

...Obama signs new fast track bill

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come law). The Fast Track bill passed the House 219-211 (with support from about one in six Democrats), but the Trade Adjustment Assistance bill went down 126-302. Unions called it a victory.

But Fast Track supporters kept trying. On June 18, the House held a second Fast Track vote intending to send an identical stand-alone bill to the Senate. It passed the House 218-208. The stand-alone Fast Track bill then passed the Senate on June 24 by 60-38, and the Senate also passed a Trade Adjustment Assistance amendment to another bill by voice vote. The following day, the House voted the new Trade Adjustment Assistance bill; this time, it passed 286-138, with only six Democrats voting against it.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance bill extends assistance through June 2022, with an expansion of the program through June of 2021. That includes \$2.7 billion in funds for worker retraining and education, while making workers in service industries eligible. In past TAAs, only manufacturing workers impacted by trade were eligible.

The bill also extends and expands a tax credit for the purchase of health insurance, and it includes subsidies for the wages of workers 50 years of age or older forced to find lower-paying jobs than the ones they lost to global competition.

President Obama signed both bills into law on June 29.

Fast Track's passage means

that for the next six years, any trade agreements will get a rapid up-or-down vote in Congress, with limited debate and no opportunity to amend.

FIG LEAF EXPOSED:

Of the 14 Senate Democrats who voted for Fast Track when it was combined with Trade Adjustment Assistance, only Ben Cardin of Maryland voted against when TAA was removed.

However, under the nefast track law, all future trade agreements must be posted on a website for 60 days, "for people to scrutinize, and take a look at, and pick apart," Obama said at the bill signing.

"So the debate on the particular provisions of trade will not end with this bill signing," Obama continued. "But I'm very confident that we're going to be able to say at the end of the day that the trade agreements that come under this authorization are going to improve the system of trade that we have right now. And that's a good thing."

HOW THEY VOTED:

In the Senate: Oregon Democrat Ron Wyden and Washington Democrats Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray voted for Fast Track. Wyden's fellow Oregon Democrat Jeff Merkley voted against Fast Track.

In the House: Oregon's Earl Blumenauer, Suzanne Bonamici, and Kurt Schrader were among the 28 House Democrats who joined 190 Republicans to pass Fast Track. Also voting for it were Eastern Oregon Republican Congressman Greg Walden and Southwest Washington Republican Jaime Herrera-Beutler. Democrat Peter DeFazio was the only Oregon member of the U.S. House to vote against Fast Track.

ONE SENATOR COULD HAVE STOPPED IT: The stand-alone Fast Track vote in the Senate passed by a single vote in a sense, because to get to a vote, there first had to be 60 votes to cut off debate (that vote, the previous day, was 60-37). Thus any U.S. Senator could have stopped Fast Track in its tracks.



Striking longshore workers occupy the railroad tracks near Pier Park and N. Columbia Blvd.

Image A2004-002.9377, courtesy of City of Portland Archives & Records

Remembering Portland Longshore's BLOODY WEDNESDAY

On the morning of July 11, 1934, a train full of Portland police officers moved toward Terminal 4 in the St. Johns neighborhood. Their intent was to forcibly break the picket line of striking longshore workers, but near the intersection of what is now Columbia Boulevard, picketers blocked the train's passage. Following the police chief's orders, officers opened fire on the unarmed workers. Four were wounded, but the picket line held firm. The event became known within the International Longshore and Warehouse Union as "Bloody Wednesday."

This year on Saturday, July 11, the Pacific Northwest Labor

History Association (PNLHA) will commemorate the incident at Pier Park, site of the attack. Local historians will lead a guided walk at Pier Park, discussing what happened that day, the meaning it had for participants, and the strike's role in Portland's history.

"The trees of Pier Park were once pockmarked with bullets, and for decades served as reminders of the odds the workers and their community supporters were up against," said PNLHA trustee Ryan Wisnor, a graduate student in history at Portland State University.

Bloody Wednesday is Portland's version of the more fa-

mous "Bloody Thursday" of the week before, when two striking longshore workers were killed by San Francisco police, leading to a general strike. Bloody Thursday is an official holiday in ILWU's longshore contracts, and in Portland, members of the union gather at Oaks Bottom every year on July 5 to lay wreaths in memory of the union martyrs.

The PNLHA event is endorsed by several ILWU locals and by the PSU History Department. The event starts at 2:30 p.m. July 11. Participants will meet at Pier Park at the traffic circle at N James St. & N Bruce Ave.

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