

Congress OKs trade agreements with Russia, Moldova

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — Amid the uproar over the “fiscal cliff” talks, Congress overwhelmingly approved legislation implementing yet two more trade pacts, this time with

Russia and Moldova. Lawmakers attached some human rights conditions to the Russia pact. The 365-43 House vote and 92-4 Senate vote sent the legislation to Pres-

ident Barack Obama, who pushed for it and promised to sign it. U.S. exports to Russia now total \$11 billion yearly, and Congressional advocates of the pacts predict that figure would double in five years. They were silent about the pacts’ impact on jobs.

Nobody in Congress openly opposed the trade pacts with the two low-wage countries, but several former foes emphasized the human rights conditions placed on Russia. The Russian government of President Vladimir Putin has been cracking down on opponents.

Even Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), an outspoken critic of past “free trade” pacts that cost U.S. workers jobs, supported the Russia pact.

“The Russia Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) legislation is an important step forward in American trade policy because it learns from some of the mistakes of China PNTR, enhances compliance and accountability measures to ensure Russia meets its commitments, and addresses human rights,” Brown wrote in a column for The Hill.

The Machinists were the most notable union foes of Russia PNTR.

In a letter to lawmakers in July, union President Thomas Buffenbarger wrote:

“Russia’s labor code fails to secure fundamental labor rights, and its application is worse: Human rights leaders have been brutally assaulted and union communications censored. In addition,

journalists, lawyers, and human rights activists have been jailed without due process, and even killed.

“If Russia receives PNTR status and joins the World Trade Organization (WTO), it will be a repeat of our devastating experience with China. Since China joined the WTO, our trade deficit with China has ballooned to nearly \$300 billion. For American workers this has meant the loss of 1.9 million manufacturing jobs and stagnant wages.”

Buffenbarger’s union, which repre-

sents thousands of aerospace workers, added that Russia, like China, “focused on the growth of its heavily subsidized aerospace industry” and demands transfers of U.S. technology in return for access to its market.

The human rights conditions bar any Russian the U.S. lists as a gross violator of human rights. For Russia, the conditions replace the Jackson-Vanik amendment to U.S. trade law, which tied trade to freedom for Soviet Jews. Jewish groups supported Russian PNTR repeal, with the conditions.

Local Motion

November 2012

A list of Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces deciding whether to be union-represented – as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

Voting in union elections

Date	Workplace (Location) Union	Yes	No	
11/1	St. Charles Medical Center (Bend) SEIU Local 49 DECERT	212	334	👍
11/5	Jasper's Food/Doozy's lottery deli (Wilsonville) Bakers Local 114	3	1	👍
11/7	Central Oregon Intergov. Council (Redmond) ATU Local 757	25	22	👍
11/11	First Transit (Portland) ATU Local 757	111	31	👍

Requesting a union election

No unionization elections were requested in November 2012 for Oregon or SW Washington

LEGEND

👍 : workers will be union-represented 🗳️ : workers will be on their own

DECERT : A decertification election occurs when some union-represented workers declare that the union no longer has majority support. A 'yes' vote is a vote for the union.

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HOUSING

ROCKAWAY ocean front 503-777-5076
5 bdrm, 2 bath, call for fisherman's special,

<http://home.comcast.net/~rockaway.beach>
ROCKAWAY BEACH rental, 3 bed, 2 bath, sleeps 10, Jacuzzi, 5 min to beach/shops. Vacationhomerentals.com/43026
LINCOLN CITY vacation rental, 3 bdrm, 2 bath, sleeps 8, wi-fi, 2 blks from beach, 3 blks from casino. 503-653-2069

MISCELLANEOUS

EDDIE BAUER goose down parka w/tunnel hood, wolf fur trim, bib overalls, elbow-length mittens w/fur back shoulder-length hat. 503-666-2289

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TAYLORMADE R580 driver, left-handed, 10.5 degree, reg, w/cover, \$50; 3-wheel, foldable pull cart, \$50. 503-669-5324

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