

June 16, 2010

The Florida Fair Trade Coalition

The Florida Fair Trade Coalition is requesting signors on the following letter that will go to Congress. It is a request to our Representatives and Senators to co-sponsor the Trade Act that is now in Congress. For background information:

<http://www.citizenstrade.org/tradeact.php>

As Social Concerns Chair for Florida UCC Women, I am encouraging our local churches, groups, and FI UCC Women's Board to sign on to this encouragement for our leaders in Congress. Thanks for considering this, Bert Perry

The letter follows:



Dear Representative/Senator,

The many members of the labor, faith, family farm, consumer, environmental, human rights and social justice organizations within Florida are writing to encourage you to support the **Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act**, and to sign on as a cosponsor today. First put forward in the 110th session, this bill now has over 140 House members signed on, from both parties, along with the institutional backing of hundreds of diverse organizations from across the country.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and other similar trade agreements have consistently failed to produce the benefits promised by their advocates. These free trade agreements, along with similar economic policies put forth in the World Trade Organization (WTO), have instead come at great costs. The price we've paid in the outsourcing of jobs, downward pressure on wages, damages to our environment and loss of family farms is far too great, and helps explain our current economic crisis. In Florida alone we have lost over 144,600 manufacturing jobs from 1993 to 2009, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Seventeen years of failed trade policy has also given broad, expansive new rights to foreign corporations to challenge American environmental and public health standards. It has flooded the U.S. with unsafe food and product imports. And it has devastated developing nations by forcing millions of family farmers off of their land, creating poverty, despair and mass migration.

The TRADE Act, simply put, legislates fair trade. It offers a way to continue to expand trade to other countries, but while ensuring workers and family farmers benefit and our environment, consumer safety, public health, and democratic rights and laws are safeguarded. It clearly sets out the basic terms of what must and must not be included in future trade agreements.

We are all eager to support trade agreements that benefit a majority of U.S. workers, farmers, small businesses and consumers. We all want to pass future trade agreements that work to achieve the larger societal goals of shared economic prosperity, poverty reduction, healthy communities, human rights and a sustainable environment.

We ask you to join the scores of your colleagues who have already cosponsored the TRADE Act, and sign on today. To join as a cosponsor, please contact Nora Todd in Rep. Michaud's office (Nora.Todd@mail.house.gov) or Chris Slevin in Sen. Brown's office (Chris.Slevin@brown.senate.gov).

Sincerely,

Florida Fair Trade Coalition