



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

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November 8, 2005

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
U.S. House of Representatives
2354 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
227 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Rangel and Smith:

I am writing on behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), (AFL-CIO) to express strong support for the Trade Adjustment Assistance Improvement Act of 2005. We believe that this legislation will extend TAA benefits to a larger number of displaced workers and compensate employees for the adverse impact of federal trade policies in a more comprehensive way.

Over the past four years, this administration has managed to increase our nation's trade deficit exponentially, and failed to create policies that would assist Americans in adjusting to changes in the U.S. economy resulting from the trade agreements the government has established with more than 11 countries. Their failure to address these changes has resulted in a spike in unemployment, causing a loss of more than 2.9 million manufacturing jobs since January 2001.

Although creating good trade policies is the most significant step that the government can take towards creating and sustaining adequate jobs, this legislation is also critical in responding to the loss of jobs among hard-working Americans. This legislation includes significant improvements, such as increased funding; expanded eligibility; coverage of service sector workers; improvements to the Health Care Tax Credit; better outreach so that more eligible workers can access TAA; and better reporting so that information on TAA services and outcomes will be more widely available.

Although improving the TAA program is only a part of a broader strategy in addressing the loss of jobs among American workers, we believe that the new legislation will strengthen and expand the existing TAA program to help those hurt by trade make a new start.

Sincerely,

Beth Moten
Legislative and Political Director