

Congressional Progressive Caucus

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

September 29, 2014

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

As you continue to negotiate health-related matters in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), we write to raise concerns about the detrimental effects of tobacco products and industry efforts to hide these facts. The TPP must include provisions that protect countries against challenges from the tobacco industry when their legislatures enact public health policies to reduce tobacco use. Without these provisions, a trade agreement like TPP combined with lower tariffs will lead to increased consumption of tobacco products.

There is a global tobacco epidemic. Tobacco kills one person every six seconds worldwide and is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Tobacco costs the U.S. approximately \$170 billion in health care expenditures and more than \$150 billion in lost productivity each year.

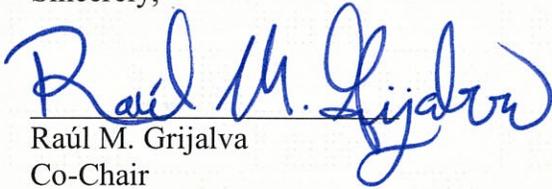
Left unabated, tobacco products are projected to kill one billion people this century. To combat the danger of tobacco, countries like the United States, Britain, and Australia implemented tobacco control measures; in the last 60 years, they saw smoking rates plummet. Conversely, the smoking rate is actually increasing in 40 other countries around the world; this is especially true in developing countries.

From Uruguay, to Hong Kong and Australia, corporations have increasingly used trade deals to challenge laws meant to protect consumers from the dangers of tobacco products. As you know, Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions allow companies to bring claims against foreign nations whose new policies may hurt those companies' future profits. The tobacco industry has systematically misused these provisions, along with threatening letters to deter countries from implementing tobacco control measures. They have consistently placed profits over public health, spending millions lobbying for less restrictive tobacco policies, and taking the ultimate toll on human lives.

Trade agreements must not be used as a tool for business interests to subvert public health policies. For the TPP to truly be the most progressive trade deal of the 21st century, it must include provisions that protect against such behavior. While smoking rates in the United States may have dropped, we urge the Office of the United States Trade Representative to lead the fight against death and disease from tobacco products around the world.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Co-Chair


Keith Ellison
Co-Chair