

Brown Leads Group Of 14 Senators On Letter Urging Extension Of Retraining Program For Workers Who Lose Jobs To Foreign Trade

Critical Program, Set to Expire on Feb. 12, Helps Trade-Affected Workers Get Retrained for New Jobs

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WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and 13 other senators sent a letter today to House leadership urging an extension of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program, a critical lifeline for workers who lose their jobs due to foreign trade. TAA, of which reauthorization must originate in the House of Representatives, is a package of training and reemployment services designed to help workers, who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade, develop the skills they need to find new jobs.

“In the last several years, hundreds of thousands of Americans, including thousands of Ohioans, have benefited from Trade Adjustment Assistance. It is truly a lifeline for trade-affected workers, helping these individuals get back on their feet and get the skills they need to land new, good-paying jobs,” Brown said. “It’s irresponsible to pass trade agreements that close factories and send jobs overseas, and then turn our backs on the workers and communities these agreements affect. We cannot allow TAA to expire next week, which is why I am urging the House to pass a long-term extension as soon as possible.”

The letter, which was sent to House Speaker John Boehner, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp and Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Sander Levin, urges leadership to “quickly introduce and pass a long-term extension of TAA” before it expires on February 12.

“TAA is a critical part of our nation’s competitiveness strategy. It ensures that the workers affected by trade receive the support and training necessary to transition into new jobs in emerging sectors of the economy,” the senators wrote. “As we understand it, you and many members of the House support a long-term extension of TAA. Just six weeks ago, on December 15, 2010, the House passed an 18-month extension of TAA...with broad bipartisan support.”

“All told, the reforms to TAA in 2009 help hundreds of thousands of workers, in every state,” the senators continued. “Over 360,000 Americans have been certified for TAA assistance over the past two years, and over 40 percent of them were certified because of the improvements to TAA that were enacted in 2009...it is critical that we preserve all these improvements to TAA.”

As one of the last acts before 111th Congress adjourned, Brown secured a six-week extension of the TAA program, in addition to the Health Care Tax Credit (HCTC), a program that helps trade-affected workers afford private health insurance. Brown [fought to extend the program](#) for 18 months, but the Senate [only cleared a six-week extension](#), leaving it up to the new Congress to reconsider the issue.

In addition to Sen. Brown, signatories to the letter include Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Bob Casey (D-PA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), John Kerry (D-MA), Kay Hagan (D-NC), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Carl Levin (D-MI).