position to weigh in on what future free trade agreements (FTAs) look like. One option could be to establish a national commission like Maine's commission to audit countries to ensure they are meeting the standards they have agreed to meet;
  - There appears to be an "agreement deal" between the two congressional parties and the White House regarding free trade agreements (however, there is no legislative language yet) that may include enforceable core labor standards, enforcement of environmental laws through trade agreements, authority for under-developed countries to produce generic drugs in cases of emergency and would include the "no greater rights" principle (no more substantive rights than other investors have in the country). It is likely that the "deal" would only apply prospectively;
  - Mr. Warren stated that the Peru FTA is "on ice" because Peru has one of the worst labor records regarding unions and the Korean FTA while economically important, has significant opposition in Congress and will be dead on arrival if beef and automobile issues are not resolved;
  - Mr. Warren believes that significant reform of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program will fall on the next president. Mr. Warren pointed out that that program is widely criticized on both sides of the political isle because it is considered an administrative nightmare and has complex eligibility requirements;
  - States need some mechanism to weigh in on trade related issues such as giving states pre-trade agreement consultations like Congress, where states would be briefed before negotiations and outlines are in place or a state/local oversight group could be created to provide for pre-agreement consultation as well as consultation during negotiations;

- Mr. Warren said that USTR has withdrawn its gambling commitment and now other countries can ask for compensation for the withdrawal of the gambling commitment but it is not clear what is being requested during behind-closed-door negotiations; and
- National Governor's Association recently adopted lobbying position on trade and federalism issues that calls for consultation process and additional resources for TAA but doesn't endorse Fast Track of any FTA specifically. Mr. Warren stated that Maine is in an exceptionally good position to affect negotiations within NGA.

Rep. Patrick asked Mr. Warren to provide written documents for TAA and any other FTA. Mr. Warren responded that he would after the Forum determined what drafting assistance it could provide focusing on the commission's priorities.

- II. Commission's review of draft work plan for FY 07-08.** The draft work plan was generally agreed upon by members however, suggestions were made to focus on particular areas of free trade such as TAA or TPA.
- III. Commission's budget for FY 07-08 and 08-09.** Commission members reviewed its budget in light of the additional \$60,000 available to the commission over the next two fiscal years. Sen. Rotundo stated that the money should be used to achieve something tangible as provided in the draft work plan. The commission directed staff to work with the chairs about funding an administrative position.
- IV. Subcommittees.** Commission agreed to have subcommittees review the three topic areas of focus they have work on in the past and the Commission's latest assessment to see if there is a need to continue to focus on these areas and report back at the next meeting.
- V. Public hearings.** The commission agreed to hold its next public meeting in the south western part of the state in November and to invite Maine's Congressional delegation to attend for a round table discussion after the public hearing. Also discussed possibly holding the second public hearing in Machias in May 2008.
- VI. Regular meeting dates.** The commission agreed to try and hold its regular meetings on the first Thursday of every month and that the October meeting would be held on October 4<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00AM.
- VII. Adjournment.** The commission adjourned its meeting at approximately 1:00 PM.