
Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015

Capacity Building, Rule of Law, and Human Rights

Prepared by the staffs of the Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee

New negotiating objective on capacity building, rule of law, and human rights. New negotiating objective recognizes the importance of trade agreements in advancing internationally recognized human rights aimed to ensure implementation of trade agreement commitments to strengthen good governance, transparency, the effective operation of legal regimes, and the rule of law, which promote respect for internationally recognized human rights and create more open democratic societies.

The President must consider human rights before initiating negotiations. The President would also be required to take this objective into account when initiating negotiations with potential trade agreement partners on par with any other negotiating objective.

New, robust reporting requirements. In addition, given the importance of capacity building initiatives to effective implementation of these commitments, the bill directs the President to report annually on capacity building undertaken in connection with trade agreements, including capacity building to support these rule of law and human-rights related commitments.

Improves provision on anti-corruption. Strengthened negotiating objective seeks high, enforceable standards by trading partners against corruption to ensure that U.S. exporters can compete on a level playing field.

Ensures trading partners adopt and maintain core internationally-recognized labor standards. New negotiating objective to ensure trading partners adopt, maintain, and enforce in their own laws five core internationally-recognized labor standards, including the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor and the effective abolition of child labor and a prohibition on the worst forms of child labor.