



Reciprocal Rip-Offs?

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Making sense of the U.S. president's trade-deal talk has always been [difficult](#).

What is he really up to?

Most of the time President Trump talks protectionist, like a high-tariff man. Other times, he seems to be demanding *reciprocal* free trade.

Now, the classic free-market economics position is that *unilateral* free trade is better than managed, high-tariff trading regimes. But Trump *never* sounds forthright like an actual free trader.

Instead, he says stuff like “Canada has been ripping us off for years.” Classic protectionist jibber-jabber. When

we buy and they sell, and vice versa, barring fraud, it is *not* a rip-off.

Mr. Trump posted the “rip-off” comment [Tuesday](#). While using the word “reciprocity,” he is talking about *government procurement programs*, claiming that “what many do not realize is that the Canadian Government, including Canadian Provinces, have banned American Small Businesses and Companies from selling into their Government Procurement Markets. This is the case even though Canada gets broad access into the massive American Government Procurement Market, including those of our States. That is not reciprocity, it is a Canadian Trade Scam. From now on, NO RECIPROCITY — NO ACCESS!”

This was to announce a new retaliatory effort after ongoing trade negotiations [broke down](#), both sides having immediately erected tariff barriers — and worse (the U.S. forbidding one Canadian airplane company from selling in the U.S. at all). “President Donald Trump directed the General Services Administration (GSA) on Tuesday to take steps to remove Canadian-origin products from a Multiple Award Schedule that accounts for more than \$50 billion a year in transactions,” *The Epoch Times* [explains](#).

This is not the reciprocity we were looking for.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.