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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8019

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State of Washington

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1993 Regular Session

By Senators Spanel, Prentice, M. Rasmussen, Williams, Pelz, Franklin, Rinehart and Quigley

Read first time 02/23/93. Referred to Committee on Trade, Technology & Economic Development.

1 TO THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND  
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
7 represent and petition as follows:

8 WHEREAS, The United States is currently involved in efforts to  
9 rewrite international trade rules under the auspices of the General  
10 Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the North American Free Trade  
11 Agreement (NAFTA); and

12 WHEREAS, International trade agreements can provide benefits to the  
13 people of the United States and Washington if those agreements are  
14 properly structured and then negotiated; and

15 WHEREAS, Current proposals severely restrict the role of this body  
16 and the United States Congress to protect (1) health and safety  
17 standards, (2) environmental and resource management laws, and (3) the  
18 rights of workers, immigrants, and peoples of color to organize and to  
19 maintain livable wages; and

20 WHEREAS, Mexico and less-industrialized countries, which comprise  
21 over half the GATT negotiating nations, have significantly different

1 standards of living than the United States, often having wages of three  
2 dollars per day or less, limited educational opportunities, unprotected  
3 child labor, no worker rights, reckless use of pesticides and chemicals  
4 long since outlawed in the United States, highly toxic substances  
5 routinely dumped into rivers, undrinkable water, and little sanitation  
6 or adequate sewer systems; and

7 WHEREAS, These discrepancies lead to dramatic differences in the  
8 cost of doing business and leave the United States at a competitive  
9 disadvantage; and

10 WHEREAS, These discrepancies can work to weaken worldwide standards  
11 of health, and environmental and worker protection; and

12 WHEREAS, Agriculture and industry in the United States and  
13 Washington are competitive in the world economy on a fair and level  
14 playing field but the current GATT and NAFTA proposals move us in the  
15 wrong direction; and

16 WHEREAS, Current procedures strip the United States Congress of  
17 authority to amend or modify final GATT and NAFTA agreements, leaving  
18 Congress with only a "yes" or "no" fast-track vote.

19 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the  
20 congressional delegation of the state of Washington and all members of  
21 Congress inform the President and the Office of the United States Trade  
22 Representative that they will not approve any legislation to implement  
23 a trade agreement that (1) jeopardizes or modifies, except to raise,  
24 the existing United States standard of living; the labor, health,  
25 safety, or environmental laws, rules, and other standards; and the  
26 workplace and civil protections of all peoples in the United States; or  
27 (2) limits the ability of Congress or local and state governments to  
28 adopt laws to protect the health and safety of their people, their  
29 working conditions, domestic food supplies, and the environment.

30 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
31 transmitted to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United  
32 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
33 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
34 Washington.

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