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Resolution on a Renegotiated NAFTA

WHEREAS, the Texas Democratic Party believes that all economic policies, including trade policies, should benefit the interests of the overwhelming majority of the American people;

WHEREAS, the free trade agreements (FTAs) of the past twenty five years have benefited multinational corporations and the economic elites, while working families have been forced to bear the brunt of such policies;

WHEREAS, the Trump administration is currently renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement that has been the template for all the FTAs since its passage, and there is the possibility that a new NAFTA could be worse than the old NAFTA:

WHEREAS, due to growing trade deficits NAFTA has displaced close to one million U.S. jobs, allowing China into the World Trade Organization has cost 3.2 million jobs, and the most recent FTA with Korea has already caused the loss of more than 90,000 jobs in 5 years;

WHEREAS, since the passage of NAFTA, the federal government has certified that, in Texas, more than 172, 000 manufacturing and service jobs have been lost to offshoring or imports, 70,000 Texas manufacturing jobs have disappeared, nearly five million manufacturing jobs have been lost nationwide and close to 60,000 factories have been shuttered;

WHEREAS, free trade agreements have been sold as a way to increase agricultural exports, in fact, under the NAFTA-style trade agreements imports have surged, exports have slowed and thousands of family farms have disappeared;

WHEREAS NAFTA has devastated family farm agriculture in Mexico and displaced over one million Mexican farmers; and has set up a system of maquiladoras that exploit Mexican workers in sweatshop conditions and since the implementation of NAFTA, the poverty rate in Mexico has risen; and the Central American Free Trade Agreement has similarly devastated family farmers and exploited workers;

WHEREAS, pharmaceutical corporate lobbyists are promoting new language in NAFTA that locks in monopoly protections for pharmaceutical corporations over new life saving biologic drugs, restricts the production of cheap generic drugs, would allow corporate challenges to government reforms to lower the price of drugs under Medicare or Medicaid, and would reverse efforts to provide low priced HIV and AIDS medicines in developing countries;

WHEREAS, NAFTA, under its "Investor-State Dispute Settlement" (ISDS) provision, gives special rights to multinational corporations to sue federal and state governments

in foreign trade tribunals staffed by corporate attorneys that bypass U.S. courts and can effectively overturn laws and grant corporations billions of dollars of taxpayer money if it is determined that those laws interfere with "expected future profits";

WHEREAS, Senator Elizabeth Warren has warned that these ISDS tribunals are a threat to U.S. sovereignty, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and other organizations have warned that ISDS suits have been used to overturn environmental protection laws under other FTAs and that under NAFTA corporations can challenge laws to fight global warming, and the AFL-CIO has pointed out that even laws to increase the minimum wage could be challenged by multinational corporations under the ISDS system;

WHEREAS, NAFTA is being negotiated under the "Fast Track" or TRADE Promotion Authority procedure in which Congress relinquishes its constitutional right to "regulate foreign trade" to the Executive branch which then negotiates the agreement in secrecy from Congress and the American people and introduces it with no right for Congress to amend it;

WHEREAS the AFL-CIO has called for its replacement with a "New Track" procedure that would make the negotiations more transparent, democratic, and participatory to both Congress and the public, with opportunities for public comment, periodic congressional hearings and more inclusive trade advisory committees to include representatives of workers (including migrant workers), farmers, consumers, communities of color, the LGBTQ community,, women, Immigrants and environmentalists;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party urge the Texas Democratic Congressional delegation, to oppose the "FAST TRACK" procedure for trade negotiations when it is next voted on, and that the delegation support the "New Track" proposal or something similar;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Texas Democratic Party, in the interest of protecting democracy and promoting a trade policy that benefits workers, farmers, consumers and the communities they live in, urge the Texas Democratic Congressional delegation to oppose a renegotiated NAFTA unless it eliminates the ISDS tribunals that allow corporations to challenge and reverse public interest laws and regulations, allows the U.S., Mexico and Canada to implement government procurement policies, like Buy American and Buy Local, that create jobs in those nations, requires food imports to meet U.S. safety regulations, does not contain rules that promote pharmaceutical monopolies and drive up the cost of medicines, and only permits the trade benefits to go into effect only if countries enact and enforce strong labor rights and wage standards and environmental policies that address pollution, environmental racism, and climate change.

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See May Brown