Here's a simple explanation of the logic behind requiring Congressional approval for the President to impose trade tariffs:

- **Checks and Balances:** The U.S. Constitution divides power between the President and Congress. This system of checks and balances is designed to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

- **Congress's Role in Trade:** The Constitution specifically grants Congress the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations. This includes the power to set taxes on imports (tariffs).

- **Potential for Abuse:** Giving the President sole authority to impose tariffs could lead to:
    - **Unilateral Actions:** The President could act without considering the broader economic and political consequences for the country.
    - **Protectionism:** Tariffs can be used to protect domestic industries, even if it harms consumers and the overall economy.
    - **Trade Wars:** Tariffs can trigger retaliation from other countries, leading to damaging trade disputes.

- **Need for Deliberation:** Important trade decisions should involve careful consideration and debate. Requiring Congressional approval ensures that these decisions are made through a more democratic and deliberative process.

Essentially, the logic is that trade policy is too important to be left solely in the hands of the President. Congressional approval would bring more accountability and ensure that trade decisions reflect the will of the people.

Contribution submitted by Chaz Antonelli, NY – 1/28/2025

[an example bill follows]

A Bill to Amend the Trade Act of 1974 to Require Congressional Approval for the Imposition of Trade Tariffs

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Section 1. Short Title.

This Act may be cited as the "Trade Tariff Accountability Act of 2025".

Section 2. Findings.

Congress finds that:

(1) The imposition of trade tariffs is a significant exercise of federal power that can have profound economic and geopolitical consequences for the United States and its trading partners.

(2) The Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations.

(3) The delegation of broad authority to the President to impose trade tariffs without prior Congressional approval undermines the constitutional role of Congress in trade policy.

(4) The imposition of tariffs can have unintended consequences, including:

(a) Increased prices for consumers.

(b) Job losses in tariff-sensitive industries.

(c) Retaliatory tariffs from trading partners.

(d) Disruptions to global supply chains.

Section 3. Amendment to the Trade Act of 1974.

Section 203 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2253) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(c) Congressional Approval Required.

No trade tariff may be imposed by the President pursuant to this section unless such imposition has been previously authorized by an Act of Congress."

Section 4. Effective Date.

This Act shall take effect 30 days after the date of its enactment.

Explanation of Key Provisions:

Section 1: Provides a short title for the bill.

Section 2: Outlines the findings of Congress that support the need for this legislation. These findings emphasize the importance of Congressional oversight in trade policy and the potential negative consequences of unchecked presidential tariff authority.

Section 3: This is the core of the bill. It amends the Trade Act of 1974, which grants the President broad authority to impose tariffs, to explicitly require prior Congressional approval for any tariff imposition.

Section 4: Sets the effective date of the legislation.

Note: This is a simplified draft and may require further refinement and legal review. It may need to be adjusted to address specific concerns and potential legal challenges.