

Now Is the Time to Defend American Workers
U.S. Congressman Peter J. Visclosky
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I oppose fast track Trade Promotion Authority (TPA).

Throughout my career, I have fought and voted against unfair trade agreements. They are bad for business, bad for our manufacturing base, and bad for American workers.

I voted against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was sold on the promise of creating 200,000 American jobs. After enactment, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) estimates that America lost 682,900 jobs, primarily in the manufacturing sector. I voted against the Korea Free Trade Agreement, which was sold on the promise of creating 70,000 American jobs. After enactment, again the EPI estimates that America lost 60,000 jobs.

Democrat and Republican administrations have been wrong to support irresponsible trade agreements in the past. President Obama is wrong in this instance.

American manufacturing and the steel industry are struggling every day to keep their footing in the fight against unfair trade. Steel imports are at record highs. Six American steel producers, including ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel, just filed a trade case against foreign countries engaged in illegal trade practices. Earlier this year, I co-chaired a Congressional Steel Caucus hearing where industry and labor representatives unanimously agreed that America's steel sector is being systematically targeted by trading partners that use the U.S. market as their dumping ground.

Trade agreements must include strong enforcement procedures, address currency manipulation, provide environmental protections, and protect American manufacturers from competing unfairly with exploited foreign workers. It is wrong to expect American workers to compete against state-owned enterprises that have unlimited government resources and violate our free market trade laws.

Now is not the time to consider legislation that allows more imports. Now is the time to consider legislation to fight against unfair trade. For example, I support legislation that accomplishes the following:

- Strengthen and improve anti-dumping and countervailing duty laws;
- Establish a means to petition Customs and Border Protection to take action in a timely manner to combat the evasion of anti-dumping and countervailing duty orders;
- Enhance the ability of the Department of Commerce to select appropriate facts when a foreign party fails to cooperate with an unfair trade investigation;
- Clarify that the International Trade Commission (ITC) should not deny relief merely because the domestic industry is profitable or because its performance has recently improved, and clarify the factors the ITC should consider in making its material injury determination; and
- Decrease the amount of time it takes to reach a final ITC trade case determination.

TPA leads to the loss of good-paying jobs in Northwest Indiana and throughout the United States. I will continue to fight against it.