

December 26, 2007

James Ploeser
Coordinator
Iowa Fair Trade Campaign
3839 Merle Hay Road
Suite 282
Des Moines, Iowa 50310

Dear Mr. Ploeser,

As your next president, I will be smarter, fairer and tougher on trade policy than we have been in the past. That is why I opposed CAFTA, fast track authority and every trade agreement since CAFTA that this Administration has put before the Senate. I have opposed these agreements because I do not trust this Administration to enforce labor and environmental standards. At every turn they have shown that they are not approaching trade policy with a plan to compete in the global economy – to make sure American jobs are protected; or even to make sure imports are safe. Instead it has kowtowed to multi-national corporations that have set up manufacturing abroad. That won't keep us safe and it won't save American jobs.

I believe that the government should be in the business of creating American jobs – not exporting them. A Biden White House would approach trade policy by immediately enforcing existing trade agreements – something that this Administration is not doing. I would then review NAFTA and the terms of other trade agreements. All trade agreements must contain labor and environmental standards. We shouldn't turn our backs on human rights violations when it comes to our trading partners. Our trade policy should not reward exploitation of people or low environmental standards. That not only hurts the people in the countries we make the agreements with but it also puts American jobs at risk.

I will stand up for US interests. We must protect intellectual property rights. All products entering the US must meet our safety standards. Instead of allowing unsafe products – such as toys with lead paint – to enter the United States, I would suspend imports as we are allowed to do under WTO rules. The cheap prices that often accompany toy imports are not worth the risk. We must keep unsafe toys off the shelves.

I would stand up to China and press them to enforce health and safety standards and allow our inspectors to check products. I would stop allowing the Chinese to manipulate the value of its currency and exchange rates. I would convene a summit, as we did in the 1980s, with Europe, China and Japan to address currency valuation.

The bottom line is that in a global economy we have to protect and create American jobs – the best trade policy in the world is not going to help unless we have the best trained, best equipped workers, making the products the rest of the world needs. We should guarantee American workers the security they deserve. Instead of tax breaks for offshore tax shelters in the

Caymans, we should invest in energy, education and health care. To compete in a global economy and protect jobs we have to address five things: (1) health care cost, (2) energy security, (3) education (4) infrastructure and innovation and (5) protecting the right to organize.

We need a new drive, at all levels of government, to improve the basic infrastructure our economy runs on. That means investments in education, in health care, in new energy technologies, in bridges and roads and ports – all of the things that will keep our workers the most productive and best paid in the world.

I will make a 5-year, \$50 billion dollar investment to make us the world leader in clean energy technology. Climate change and oil dependence threaten our national security. Our goal has to be a greener, cleaner economy, one that can be the source of hundreds of billions of dollars in new technologies that will make it run. That means jobs, good jobs with a future.

I will invest rebuilding and strengthening our infrastructure – from roads and bridges to utilities and telecommunications. We spend less than one percent of our national income on infrastructure investment. China and India, the fastest growing economies in the world, spend more than three times that amount. China, the fastest growing economy in the world, spends 9 percent. India is spending 3.5 percent, and plans to increase to 8 percent. It will take \$9-\$10 billion a year over the next 20 years to bring the existing bridges into structural and safety compliance.

Getting workers to their jobs, getting our products to markets – those are fundamental to our economy. If we wonder where good paying jobs are going to come from, look at the work that needs to be done.

Finally, we have to protect the right to organize. As President, I will put a stop to George Bush's war on labor. I will sign into law the Employee Free Choice Act to ensure that workers have the right to join unions without interference from employers. When unions are at their strongest, the middle class is at its strongest and wages grow. When unions are on the defense, the middle class standard of living is stagnant.

I think we sometimes forget that labor built the middle class and that there isn't a white collar worker that is treated well by his employer or a piece of social legislation that exists that isn't because of organized labor. We have a strong middle class in this country because of labor.

A Biden White House would honor the importance of unions. The people I would appoint to the Department of Labor would understand and value labor. They wouldn't be afraid to use the word union. And I would make sure that the NLRB returns to being a fair forum to contest unfair labor practices.

The way I see it, the next president has two jobs. He must first end the war in Iraq in order to return America to its standing in the world. But he must also restore the middle class and that will not happen without a new approach to trade. A Biden administration will put the creation – not the export – of American jobs at the center of its trade policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Biden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

Senator Joe Biden