

BACKGROUND ON TRADE ISSUES: OBAMA FIGHTS FOR FAIRNESS

Barack Obama wants to end tax breaks for companies that send jobs overseas. Trade agreements, he says, must include labor and environmental standards that are enforced.

OBAMA: NO TAX BREAKS FOR JOB EXPORTERS.

- “We’re not going to be giving tax breaks to companies that send jobs overseas,” Obama said. (*Detroit Free Press*, 6/3/08; Obama Remarks, Raleigh, North Carolina, 6/9/08)

OBAMA: ONLY IF LABOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS ARE ENFORCED.

- “The truth is trade is here to stay,” Obama said, “and that if we have strong labor and environmental protections in our agreements, and if our trading partners are playing by the rules, trade can be a good thing for our workers and our economy.” (Barack Obama speech to Building Trades Conference, 4/15/08)

OBAMA VOTED AGAINST CENTRAL AMERICA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT.

- Obama voted against the Central America Free Trade Agreement because it did not contain adequate protections for the environment or for workers, such as the freedom to form unions. CAFTA likely will exacerbate poverty and inequality in Central America, while further eroding good jobs and wages at home. (S. 1307, Vote 170, 6/30/05)

OBAMA: RENEGOTIATE NAFTA OR OPT OUT.

- Obama said, “I will make sure that we renegotiate [NAFTA]...I think we should use the hammer of a potential opt-out as leverage to ensure that we actually get labor and environmental standards that are enforced. And that is not what has been happening so far.” (Cleveland Democratic Debate, NBC, 2/26/08)

OBAMA PROPOSES TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE TO RETRAIN WORKERS.

- To help workers adapt to a rapidly changing economy, Obama would extend Trade Adjustment Assistance to service industry workers, create education accounts to help workers retrain and provide retraining assistance for vulnerable workers before they lose their jobs. (Obama for America website)

OBAMA PROPOSES ‘ADVANCED MANUFACTURING FUND’ TO PREVENT JOB DISPLACEMENT.

- Obama proposed creation of an “advanced manufacturing fund” to promote industries that are likely to keep jobs in the United States. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 5/14/08)