

# Brendan Flanagan: WTO ruling and domestic lawsuits may boost Biden's chances of winning

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The first presidential debate proved to be exactly what we expected: unconventional. Between the back and forth dialogue, Americans were left wanting to know more about each candidate's vision for the country should they win in November. As President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden prepare for tonight's debate in Tennessee, one very important topic each candidate should be prepared to address is the World Trade Organization's (WTO) recent ruling against President Trump's trade war with China.

The WTO declared that a large portion of President Trump's tariffs on China are illegal. This ruling certainly comes as a blow to President Trump, as it is well-known that his trade war with China has been one of the hallmarks of his Presidency. Tariffs were supposed to be a vehicle to help Trump bring jobs back to America and revitalize the U.S. economy. Unfortunately, they have not had that effect.

The WTO's decision rules that over \$400 billion of tariffs imposed on Chinese goods violates international trade agreements. The tariffs in question fall under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which allows the President's administration to fight foreign trade policy [it deems](#) "unreasonable or discriminatory and burdens or restricts United States commerce."

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Over 3,000 companies have filed lawsuits against the United States through the

U.S. Court of International Trade in an effort to gain leverage over the President's ill-fated trade war, which has not provided any benefits to the American economy or consumers. Among the latest companies to join the ranks of Home Depot and Ford in the lawsuit is Elon Musk's Tesla Inc., which is [seeking an order](#) declaring President Trump's tariffs as unlawful and asking for a refund -with interest- for amounts that have already been paid.

To make matters worse, recent reports indicate that President Trump's efforts to bring back American manufacturing jobs have not only fallen flat, they're actually in the negative. Nationwide, domestic manufacturing employment [decreased](#) by 237,000 jobs from January 2017 to August 2020. The states most affected also happen to be among the key battleground states that the President needs to win in November to stay in the White House. All in all, throughout the last three years, President Trump's trade war [has cost](#) 77,400 jobs in Michigan, 31,400 jobs in Ohio, 28,900 jobs in North Carolina, 24,000 jobs in Pennsylvania, 14,700 jobs in Minnesota, and 11,900 jobs in Wisconsin. These states also happen to be where Mr. Trump is trailing Vice President Biden.

Americans, particularly those who own businesses and work in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors, recognize that tariffs are an [additional tax](#) on their goods and products, which has thus far [cost](#) the U.S. economy nearly \$60 billion. To make matters worse, Wisconsin alone has [paid](#) over \$1.6 billion in tariffs. That's why it is especially disappointing to see that neither candidate has recently spoken on the trade war which has impacted so many Americans.

This could spell trouble for the President if he doesn't change his tune soon. Vice President Biden is currently in the lead and is dominating in nearly every key battleground state needed to secure the Presidency, including [Wisconsin](#). The WTO ruling, coupled with the fact that thousands of companies have filed lawsuits with the U.S. Court of International Trade, only further discredits the "achievements" made under the guise of President Trump's trade war. If President Trump wants to avoid becoming a one-term president, he must recognize that tariffs are costing Americans their jobs and end the trade war.

*- Brendan Flanagan is a Democratic consultant and veteran of Obama for America*