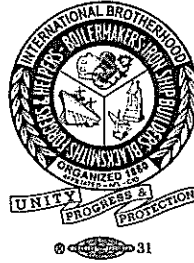


International Brotherhood of

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December 16, 2010

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers, I write to express our opposition to the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). This misguided agreement fails to address the long-standing concerns of American workers, will result in more lost American manufacturing jobs, and fails to establish an appropriate model for sustainable global trade. At a time when so many Americans are struggling in our weak economy, the KORUS FTA is the last thing our nation can afford to pursue.

We continue to be disappointed the U.S. Trade Representative has failed to negotiate positive changes in core aspects of this agreement. The provisions on investment, procurement, and services continue to constrain both governments' ability to regulate in the public interest, promote domestic job creation through responsible procurement policies, and provide public services. The agreement's rules on procurement have the potential to restrict policy goals of vital importance to our union, including domestic sourcing requirements. It is inappropriate for trade agreements to restrict the ability of governments to invest tax dollars in domestic job creation and promote legitimate social objectives. In addition, the investment provisions of the agreement include provisions that allow foreign investors to claim rights above and beyond those granted to domestic investors.

With respect to the labor chapter, no effort was made to improve and strengthen the labor provisions with the Korean Government. Contrary to popular belief, Korean labor laws fail to conform to norms established by the International Labor Organization (ILO). In fact, dozens of trade unionists have been imprisoned for exercising basic labor rights. Further, the Korean Government passed legislation several years ago weakening basic labor protections, contrary to the recommendations of the ILO.

This trade agreement – the most significant in over a decade – fails to live up to the standards workers in both countries deserve. During the 2008 Presidential campaign, then candidate Obama promised to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Instead, two years later, the Obama administration is asking American workers to once again turn a blind eye to yet another unfair and unbalanced trade agreement. It is time to abandon the flawed model on which the KORUS FTA is based, and move toward a new policy that creates good jobs, benefits the U.S. economy as a whole, and protects fundamental rights.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Newton B. Jones
International President