

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, October 10, 2006

Contact: Arthur Stamoulis
(503) 736-9777

BUSINESS AND LABOR:

“Free Trade” a Major Cause of Job Loss Across Oregon, Report Says

*New Study Documents the Impact of Outsourcing and Foreign Competition in
20 Communities throughout Oregon; Estimates 68,000 Jobs Lost*

Portland, OR — A new report about the impact of outsourcing and foreign competition on Oregon released today by the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign (ORFTC) finds that an estimated 68,000 Oregonians have lost jobs due to international trade policies. The report provides first-hand accounts of the negative effects that trade-related job loss has on families and communities throughout the state, quoting from among over 100 interviews ORFTC conducted with displaced workers in 20 separate Oregon communities.

“Free trade agreements like NAFTA have caused significant job loss in all corners of the state,” said ORFTC Director Arthur Stamoulis. “While workers in the manufacturing sector have been hit the hardest, even service sector workers and white collar office workers are beginning to see their jobs move abroad. Outsourcing is a trend that is sparing few industries, and reckless trade policy is accelerating that trend.”

The report *Faces of Free Trade and Job Loss* draws on interviews with displaced workers from Bend, Coos Bay, Hermiston, Klamath Falls, Nyssa, Portland, Roseburg, Salem, Wilsonville and eleven other cities and towns throughout the state. General trends repeated in many interviews include that:

- Trade-related job loss is effecting a wide range of industries—not just the manufacturing sector
- Plant closures are devastating not only to individual families, but to entire communities—particularly in rural areas without diverse employment bases
- People who have lost their jobs due to free trade are often moving into lower paying jobs with fewer benefits
- Many displaced workers find that the government is the only major employer left in their community that still offers family-wage jobs

“These trade agreements craft a new way that companies do business. There is definitely nothing fair about them,” Diego Castellanoz, former mayor of Nyssa, is quoted as saying in the report. “Because of the sugar allotments put into affect by NAFTA, the Amalgamated Sugar company had to shut down a processing plant. There was certification that this was a

—continued—

NAFTA-related layoff. This community loses about \$1 million a year from this one shut down. People are leaving the area to look for work and cause a loss for the school district. This is a huge blow.”

The U.S. Department of Labor tracks trade-related plant closures and certifies certain categories of workers as eligible for its Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Examining TAA records, ORFTC found 32,000 Oregon jobs certified as lost due to trade. Many additional Oregonians have lost their jobs due to outsourcing and foreign competition, but fall into categories of work not typically covered by the TAA program; this often includes truck drivers, service technicians, suppliers, consultants, small business owners, growers, ranchers, fishermen and many others. The Department of Labor does not certify these additional trade-related job losses. ORFTC estimates that 68,000 Oregon jobs have been lost due to outsourcing and foreign competition since NAFTA took effect in 1994.

“I don’t know what people are going to have left if this continues,” Oakley Taylor of Bend, a former KorPine employee, is quoted as saying in the report. “It’s just a rapid decline, as far as I can see, with the quality of people’s lives. Anyone that works hard deserves to make a decent living, deserves to take a vacation two weeks out of every year and not struggle all the time.”

The U.S. trade deficit is currently at its highest level in history, rising to \$68 billion in July 2006, according to the U.S. Commerce Department. Median household incomes in Oregon fell by 8.3% between 2000 and 2005 from \$48,176 to \$44,159, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Census and MBG Information Services.

“It’s time that members of Congress realize that the free-trade agenda isn’t working for Oregon,” said Stamoulis. “There are proposals being debated right now about whether to expand NAFTA into countries like Peru and Colombia. They should be opposed. The record of job loss due to these type of agreements is just too obvious to ignore.”

Interviewees for the ORFTC report included former high-tech workers from Wilsonville; sugar beet growers from Ontario; small business owners from Glide; forest product workers from North Bend; technical writers from Beaverton; and many others. For a complete list of interview locations and profiles of interviewees quoted in the report, download the report online at: www.citizenstrade.org/pdf2/Faces_of_Free_Trade.pdf

###