

## Who benefits from private courts in the TPP? We'll Give You One Guess

By Ian Kaplan

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) sets up private “corporate courts,” with few rules, that are only open for multinational companies to sue countries. Nearly all the winnings in these “corporate courts” go to the world’s biggest corporations and richest people—and most of the rest goes to the lawyers who work in these tribunals, according to a study published by York University’s Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto.

Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) is the official name of these corporate courts, which have been included in trade and investment treaties for more than 20 years.

A history of bizarre decisions and outrageous payouts has convinced many countries to reject the system. Now researchers Gus Van Harten and Pavel Malysheuski have analyzed the rulings of those courts. It turns out that most of the wins — and 95 percent of the money awarded — went to the world’s biggest corporations and to individuals worth more than \$100 million in net worth. They won more than \$8.5 billion in the cases studied.

Small companies and even not-quite-super-rich people almost never used ISDS courts — and usually lost when they did.

The big winners are oil and gas companies, international banks and the people who own them, and the very small group of lawyers and judges who work on these cases and collect hundreds of millions of dollars in legal fees.

The Osgoode study reports corporations of \$10 billion or more in revenue won 70.8 percent of the time, while others were only successful 42.2 percent of the time. They won in the “merits” stage of their hearings 82.9 percent of the time, versus a 57.9 percent success rate.

The authors also found that ISDS “lawyers, arbitrators, experts and other actors” had earned an estimated \$1.7 billion from these hearings by the spring of 2015.

The big losers, of course, are the working people who think they have the right to decide the laws in their own countries and have them judged in their own courts, and find they have to pay out billions of dollars instead.

TPP supporters say that ISDS is a way of protecting “investors” from governments that might abuse them. It turns out a look at the cases shows that the investors are who we need to be protected from.

*(Editor’s Note: Ian Kaplan writes for the AFL-CIO NOW blog.)*

## Letter Carriers’ food drive sets national record with 80 million pounds collected

Responding to the needs of the hungry, Americans set a new record by donating 80 million pounds of food to the National Association of Letter Carriers’ (NALC) annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, the union announced June 20.

In Oregon and Southwest Washington, Letter Carriers collected 970,000 pounds of nonperishable food.

The food is distributed to local food banks, charities, soup kitchens, pantries and other enterprises that feed the needy. Many of those enterprises had exhausted the food they had collected during the winter, union President Fredric Rolando said.

“These results are gratifying, because they mean that even more people will be helped,” Rolando said. “As Letter Carriers, we are honored to be able to assist people in need. On a daily

basis we see the struggles in the communities we serve, and we believe it’s important to do all we can to help.

He praised the organizations that help with the annual food drive, held the second Saturday each May. The food drive’s old yearly donation record was 77 million pounds.

Federal data show that approximately one of every seven U.S. residents — 50 million people — go to bed hungry each day. They include millions of children, veterans, and the elderly, NALC said.

Preliminary collections data show that eight NALC branches collected more than 1 million pounds of food each. Tops on the list was Branch 1091 in Orlando, Florida. The 1,613-member local collected 2.233 million pounds of food.



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