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Statement by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka on the U.S.- South Korea Trade Agreement June 29, 2010

We remain deeply concerned about and strongly opposed to the U.S.-South Korea trade agreement as negotiated by the Bush Administration. The agreement would exacerbate our already lopsided trade relationship with South Korea, putting at risk thousands of good U.S. jobs in the auto, steel, and other industrial sectors.

The agreement phases out tariffs on goods and services between the two countries, but does not go nearly far enough in eliminating the non-tariff barriers that currently prevent American products – especially autos – from entering the South Korean market fairly.

This flawed agreement is the last thing working people need. With a fragile and incomplete economic recovery, and unemployment estimated to remain near 10 percent for the foreseeable future, we should not be putting in place new trade agreements that will speed up the offshoring of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Our negotiators should go back to the table to address the imbalanced market-access provisions in the agreement and to revisit the flawed investment, procurement, and services provisions as well.

President Obama promised a "smart, fair and strong" trade policy. The KORUS FTA does not meet this standard, and we will work closely with the Administration and Congress to improve this agreement on behalf of American and Korean workers. Unless and until the agreement is amended to address these concerns, we will strongly oppose passage of the U.S.-South Korea trade agreement.

Contact: Amaya Tune (202) 637-5018

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