FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS - BENEFITS TO THE U.S.

Creating Jobs and Overseas Market Access

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"…free trade and open markets are powerful tools to improve living standards far and wide. They do create new jobs. They do open up new economic opportunities, raise standards of living, and lead to the kind of win-win solutions that bring people and countries closer together."

– Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) support American jobs, expand markets, and enhance U.S. competitiveness. By removing barriers to U.S. goods, FTAs create new opportunities for U.S. companies, workers, and investors. During a worldwide economic downturn, FTAs help promote faster economic recovery in the United States and in other countries.

Results of Free Trade Agreements

- **Commitments to Protect Labor Rights:** FTAs set high standards for protection of workers' rights – including obligations for the other country to respect fundamental labor rights and to effectively enforce labor laws designed to ensure that U.S. workers can compete in the worldwide labor market.
- **A More Open and Level Playing Field for U.S. Investors:** FTAs create greater access to foreign markets, strong investor protections, and a way for U.S. investors to enforce their rights and settle disputes with other countries.
- **Greater Access to Services Markets Overseas:** FTAs help open international markets to the U.S. services sector, ranging from energy and environmental services to financial services and distribution.
- **Tariff Elimination on Agricultural Products:** FTAs create new opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, and food processors by eliminating tariffs on a range of agricultural commodities such as wheat, barley, soybeans, flour, beef, bacon, almost all fruit and vegetable products, peanuts, cotton, and most processed food products.
- **Fair and Open Government Procurement:** FTAs expand American firms' access to foreign government procurement markets, creating new opportunities for exporters in a range of fields and ensuring that U.S. firms can bid on contracts on a level playing field with local firms.
- **Protection of the Environment:** High environmental standards are incorporated into America's trade agreements. Both parties to a trade agreement commit to effectively enforce their own domestic environmental laws and adopt, maintain and implement laws, regulations, and other measures to fulfill obligations under multilateral environmental agreements. Environmental obligations are subject to the same dispute settlement and enforcement mechanisms as commercial obligations.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for American Workers

Trade adjustment programs offer a variety of assistance to U.S. workers whose jobs have been lost as a result of foreign trade. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers program would restore and reauthorize a federal program offering a range of support to displaced workers.

The streamlined TAA program includes the following assistance to displaced workers:

- Training services for workers to learn 21st century job skills,
- Assistance for job search and relocation,
- A tax credit to maintain health coverage, and
- Trade Readjustment Allowances that provide critical support during training.