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Creating Trade Policies that Create Ohio Jobs

A mother of three living in an Ohio hometown may not care much about United States export policy. She is probably too busy providing for her family: getting her children to the school bus on time, working long hours at the small business she started, and trying to make ends meet.

But U.S. export policy affects Ohioans in small towns, rural areas, and major cities. As the THIRD largest manufacturing state in the country, Ohio has a lot to lose and a great deal to gain from U.S. trade policies.

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The International Trade Commission (ITC) recently held a hearing on seamless pipes – the kind used in industrial plants throughout the world – [where I testified on behalf of steelworkers in Youngstown and Lorain](#). U.S. imports of Chinese seamless tubes and pipes rose from 156,000 tons in 2006 to more than 366,000 tons in 2008 - increasing by more than 100 percent and capturing more than 34 percent of the market in 2008. This level of imports was unsustainable in the best of conditions. During the economic crisis, the results were horrific. Domestic producers faced a dearth of new orders, and much of the domestic industry was shut down. As a result,

workers in Lorain and Youngstown were idled or laid off. For the small businesses owners who rely on these workers to keep the doors of their sandwich shops open, U.S. trade policies matter, too.

That's why U.S. workers petitioned the ITC to stand up for our industry against Chinese imports. When workers in other industries – like tires or oil steel tubes filed similar petitions – enforcement measures taken by the Obama Administration led to the creation or retention of hundreds of new jobs across our state, almost immediately.

Stronger trade enforcement is essential to saving Ohio jobs. It is also imperative that U.S. trade policies support U.S. companies in the first place.

[That's what I told President Obama at the White House this month](#) when he convened members of the President's Export Council. He's laid out an important goal of doubling exports over the next five years. If we're serious about achieving this, we must crack down on illegal practices by our trading partners that undermine American manufacturing.



Ohio workers can compete with anyone in the world, but when China manipulates its currency or gives unfair subsidies to its industries, that's not competing – it's cheating. Promoting the value of exporting to new markets is not going to be enough; vigorous trade enforcement is vital if we are going to achieve this goal. We cannot double exports and create jobs unless we address predatory trade practices – and China's currency manipulation is at the top of the list of obstacles facing our workers and producers.



What does Chinese currency manipulation mean for Ohio manufacturers? Earlier this week, I urged the ITC to make a decision in favor of American manufacturers of coated paper because currency manipulation is hitting the industry hard. Coated paper – like the glossy paper used as magazine covers – is manufactured in our state. Ohio has major coated paper companies in Miamisburg and Hamilton. Coated paper imports from China and Indonesia, however, are adversely impacting our suppliers. We are at risk of letting our coated paper industry slip away if we continue to allow the anticompetitive practices of foreign companies undermine Ohio

companies.

For example, the largest coated paper producer in China – a nation that lacks the natural resources needed to make coated paper – sells its products in the U.S. market at prices drastically lower than U.S. companies. How is that possible when this Chinese company buys its raw materials from other countries, transports the pulp to Asia, and then ships the finished product to the United States? It's clear that China manipulates the system by manipulating its currency. As a result, Chinese products imported into the U.S. are at least 40 percent cheaper than their true cost. We cannot afford to sit by idly as China breaks every trade rule at the expense of U.S. companies and U.S. jobs. It is one thing to talk tough on trade and another to take tough action on trade. If the Administration is serious about American manufacturing and boosting exports, we need to be certain that our trading partners play by the same set of rules that we do.

Sincerely,

Sherrod Brown



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