

In the first big test of whether President Obama was going to side with the interest of big corporations and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce or with workers and I am happy to say that he came down on the right side. I have complained many times that the government always says that free trade deals will be enforced but too often those have been empty promises.

In 2008, China exported nearly 46 million consumer tires with a value of more than \$1.7 billion. This was 215 percent more than the 2004 level of imports by volume and 295 percent more by dollar value.

In this period, domestic production of consumer tires declined by over 25 percent and the domestic industry's share of the U.S. tire market declined from 63 percent in 2004 to below 50 percent in 2008. Meanwhile, Chinese producers' share of the U.S. consumer tire market rose from less than five percent to more than 17 percent.

As an inevitable result, American plants closed and American workers were sent home with an uncertain fate. Over 4,400 workers lost their jobs during the four year stretch and an additional 2,400 face imminent job loss in 2009. These layoffs are coming during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, to the plight of these workers.

The bottom line is that it was no mere coincidence that these plant closings occurred over the exact same period as the flood of Chinese imports claimed an ever larger share of the U.S. market.

Trade remedies must be used in accordance with what those of us in the Congress spelled out, without fear of retaliation when they are fairly applied. Trade remedies impact less than one percent of our trade in a typical year. However, these laws that provide redress against egregious foreign trade practices are a critical component for our economic recovery.

Although the 35 percent levy was less than the 55 percent recommended to him in July by the US International Trade Commission, it was still a significant statement of administration support for organized labor, which has lost jobs and closed factories as tire imports surged. I only wish that we could have done something about Buffalo Color, which years ago used to make indigo dye but went out of business because of dumping by Chinese competitors.

It's great to see the United States stand up for its workers for a change, and I hope that President Obama will continue to use all of the tools at his disposal to make sure that international trade creates a level playing field for American businesses.