

Insists Trade Policies Must Defend American Jobs

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WASHINGTON, DC – Today Peter DeFazio and a dozen other members of the House Trade Working Group met with President Obama to insist on trade policies that protect American jobs.

Americans' have made clear that their number one priority is the creation of secure family wage jobs, and rightfully so considering that nationwide unemployment remains at 9.6%. Rather than pay heed to this stark message, however, President Obama is in the midst of negotiating a free trade agreement with South Korea that follows the same failed trade model as NAFTA and the Bush free trade agreements. Despite rosy promises to the contrary, these free trade agreements have shipped millions of American jobs overseas, decimated entire swaths of American manufacturing, and exacerbated the continuing recession.

Members of the House Working Trade Group offered the President suggestions to make the South Korean FTA a level playing field that benefits American workers as much as it benefits corporate profits. The President was receptive and understood that prior trade agreements failed to live up to the promises made to the American worker.

“I told the President that I will not support another failed free trade agreement that repeats the same mistakes of past agreements,” said DeFazio. “Americans have been promised great benefits from Free Trade Agreements for 20 years, but all they have delivered is outsourcing and trade deficits. Our manufacturing base has been decimated and working men and women are fed up with the one-way trade policies that work for big business and foreign countries but have left Americans behind. We must do better.”

“I was pleased the President indicated support for a national manufacturing strategy, but such a strategy should be enacted first and should inform future trade agreements in order to boost U.S. manufacturing rather than ship it overseas,” DeFazio continued.

DeFazio has voted against all free trade agreements, including NAFTA and most-favored nation trading status for China. He has called for these agreements to be renegotiated in a manner that protects American jobs and revitalizes America's manufacturing base.