

COMMITTEE REPORT: INTERNATIONAL TRADE EDUCATION SQUAD

February 28, 2022



By Susan Metz

The International Trade Education Squad has five permanent members: Bart, the proprietor of Rullo's, a drinking & eating establishment on Fifth Avenue between 15 and 16 streets; Chris, who holds a Ph.D from Rockefeller University in Biomedical Sciences and is the Founder and CEO of Calder Biosciences, which develops vaccines against viruses that cause respiratory infections; Helen, a certified professional financial advisor; and Jen, an author and media production team member. I am a retired public high school teacher now spreading Playback Theatre throughout Latin America, and Willy is a social studies teacher at Midwood High School.

At the April 2017 GM, we were approved as a permanent squad of seven members. To fill one of two openings, introduce yourself with an email

to CoopITES@gmail.com with “Interested in being on ITES” in the subject line.

Our archive documents seven years of activities. “Vaccines for All” is our current campaign. Along with faith, labor, community, environmental, healthcare, student and other groups and individuals, we are determined to end the Covid-19 pandemic.

Global Trade Watch, a project of Public Citizen, provides outstanding organizational capacity to Trade Justice U.S. We are asking President Joe Biden to put U.S. influence firmly behind the effort to set aside patent rights that limit production, sale and distribution of vaccines to several huge pharmaceutical corporations (aka Big Pharma). Patents ensure monopoly rights to make, sell and distribute medicines.

The authority to protect patents internationally is institutionalized under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) chapters of the charter of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) like the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Every part of an international treaty enters the U.S. legal system with as much authority as legislation passed through local, state and national government bodies. However, trade agreements are negotiated in secret.

Representatives of big corporations have more access to the U.S. Trade Representative negotiators (appointed by the president) than legislators, the press, advocacy groups or the public. Big Pharma corporations are among the top spenders on professional lobbyists who convince congress members to favor their proposals. Many investors also contribute to electoral campaigns of those who support treaty protections of their monopoly rights.

ITES members gathered signatures calling on Brooklyn Representative Hakeem Jeffries (CD 8) and Representative Yvette Clarke (CD 9) to sign the Dear Colleague letter circulated in Congress asking President Biden to join countries in the WTO working to set aside the treaty law that enforces patent protections so that big Big Pharma will share with enterprises around the world the formulas and procedures to make,

sell and distribute the shots.

In June, President Biden did agree to support the waiver of monopoly patent protections during this emergency. Still, more pressure on Pfizer, Moderna, J&J is needed. - Making the vaccine near the folks it can save avoids possible disruption in the Supply Chain and saves the fossil fuel used in transportation that contributes to global warming.

FYI: A team of researchers from Baylor University in Texas has made their discovery of an effective vaccine available license-free, as has the government of Cuba.

Join ITES and help with outreach and communications so that we can respond to comments and answer questions about our reports. Join us to study, analyze and publicize the implications of international trade policy on our lives as consumers.

