The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is poised to become the largest free trade agreement ever. Current negotiating countries include the U.S., Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. This grouping accounts for 38% of global economic activity. And the U.S. Trade Representative (the federal agency that negotiates our trade agreements) wants many other countries to join including China and South Korea. Negotiators have refused to release the text of the TPP to the public but have given access to members of special advisory committees which are dominated by hundreds of corporate officials, lawyers and lobbyists. However, based on leaked text, previous trade agreements, news reports and public statements, we can conclude that the TPP will adversely impact Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and will reward pro-TPP Asian governments that violently suppress human and workers’ rights.

01 Loss of U.S. jobs

Just three trade deals (North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), China into the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the U.S. – Korea Trade Agreement) have resulted in the loss of nearly 4 million U.S. jobs. States with large AAPI populations have been particularly hard hit. California (-561,200); New York (-193,100); Texas (-295,200); New Jersey (-92,800); Illinois (-148,400); Florida (-134,900); and Virginia (-65,800).¹ The TPP would also speed up the globalization process that has already resulted in the loss of an estimated 3.4 million service sector jobs.²

02 Loss of U.S. wages

Past trade deals have resulted in an average annual loss of $1,800 for approximately 70% of the U.S. workforce – for a total annual loss of approximately $180 billion.³ The TPP will also erode U.S. wages. After all, corporations will flock to Vietnam where the average 2014 minimum wage was 52 cents - less than 8% of the U.S. minimum wage of $7.25 and about a quarter of the average Chinese minimum wage of $1.94.⁴

03 Higher Prescription Drug Prices

AARP and others have warned that the TPP will lead to higher prescription drug prices and will place a number of Medicare and Medicaid programs at risk – including prescription discounts and rebates.

stopthetpp.org
Less Retirement Security
Globalization and previous trade deals have eliminated 6.8 million U.S. manufacturing and service sector jobs, which have removed $284 billion in wages from our economy. This has resulted in an annual loss of $35 billion in Social Security revenue per year. Social Security is especially important to AAPIs because about 29% of married AAPI elderly couples and 60% of singles rely on social security for 90% or more of their income. Social Security keeps 19% percent of older AAPIs out of poverty.

Rewarding Pro-TPP Asian Governments that violently suppress Human and Workers Rights
Vietnam. Vietnam is the 2nd largest exporter of apparel and the 5th largest exporter of shrimp to the U.S. They able to enforce low wages and maintain political control through the violent suppression of workers’ rights and human rights. Vietnam is fast turning into one of Southeast Asia’s largest prisons for human rights defenders and other activists. (Amnesty International) Vietnam has increasingly limited freedoms of association, press, speech, religion and internet as well as suppressing workers’ rights and violence and discrimination against women. (U.S. Department of State)

Brunei. This oil-rich monarchy has adopted a new penal code, supposedly based on Sharia law, which threatens the human rights of women, religious minorities as well as gays, lesbians and transgender people. In 2013, 119 members of Congress called on Secretary of State Kerry to stop negotiations with Brunei until that country addresses its human rights violations.

Malaysia. Human Rights Watch reports that “Despite pledges by Prime Minister Najib to revoke the Sedition Act, the government uses sedition charges to silence and punish those who question government policies. Discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons remains a persistent problem that is reinforced by government policy. In 2012, Prime Minister Najib declared that LGBT activities do not “have a place in the country.”

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Organized by:

1 Economic Policy Institute
4 Calculations based on official Vietnamese and Chinese minimum wages.
5 Communications Workers of America, Department of Research calculations based on loss of jobs to globalization and trade deficits, average U.S. wage and social security tax.
6 National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Social Security is Important to Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans
8 National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
10 The other two countries placed on the list for forced labor and child labor in apparel production were India and Thailand. U.S. Department of Labor, List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, 2012, p. 29.