

The Senate Select
Parliament House
Canberra ACT
Fax: (61) 2) 6277 3830

Submission on the USFTA

The two outstanding concerns I have about the USFTA are that

- It is a major threat to our democracy
- It functions on a gross imbalance of power, leaving us in a position where we are effectively dependent upon the goodwill of the other party to conclude successful negotiations, because we have comparatively no real power in the face of their opposition ----- they can trample all over us if they wish

Mostly, my objections fit these categories.

I must point out that a government is not necessarily democratic because it is elected. Democracy is "government by the people", and an elected government tethered by rules in the making of which a foreign government has had a legal and significant part, is no democracy. In such a case, the people are powerless to put *their* decisions into practice, if these decisions conflict with those of the government in question.

According to the Australian APEC Study Centre and ACTH. Consultants we reap only economic losses in this Agreement, while the original CIE economic consultants study predicted gains of only 0.3% after 10 years, and that was assuming genuine free trade in agriculture! Why, then are we even giving this agreement the time of day, let alone signing it? It contains virtually nothing for us economically, and is trespassing on our democratic freedom.

This trespass shows up particularly in the dispute process, the restriction on regulation of investment and services, the service reservations, the request of the US to actually have their citizens representing *them* on *our* committees which determine *our* laws on quarantine and GM foods ----- what check!

The Annexes, too, are totally unacceptable in every area in which they apply, making it impossible for our country to function as an effective democracy. Particularly, the pretence that our services are untouched while they are defined as being *not* supplied "on a commercial basis, nor in competition with one or more services suppliers", when they know full well that that is exactly how most of them are supplied, is simply playing cat and mouse with us.

The same applies to the devious means they are using to increase our total pharmaceutical bills; the result will be that if the individual taxpayer will not pay more, the community will have to ----- once again a negative for Australia.

I submit that the attitude in this package, and the requests that have been presented, show a lack of respect that a government of such power feels that they can afford to display to a minnow like us. Careful scrutiny of it warns us of the treatment we may expect from them if we sign it.

Let us opt for freedom and reject it utterly.