

## **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP**

### **TIMELINE AND REQUIREMENTS**

- ✓ Every five years the Administration is required by U.S. law (19 USC 1235) to send a report to the Congress that includes an analysis of the effect of the WTO agreement on the interests of the United States, the costs and benefits to the United States of its participation in the WTO, and the value of the continued participation of the United States in the WTO.
- ✓ This year, the Administration sent this report to Congress on February 28, 2005 as part of the 2004 Annual Report of the President of the United States on the Trade Agreement Program.
- ✓ Within 90 days of the date on which Congress receives the report, any Member of Congress may introduce a non-amendable joint resolution that withdraws Congress' approval of the text of the WTO agreement. This resolution is set forth in statute.
- ✓ On March 2, 2005, Rep. Bernard Sanders (D-VT) introduced H.J. Res 27 to withdraw the approval of the United States from the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization.
- ✓ The resolution would not automatically pull the United States out of the WTO and does not require the President to withdraw the United States from the WTO. Rather the resolution merely states that Congress does not approve of U.S. membership in WTO.
- ✓ Once Congress receives the Administration's report, it starts a 90-day clock. The joint resolution must be enacted and transmitted to the President within 90 legislative days after March 1.
- ✓ The Committee of jurisdiction – Ways and Means – must act on the resolution within the first 45 session days or the resolution is automatically discharged to the House floor for a vote.
- ✓ The resolution is highly privileged and not amendable. There is limited floor debate and only one resolution may be considered.
- ✓ Both the House and the Senate must approve the resolution for it to be sent to the President.
- ✓ The President may sign it into law or may veto the resolution .
- ✓ Congress may override the veto by a two-thirds majority — either by the last day of the 90-day period beginning on the date the Congress receives the President's report, or the last day of the 15-day period beginning on the date the Congress receives the veto message, whichever is later.

### **THE LAST TIME CONGRESS VOTED ON WTO MEMBERSHIP**

- ✓ On June 21, 2000, the House voted on H.J. Res 90 – introduced by Rep. Ron Paul (D-TX).
- ✓ The resolution failed 56-363 – with 181 Democrats and 182 Republicans voting No.
- ✓ The Senate did not act on a disapproval resolution.