Rules on the duration of tariff elimination are ubiquitous in modern free trade agreements (FTAs), yet research has been scarce, and explanations on the variation in phaseout duration have largely been non-political and lacking political micro-foundations. I argue that the principle of reciprocity necessitates and moderates the use of tariff phaseouts. First, reciprocity weakens the incentive to exclude products from liberalization to encourage free-trade commitment. Second, it limits the scope of tariff phaseout usage to facilitate quicker access to foreign markets, requiring phaseout allocation and duration to be strategic. The Executive can prioritize specific products or sectors to serve either electoral or ratification purposes. I test the extent to which either strategies are substitutive or complementary using a novel dataset on tariff treatment at the 8-digit product level for all 13 FTAs ratified by the United States. I find that longer tariff phaseouts are allocated to products belonging to industries with higher employment share in swing states as opposed to districts of median legislators, aligning more with the electoral hypothesis. This effect is significantly magnified for highly import-sensitive products. When disaggregated to individual FTAs, electoral concerns were strongest for NAFTA, while ratification concerns were strongest for KORUS.