Congressional Trade Powers Reform Act of 2026
Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR)

The Congressional Trade Powers Reform Act of 2026 would reassert congressional authority over tariffs and trade.

The U.S. Constitution gives Congress authority over international trade. Over time, however, Congress has delegated significant portions of its trade and tariff powers to the Executive Branch, resulting in trade policies that are driven by presidents and administration officials rather than the branch of government that most directly represents the voice of Americans across the country. Without the stability of congressionally approved trade policies, our nation has seen abrupt policy changes between administrations and a lack of predictability that has driven up costs for consumers and harmed businesses and workers who depend on trade.

The *Congressional Trade Powers Reform Act of 2026* would eliminate or reform the tariff authorities delegated to the President and make it clear that binding trade agreements must be approved by Congress. Taken together, these changes put Congress back in the driver's seat, providing certainty for small businesses and manufacturers, stability for exporters, and a trade policy that reflects the interests of all Americans.

Under the framework in this bill, the President would be required to propose tariff actions to a new congressional committee, the Joint Committee on Tariffs and Trade (JCTT). The JCTT would consider such proposals and, where appropriate, issue recommendations to Congress to vote on a tariff action within an expedited timeframe. To facilitate its work, the Joint Committee would be staffed on a nonpartisan basis by economists, lawyers, and other professionals with significant international trade experience.

Additionally, the bill would improve congressional oversight. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) plays a critical role in the implementation of U.S. trade policy, but oversight has been limited by the placement of USTR within the Executive Office of the President. The bill would make USTR a separate agency and establish an Inspector General to conduct audits and investigations in relation to USTR's operations and recommend policies for preventing and detecting fraud and abuse.

What the Bill Does:

- Limits the President's ability to impose tariffs and restores Congress's authority over trade by:
    - Requiring congressional approval for tariffs proposed by the President under Sections 301, 232, and 201.
    - Eliminating outdated tariff authority under Sections 122 and 338.
- Establishes a bicameral committee called the Joint Committee on Tariffs and Trade (JCTT) to support Congress's oversight over tariffs and trade, and creates the positions of Chief Congressional Trade Representative for Negotiations and Chief Congressional Trade Representative for Monitoring and Enforcement to facilitate the JCTT's oversight.
- Clarifies that binding trade agreements require congressional approval.
- Provides for greater oversight of USTR by moving the agency outside of the Executive Office of the President and installing an inspector general.