

## (12)

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**WHEREAS:** The goal of international trade should be to create an engine of job growth and shared prosperity in our economies and to provide a long-term source of employment and stability in our communities. International trade must be balanced, fair, and well-regulated to ensure that our economic and social well-being is enhanced; and

**WHEREAS:** Trade deficits exacerbated by Unfair and illegal Trade has displaced hundreds of thousands American jobs, and trade deficits with China since accession to the World Trade Organization have resulted in the loss of millions of jobs that have devastated families and entire communities; and

**WHEREAS:** Ohio was one of the states hit hardest by NAFTA and other poorly structured trade deals and agreements such as CAFTA and Permanent Normal Trade Relations for China, displacing tens of thousands of our workers; and

**WHEREAS:** In our increasingly integrated economies it is time for new approaches so that trade agreements benefit the interests of American citizens. Trade agreements negotiated in the model of NAFTA, CAFTA and subsequent agreements have no place in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Trade Agenda; for American workers to benefit, we need to ensure the voices of workers, farmers, small business families and communities are heard and their interests addressed; and

**WHEREAS:** The people of Ohio have the best chance to benefit from pending trade and investment agreements only if the process by which they are negotiated undergoes swift and strong reform; and

**WHEREAS:** The most significant source of trade imbalances, and the resultant job loss, is China's predatory and protectionist trade policies. China is now the world's second largest economy and is projected to soon be the world's largest economy. China has achieved its current status through concerted and deliberative illegal actions taken to benefit its exporters at the expense of its trading partners. These actions include:

- Manipulation of the value of its currency so that it is artificially low, making Chinese exports to North America dramatically cheaper than they should be, and North American exports to China more expensive than they should be.

- An array of import barriers, both overt (such as tariffs) and covert (such as opaque licensing procedures), which serve to further reduce the sale of North American finished goods in China.
- Extensive subsidies to Chinese exporters, including indirect subsidies such as low-priced inputs, power, land and credit, and direct subsidies such as tax rebates and cash payments.
- Dumping of goods in the North American market at process below production costs.
- Espionage that steals intellectual property to hobble their American competitors.
- Extensive human rights abuses, including the denial of the right to form unions, to protest or to bring employers to court, which operate to keep workers oppressed and wages low; and

**WHEREAS:** Many large North American industrial employers are fully complicit in the decline of industry in the U.S. and have helped fuel the growth of China and other countries that don't play by the rules at the expense of their own countries. These companies have taken advantage of unfairly low wages, working conditions, and exporter subsidies and sidestepped import barriers by moving production to China and elsewhere. More than half of China's exports come from foreign invested entities, including the China operations of American companies. Frequently, access to the Chinese market is conditioned on technology transfer or in-country research and development, further eroding North America's competitive advantage in advanced products; and

**WHEREAS:** It is not possible to have a thriving knowledge economy or a strong middle class without a healthy manufacturing base. Innovation, both of products and industrial processes, occurs on the shop floor with dialog between skilled workers and production-literate engineers and scientists. The manufacturing sector is a major source of R&D spending in the United States linking manufacturing to technology. When a manufacturing operation expands and hires more workers, there is a multiplier effect and jobs are created in the company's supply chain, in the service sector, in the local community, and in the local, state, and national government. Allowing America industry to wither sets the stage for long-term economic decline; and

**WHEREAS:** The voice of organized labor is essential to prevent further capture of the process by those who do not have our national interests at heart; and

**WHEREAS:** The AFL-CIO is at the forefront of the fight for so-called “fair trade”, working with the U.S. Congress to push for legislation to preserve and create manufacturing jobs and level our trade imbalance. The AFL-CIO has also aggressively fought for enforcement of our existing trade laws and improvements in trade agreements being negotiated. Through public pressure and through concrete action, the AFL-CIO has been a leader in the fight to level the playing field to ensure the rules are enforced so that our members and their industries have a fighting chance.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** The delegates of the 31<sup>st</sup> Biennial Ohio AFL-CIO Convention call upon our elected officials in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to oppose legislation that would keep trade policy-making behind closed doors and would otherwise fail to restructure the misguided and failed trade negotiating policies of the past.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** The delegates of the 31<sup>st</sup> Biennial Ohio AFL-CIO Convention call upon our elected officials in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to support new trade negotiating authority only if it will:

- Protect and promote traditional state prerogatives and authority under our federal system, including providing opt-in rights for states with respect to procurement and service sector commitments; and
- Ensure that Congress can approve trade agreement partners before trade negotiations begin; and
- Create trade negotiating objectives that are specific to the trade partners involved;
- Advance trade rules that provide balanced, inclusive benefits across states and communities; and
- To preserve the balance of powers, ensure that Congress, rather than the executive branch, determines whether trade negotiating objectives have been met and whether trade agreements qualify for expedited consideration; and
- To preserve the separation of powers, ensure Congress has effective opportunities to strip expedited consideration provisions from trade deals that fail to meet trade negotiating objectives; and
- To preserve the separation of powers, ensure Congress has effective opportunities to strip expedited consideration provisions from trade deals that fail to incorporate Congressional and public participation; and

- Increase access to U.S. trade policy making, trade proposals, and negotiating text for elected state officials and members of the public; and
- Reform failed trade policies that have cost American Jobs, devastated manufacturing communities, and impinged on traditional state powers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Ohio AFL-CIO will continue to work and advocate for “fair trade” standards so U.S. workers share in the benefits of international trade while including protections for human and labor rights and environmental values. With these tools, trade agreements can have the effect of raising living standards and human rights records among trading partners and reduce the incentive to move production to countries with the lowest standards.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** The Ohio AFL-CIO will continue to work with our affiliates to push the Trump Administration and the U.S. Congress to craft trade agreements and policies that will benefit North American workers, not just multinational corporations, and create and maintain jobs here in America.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** The Ohio AFL-CIO maintains that workers’ rights are human rights and until workers in all countries have the right to organize and collectively bargain, corporations will continue to exploit them, and the mass exodus of jobs from the U.S. will continue.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:** That the Ohio AFL-CIO remains committed to seeking legislative and political solutions to spur our government to action on the anti-competitive practices of other countries and will constantly look for new ways to force China and other countries to adhere to fair standards with regards to trade.

**Submitted by: United Steelworkers - District 1**