

TTIP - the free trade agreement that is currently being negotiated between the USA and the EU - has a huge potential to create jobs, improve wages and deliver a better deal for consumers. However as the TUC has pointed out, the Partnership has “threats as well as opportunities.”

I support the TUC’s call for a TTIP that creates a gold standard for workers’ rights—so that, for example, American workers would have the kinds of rights, protection and worker representation found in Europe.

It is crucial that the benefits of TTIP filter down to employees, small businesses and consumers, that the deal is open and accountable, that it respects environmental concerns and that national Governments can still act in their own interests.

I am concerned about some aspects of the way that disputes under the Partnership would be settled. ISDS would grant a foreign investor the right to initiate dispute settlement proceedings against a foreign government. In the UK, health and education are particularly under threat from ISDS due to the extent of American investment in these areas.

My particular concern about TTIP is the impact it could have on public services - particularly the NHS - which would allow investors to bring proceedings against any foreign government that signs the treaty.

I believe that the NHS and all public services need to be more, not less, integrated and I am concerned that including public services in the final TTIP could increase the fragmentation of health services that is already taking place under this Government.

That is why I believe that the NHS and public services should not be included in any final TTIP agreement.

You may already be aware that I am currently tabling a Private Members Bill in Parliament which aims to put the patient above private profit by amending the provisions of the Tories’ Health and Social Care Act 2012 to repeal the regulations made under section 75 of the Act relating to competition and provision of private health services. **An important aspect of the Bill is that it would prevent international treaties like TTIP from affecting the way the UK chooses to deliver the NHS without a specific vote for approval from Parliament.**

I also have wider concerns about the Government's recent changes to the NHS, which have increased competition and fragmentation in one of our most cherished public services. That is why I opposed these changes when they were debated in Parliament and why I welcome the commitment by the Shadow Frontbench that a future Labour Government would repeal the current Government's 2012 Health and Social Care Act.

If you would like to register your support for the Bill then please sign the petition at petitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/68064

I will continue to do all that I can to help ensure that we deliver an agreement that realises the enormous opportunities for more jobs and growth but without opening our public services up to increased privatisation, fragmentation and expensive litigation.

