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VISCLOSKY OPPOSES TRADE DEALS

Mr. Speaker: I rise in opposition to all three trade agreements under consideration in the House this week. I believe these agreements will only exacerbate our unemployment crisis, undermine America's manufacturing sector, and allow the continued hemorrhage of our jobs to foreign countries.

I am a proponent of trade, but any agreement that reduces barriers and removes avenues to redress unfair practices should preserve American jobs, ensure a level playing field, respect the rights of worker's and our environment, and provide significant economic benefits. These proposed agreements, individually and collectively, do not live up to those standards.

Since 1977, the real median hourly wage has decreased \$.53 for workers in this country. In manufacturing, it has decreased \$1.40. In the same time frame, the U.S. has lost approximately 7 million manufacturing jobs, over 250,000 in the state of Indiana alone. These are middle class jobs, and each lost job means lost wages, lost health care, and lost retirement benefits for a family. It is getting harder and harder for America's working class to make it, and that is a shame. With the unemployment rate at 9.1%, we must do everything possible to create new jobs, and protect every single American job that exists. Congress should have a singular focus of promoting American workers and creating American jobs.

Instead, Congress is going to pass three trade agreements that will cause a loss of jobs; necessitating the passage of a TAA package to train those whose jobs are being outsourced! What a terrible and wrongheaded policy. Further, the TAA package that Congress is considering would pare back the eligibility requirements and funding levels for displaced workers that were established in 2009. Are American workers less vulnerable to trade than in 2009? I find it ludicrous that we would choose to reduce this assistance when long term unemployment continues to plague millions of American families.

All three of these agreements are similar to NAFTA, and we know, all too well, the effects of NAFTA. In 1993, before the enactment of NAFTA, we had a small trade surplus of about \$1.6 billion with Mexico. NAFTA was enacted in 1994 and by 1995 that surplus had turned into a deficit of almost \$16 billion. By 2007, this deficit had grown to a staggering \$75 billion. These policies have displaced millions of jobs, and we cannot afford to aggravate the problem with more misguided trade agreements. Further, the jobs that aren't displaced are diminished through depressed wages and benefits.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the South Korea agreement will expand the U.S. trade deficit by \$13.5 billion and eliminate 159,000 jobs within seven years. Proponents of this deal will cite estimates by the International Trade Commission indicating a small positive impact on our trade deficit and negligible domestic employment gains. However, I would point out that the ITC projected a \$1 billion increase in the trade deficit and a negligible effect on employment before China's ascension to the World Trade Organization. The results turned out to be dramatically different. Between 2001 and 2008 our trade deficit with China increased by \$185 billion and we have lost approximately 2.4 million jobs.

The manufacturing supported by the United States' automobile supply chain is the backbone of our economy. The provisions of the this agreement allow duty free imports of vehicles with up to sixty five percent of the content coming from outside South Korea. I fear that countries that have circumvented our trade laws in the past will use this as a new opportunity to increase the presence of unfairly subsidized products in U.S. markets by going through South Korea. The resulting job losses are as inevitable as they are unacceptable.

Finally, South Korea has a history of currency manipulation and erecting significant non-tariff import barriers. Are we foolish enough to believe they won't continue to aggressively protect their domestic industries at the expense of manufacturing jobs here in the U.S.?

Specific to the Colombia agreement, the Economic Policy Institute estimates that this deal would eliminate 55,000 American jobs within seven years, while growing our trade deficit by \$3.3 billion. Additionally, Colombia has a disturbing history of violence against labor unions. Nearly 2,680 unionists have been murdered there and only six percent of these crimes have been prosecuted. That is an appalling fact. The administration's Action Plan is a positive step, but it does not guarantee the basic rights of workers, nor their protection from retaliation. Further, the Action Plan is not part of the FTA, and is therefore subject to the discretion of the Executive Branch. I will not be satisfied until I see sustained long term progress for workers' rights in Colombia.

These trade agreements will come at the expense of the middle class at the worst possible time. They will do away with at least 214,000 American jobs and undermine key industries throughout our economy.

Trade can have positive benefits for the U.S. economy, but it has to be done right, and it has to be done fairly. These agreements do not reflect the lessons we have learned. Again and again, we have seen countries acting aggressively to support and promote their domestic job creating industries while protecting them from competition. Even when our companies have legal recourse, it is almost always too little too late, the damage has been done, and the jobs are gone. That is why I am concerned about the failure of these agreements to have robust mechanisms to ensure that the provisions are enforced.

We should be using our time to pass legislation to rebuild America's economic infrastructure using American workers and goods and products made in the United States. I encourage my colleagues to oppose all three agreements.

