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A Level Playing Field for Ohio Manufacturers

Ohio manufacturers can compete successfully against anyone, but only if they have a level playing field. In soccer's World Cup, a blown call can cost a coach his job. When it comes to international trade, a blown call can cost thousands of jobs.

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Yet when it comes to competing against some countries, there's no such thing as a level playing field. In China, for example, currency manipulation, product dumping, and other trade abuses have repeatedly undermined legitimate competition from American workers and manufacturers. The United States needs to be a leader in the global clean energy economy. But right now, China is working every day to win the clean energy race – at any cost and by any means necessary.

Chinese spending on renewable energy is nearly double that of the United States. For each day we delay investments in clean energy, China spends \$51 million to widen that unacceptable gap.



And China is not only using its abundance of capital to monopolize clean energy manufacturing – it is also elbowing competition out of the way by discriminating against U.S. companies and manufacturers. China cries foul at our Buy America policies, but has its own "Buy China" policies. China's so-called "indigenous innovation" policies provide preferences to products containing Chinese-developed intellectual property for government procurement purposes.

Meanwhile, China's currency manipulation imposes an enormous and unfair competitive disadvantage on our workers and manufacturers. By artificially lowering the value of its currency, the yuan, China keeps the U.S. dollar artificially high – by up to 40 percent. This results in higher prices on U.S.-made goods that are exported to China and cheaper China-made goods imported to the U.S. While such a practice is illegal under U.S. and international law, China continues to get away with it.

[Last week's announcement](#) that China will allow a gradual appreciation in the value of the yuan was well timed on China's part to mute criticism at the G-20 meeting in Canada this past weekend, but it does not instill confidence. This would not be the first time China announced a positive step to deter our nation from taking action, only to revert back to its old ways when the spotlight fades.

President Obama has shown a willingness to

enforce trade rules – he is the first president to invoke the “Section 421” safeguards, as he did when he granted relief to the U.S. consumer tire industry. This single action saved at least 100 jobs in Findlay, Ohio, with more benefits to come in the year ahead.



The U.S. Commerce Department also found that steel pipe and tube manufacturers are being dramatically undercut by China. As a result, the International Trade Commission (ITC) [granted immediate relief](#) on “Oil Country Tubular Goods,” which is helping a steel pipe manufacturer expand operations in Youngstown. I was recently in Youngstown at the groundbreaking ceremony at this steel plant. The hundreds of jobs and new economic development in the region was made possible by a combination of trade enforcement and critical Recovery Act funds, as President Obama made clear during his visit to Youngstown in May.

These are good developments, but we must do more to show that we are serious about rebalancing our trade relationship with China and defending our national economic interests.

The U.S. Commerce Department faces an important decision on whether to investigate China’s currency manipulation on behalf of paper manufacturers in Ohio and several other states. These companies and their workers – in West Carrollton and Miamisburg, and Chillicothe – are holding on for dear life. And like manufacturers and workers across the U.S., they understand why enforcing our trade laws is so vital. They know firsthand why our trade laws must combat currency manipulation.

We cannot enter the next decade of the 21st Century further behind China. If China leads the clean energy revolution, we will trade dependence on foreign oil with dependence on Chinese or foreign-made clean energy technologies. But with the right investments and a good referee, we can level the playing field to make sure that doesn’t happen.

Sincerely,

Sherrod Brown



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