

*"None of the free trade bills we've voted on in the last twenty years were designed to protect American manufacturing. We won't maintain our superpower status by giving each other haircuts and serving each other dinner."*

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today spoke on the House floor in opposition to three so-called "free trade" agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama.

In part she said:

"This Congress needs to wake up, and fast. We are currently in a race with countries like Germany and China to see who will dominate green manufacturing for a generation to come. If we continue the era of giveaway trade, we will utterly lose this race with devastating effects across our economy. We can't win the race if we allow competitors to dump solar panels in our country while stopping our manufacturers from mass-producing wind turbines for sales overseas.

"The time is now. We won't maintain our superpower status by giving each other haircuts and serving each other dinner. We have to make things here at home, so that our businesses and our workers can finally benefit from fair free trade."

The full text of the speech is below.

M. Speaker,

I cannot state this strongly enough- I am vigorously opposed to the three free trade bills that we

are considering today. On behalf of the businesses and workers of Western New York, I implore my colleagues to vote against today's free trade bills and put an end to the era of giveaway trade.

None of the free trade bills we've voted on in the last twenty years, including the bills here today, were designed to protect American manufacturing and American jobs- they were designed to protect multinational corporations operating in the towers of New York, London and Shanghai. These companies could care less where their goods are made, as long as we allow them to sell their goods all over the world.

As American legislators, we have different responsibilities- we must care where goods are made, and we must do everything we can to make sure they are made in the USA.

I think many people would be shocked to know that there is little in our current trade deals to prevent countries like Korea from developing new regulations that make it harder for us to sell our goods in their country. Using nontariff barriers, Korea could place a dozen arbitrary restrictions on American-made cars, in order to stop Chevys, Fords and GMs from being sold in Korea. Yet under the proposed free trade agreement, there is little we can do to ensure our companies are treated fairly. You call this a good deal?

Currently, non-tariff barriers are playing a vital role in preventing US-made cars from being sold in Japan. According to the American Auto Council, for every one vehicle that the US exports to Japan, Japan exports 180 vehicles to the United States. In fact, US auto exports to Japan were limited to just 8,000 vehicles last year. The USTR has said that "A variety of nontariff barriers have traditionally impeded access to Japan's automobile and automotive parts market. Overall sales of US-made vehicles and parts in Japan remains low, which is a serious concern."

Now, despite these explicit warnings from our government's left hand, our right hand prepares to sign more trade bills that ignore nontariff barriers, an action that defies all common sense.

Instead of wasting my time voting for badly flawed trade bills, I have introduced a bill that will legally ensure a fair playing field for American manufacturers. HR 1749, the Reciprocal Market Access Act, would require the US government to consider both tariff and non-tariff barriers when negotiating a trade agreement with another country. This approach would guarantee that

American manufacturers have the same opportunities as the foreign competition to sell their goods around the world. If a foreign country is caught trying to stop the sale of American-made goods, a "snap-back" provision stops the free-trade agreement in its tracks, until the problem is resolved.

This no non-sense approach has gained the support of both business and labor, Democrats and Republicans. This bill has bipartisan support in the House, and has been endorsed by Corning Inc., Hickey-Freeman, Globe Specialty Metals, American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition, the AFL-CIO, and the United Steelworkers. Even the United Auto Workers, who are supportive of the Korea free trade agreement, support my legislation as well.

This Congress needs to wake up, and fast. We are currently in a race with countries like Germany and China to see who will dominate green manufacturing for a generation to come. If we continue the era of giveaway trade, we will utterly lose this race with devastating effects across our economy. We can't win the race if we allow competitors to dump solar panels in our country while stopping our manufacturers from mass-producing wind turbines for sales overseas.

The time is now. We won't maintain our superpower status by giving each other haircuts and serving each other dinner. We have to make things here at home, so that our businesses and our workers can finally benefit from fair free trade.

Instead of voting for the badly flawed free trade agreements we are considering today, I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor my bipartisan approach to trade.

It is high time that our trade agreements look out for American businesses and American workers. We must finally create a level playing field for Americans to work, compete and win through fair free trade.

I yield back the balance of my time.