



2008 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

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The Ohio Conference on Fair Trade (OCFT) is a statewide coalition of Labor, Faith, Environmental, Agricultural, Community and Social Justice organizations, advocating for fair trade policies and a more socially and economically just globalization model.

OCFT members include: The Ohio AFL-CIO, United Steel Workers (District 1), UNITE HERE (Ohio State Council), Ohio Farmers Union, Jobs With Justice, Ohio League of Conservation Voters, Ohio Environmental Council, Ohio Sierra Club, Ohio Federation of Teachers, Simply Living, United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries, Ohio Civil Service Employees Association, Americans for Democratic Action, Ohio Working Group on Latin America, Department for Social Concerns of Columbus Catholic Diocese, and various Locals of USW, CWA, AFSCME, IBEW and Sheet Metal Workers.

The members of our coalition are concerned about the current model of globalization being implemented under the World Trade Organization (WTO). NAFTA-style trade agreements have resulted in significant job loss in Ohio. The impact of these policies have resulted in degradation of our environment, downward pressure on wages and workplace safety, inability to access health-care and higher education, eroded tax bases, increased poverty, immigration and insecurity in developing countries, deterioration of our infrastructure, and the undermining of safe and healthy local food in Ohio.

We are looking for commitments from the next President of our country to address these growing problems. Please help us by thoughtfully considering our questions and by committing to real change for Ohio and the U.S.!

1. Agriculture

a. How would you encourage the benefit of more vibrant family farms and local food security systems as promoted by the new provisions of the Farm Bill when they contradict the provisions and goals of the WTO and our current NAFTA-style trade agreements?

Answer:

As President, I will ensure that trade agreements benefit workers and farmers - not just corporate elites. In the early months of my presidency, I will observe a timeout from new trade agreements until my administration has reviewed all of our existing agreements and has formulated a comprehensive trade policy for the 21st century that promotes the interests of all Americans. Also, as President, I will continue to pursue the priorities on agriculture that I have as Senator of New York. Local marketing, purchasing and distribution of food from our family farms are crucial. I have introduced the FOOD for a Healthy America Act (S. 1432), with Sen. Brown, which will go to the heart of expanding direct-to-consumer marketing of products to the benefit of those in underserved areas, in need of healthier food, and the farmers who can use more markets to increase their share of the food dollar. Thinking of innovative ways to help farmers and strengthening family run operations has been a focus of mine, and something I've succeeded with in New York. That is also why I created my "Farm-to-Fork" initiative to develop new ways to tackle the hurdles that obstruct farmers and create opportunities where they can find in roads to the largest market in our country, New York City.

2. China Trade

Ohio has been harder hit than most states by trade policies with China. Our state has lost more than 200,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000. Ohio manufacturers are unable to compete when China grants enormous subsidies to foreign investors and misaligns its currency, which Federal Reserve Chair Bernanke calls "an effective subsidy." In November 2007, the U.S. reached a new record annual trade deficit with China -- without December's figures even being calculated.

a. As President, what specific steps will you take in your first year to address China's unfair advantage over Ohio workers and manufacturers?

Answer:

The Bush administration has failed to make China play by the rules. Consequently, our workers – particularly those in manufacturing states like Ohio – have paid a price. That is why as President, I will crack down on China's unfair trade practices. I have co-sponsored the Currency Exchange Rate Oversight Reform Act, which will require the administration to take definitive steps to stop China and other countries from harming American interests by undervaluing their currencies. And because currency manipulation is contributing to the trade deficit, I have also co-sponsored legislation that will require the administration to address the ballooning trade deficit. As President, I will make enforcement of trade agreements a priority. To that end, I will appoint a trade enforcement officer and double the enforcement staff at the Office of the United States Trade Representative. The current staff is too small to monitor and enforce the increasingly complex trade agreements.

b. How would you address China's Human Rights violations and China's failure to enforce labor and environmental standards which contribute to unfair trade advantages?

Answer:

As President, I will require that all future trade agreements contain strong and enforceable labor and environmental provisions in the core of the agreement. These provisions will elevate labor and environmental standards around the world, protecting our workers from a race to the bottom. These provisions will also make it harder for companies to ship jobs to countries where workers have fewer protections than they do in the United States.

c. Will you commit to initiating and obtaining Congressional approval of legislation that will end the importation of toxic foods, toys and products from China, and to initiating amendments to the WTO that will allow the United States to require all imported products meet our domestic safety standards and allow us to inspect imports to the degree we determine is needed?

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

We have to take decisive steps here at home to protect our children and our citizens, but we also have to push China to improve its safety record. I have proposed a broad safety agenda to address this challenge. Specific initiatives in my plan include creating a single food safety agency; banning lead in children's products; requiring independent third-party testing of imported toys; holding foreign products of drugs, toys, and food to American safety requirements and holding importers liable for the products they bring into this country; and imposing stiffer penalties and pursuing criminal prosecutions against companies that put our children and citizens at risk. I will also increase the number of inspectors at ports of entry and in foreign countries to verify that our safety rules are being followed, mandate and fully fund Country of Origin Labeling, and appoint a chair to the Consumer Product Safety Commission whose first priority is protecting the public not industry.

3. Dumping Practices

"Dumping" refers to the practice of exporting subsidized commodities to the markets of another nation at prices below the actual cost of production. Under NAFTA, the exportation of subsidized corn from the U.S decimated Mexican farms, putting more than 1.5 million family farmers out of business with a resulting 60% increase of immigration from Mexico to the U.S. Chinese steel manufacturers benefit from an array of subsidies that have displaced American steel workers even though U.S. steel production is among the most efficient in the world.

a. Will you commit to prohibiting the practice of "dumping" in our trade agreements?

Yes

No

b. What would you do to eliminate the practices of dumping?

Answer:

As President, I will formulate a trade policy that is genuinely pro-worker and pro-American. I have also introduced the Trade Agreement Assessment Act, which will periodically review all trade agreement to measure how they are working and, in the process, to make clear what requires fixing. I will also make trade enforcement an absolute priority. To that end, I will appoint a trade enforcement officer and double the enforcement staff at USTR. The United States has legal processes for dealing with countries that dump goods in our market. As President, when it is appropriate, I will consider antidumping cases against countries that are harming our workers and our economy. In 2005, I voted for an amendment introduced by Senator Dorgan to stop the administration from weakening our ability to use countervailing and antidumping duties.

4. Fast Track

Fast Track Trade Promotion Authority allows presidents to sign trade deals before elected members of Congress are able to approve the agreements' terms. This process destroys the important checks and balances process the Founders wisely included in the Constitution to provide Congress with exclusive authority to set the terms of commerce with foreign nations. This process also thwarts Americans' ability to hold their elected officials accountable. Hundreds of trade agreements have been implemented without Fast Track, including the Jordan FTA which excluded NAFTA-style investor rights and included labor rights and thus enjoyed broad support in Congress. After Fast Track was enacted in 1974, the U.S. shifted from decades of balanced trade to an era of unprecedented and growing trade deficits. Since "Fast Track enabled trade agreements" like WTO and NAFTA were implemented, U.S. workers have suffered the destruction of one out of every four American manufacturing jobs – over four million total – which has resulted in flat median wages now hovering at 1974 levels in real terms, even as productivity increased substantially.

a. Will you commit to replacing the Fast Track negotiating process with a new system that includes readiness criteria to determine appropriate negotiating partners, binding obligations regarding what must and must not be in future trade agreements, and the right of Congress to vote before the signing of agreements?

Yes No

Additional Comments:

I oppose fast track for President Bush because he has failed to enforce our trade agreements and because he negotiates trade deals without particular concern for our workers. As President, I will take a timeout from new trade agreements. My priorities will be to review all of our existing agreements to ensure that they are benefiting our workers and to craft a trade policy that is genuinely pro-worker, pro-American, and vigorously enforced. Our focus should not be on new trade deals, nor should it be on the fastest away of getting new deals done. It should be on enforcing the existing agreements and designing policies that benefit our workers. But fast track is not all that requires addressing. Before entering into trade agreements, we much consider

whether the country is a suitable partner for America. For example, I have opposed the trade agreement with South Korea because it did not do enough to level the playing field for American automotive workers. I have opposed the agreement with Colombia because of that country's history of violence against trade unionists. And I have opposed the agreement with Panama because the head of the country's National Assembly is a fugitive from justice in America.

5. World Trade Organization

The failing Doha round of talks at the World Trade Organization include an expansion of WTO authority that would limit government regulation of essential services, including higher education and energy. This expansion would provide foreign investors operating within the U.S. new rights to challenge our domestic service sector regulatory policies. Some of the U.S. energy service offers that would become part of a Doha Round agreement would limit critical proposals to combat global climate change. The Doha Round also provides for non-reciprocal tariff cuts regarding non-agricultural goods, meaning we would have to cut our tariffs on manufactured goods while many U.S. competitors such as China and Brazil would escape similar tariff cuts – disadvantaging our exports and increasing our markets' exposure to import floods.

a. Will your administration demand a halt to the current Doha talks based on this agenda, and instead champion a new round of WTO negotiations that is designed to address the many unfair and anti-democratic provisions in the existing WTO agreements?

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

We need a 21st century trade policy that allows us to better manage globalization. Trade policy cannot just protect the interests of elites. It must make our workers better off and it must elevate standards of living around the world. That is why I have insisted on ever stronger labor and environmental provisions that will ensure that American workers are not caught in a race to the bottom. As President, my immediate priority will not be new agreements. Rather, it will be to review our existing agreements to assess whether they are delivering benefits and to formulate a comprehensive trade policy that is genuinely pro-worker and pro-American. After the timeout, I will not sign any agreements that I do not believe protects American interests to the fullest extent possible. I strongly believe that the President should not rush to sign other trade agreements on his way out of office.

b. How will you develop new strategies for reorganizing the priorities of the WTO to the benefit of the health, security and sovereignty of all participants?

If trade is to work, it cannot just benefit elites. It must benefit workers as well, and it must elevate standards of living here and around the world. That is why strong, enforceable labor and environmental standards are so important.

6. American Sovereignty

Trade deals like NAFTA and CAFTA give foreign investors greater rights than U.S. citizens or businesses. These trade agreements allow foreign businesses to bypass the courts and directly sue the United States in foreign trade tribunals. These pacts empower foreign investors to challenge our U.S. federal and state environmental, agricultural, zoning, health and safety laws. Additionally, agreements such as the Oman FTA provided foreign investors with rights to operate our sensitive infrastructure, such as ports. The FTAs since CAFTA have allowed foreign investors to contest the terms of their natural resource concession and infrastructure construction contracts with the federal government before foreign tribunals under FTA rules, rather than bringing such disputes to U.S. courts as is required of U.S. citizens and firms.

a. Will you commit to removing the provisions in existing trade agreements that allow foreign corporations to enforce their natural resource concession and other contracts with the U.S. federal government before foreign tribunals and commit to excluding such provisions from future agreements you may negotiate?

Yes **No**

Additional Comments:

As part of my plan to fix NAFTA, I have called for revising the provisions that permit foreign companies to challenge U.S. laws before special panels rather than in courts. The laws companies can challenge include regulations intended to protect workers and protect the environment. I believe that trade agreements must elevate standards of living around the world and not empower corporations to hold those standards down. Furthermore, foreign companies should not have greater rights than American companies.

b. What is your opinion of providing rights in trade agreements for foreign operation and control of our infrastructure?

Answer:

I am very concerned about ceding control of critical American infrastructure to foreign ownership. That is why I vigorously opposed Dubai Ports World's efforts to acquire control of American ports. As President, I will ensure that our Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) is carefully reviewing foreign acquisitions of American assets that may raise strategic and security concerns.

7. Replacing the NAFTA Model

Ohio has been harder hit than most states by the outsourcing and off-shoring of jobs due to NAFTA and NAFTA-style trade agreements. Ohio has experienced a direct net loss of at least 50,000 jobs to NAFTA. Not reflected in this figure is the "ripple-effect" of job loss on the part of community support services and supply-chain sources. We are encouraged that at least two Presidential candidates have committed to review NAFTA and renegotiate aspects of it!

a. To combat incentives for off-shoring, will you renegotiate NAFTA and CAFTA to eliminate investor rules that allow private enforcement of investor privileges in foreign tribunals, and that

give foreign investors greater rights than are provided by the U.S. Constitution as interpreted by our Supreme Court?

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

I have said that NAFTA was a mistake – it has not lived up to its promises. As President, I will work with Canada and Mexico to fix the agreement so that it works for America. I have a four-point plan to fix NAFTA and it includes changing the rules that allow private enforcement of investor privileges. Specifically, my plan calls for:

1) Dramatically strengthening NAFTA's labor and environmental provisions. Strengthening these provisions will elevate labor and environmental standards around the world, protecting our workers from a race to the bottom. It will also make it harder for companies to move jobs to countries where workers have fewer protections than they do in America. NAFTA's labor and environmental provisions are now in a side agreement rather than in the core text. The requirements are weaker than those I will demand in future trade agreements and weaker than those the Democratic leadership recently crafted. As President, I will bring NAFTA's labor and environmental protections up to date. I will make the standards far tougher and absolutely binding, and I will place them in the core agreement in order to raise living standards around the world.

2) Changing NAFTA's investment provisions that grant special rights to foreign companies. Under NAFTA, foreign companies can challenge American laws before special tribunals and outside of our court system. The laws that foreign companies can challenge include regulations intended to protect workers and protect the environment. I believe that trade agreements must elevate standards of living around the world, not empower corporations to hold them down.

3) Strengthening NAFTA's enforcement mechanisms. Stronger enforcement mechanisms will ensure strict compliance with the agreement and it will help remove trade barriers our companies may still encounter. I will apply the stronger enforcement mechanisms not only to NAFTA's commercial provisions, but also to its labor and environmental provisions.

4) Reviewing NAFTA regularly. Regular reviews will enable us to measure whether our workers and communities are reaping benefits, ensure that labor and environmental standards are improving, and allow us to assess whether the agreement requires additional changes going forward.

b. Will you commit to impose a moratorium on NAFTA-style trade agreements until the long-range impacts of these ten agreements can be determined and assessed and the damaging provisions addressed?

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

As President, I will take a timeout from signing new trade agreements until my administration has accomplished two things: (1) reviewed every trade agreement to assess whether it is benefiting our workers and our economy; and (2) formulated a comprehensive trade policy for the 21st century that is genuinely pro-worker, pro-American, and vigorously enforced. I have introduced the Trade Agreement Assessment Act so that all of our trade agreements will be reviewed every five years. This would enable us not only to measure their effects but also to learn whether our trade partners are elevating their labor and environmental standards.

c. Will you commit to providing meaningful assistance to displaced Ohio workers by working with Labor Leaders to strengthen Trade Adjustment Assistance programs and develop new programs to re-train workers in all impacted industries for jobs that will provide long-term and sustainable family-supporting employment?

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

As President, I will ensure that workers who are hurt by the global economy receive the assistance and training they need to get back on their feet. I have proposed to expand the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program to help displaced workers. I will broaden TAA to cover all workers whose plants have moved to any foreign country (including China and India), rather than simply those countries with which we have free trade agreements. I will also expand TAA to cover service workers, so people in occupations like call-center operators receive assistance. I will also double funding for TAA's job training program, because education and training and important for equipping workers for the jobs of tomorrow. I will also overhaul the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC), making the subsidy far more generous and enabling certain beneficiaries to use it to buy into the health plan that is available to Members of Congress.

d. Will you please indicate the reason(s) for your support of, or opposition to, the recent Peru Free Trade Agreement?

Answer:

I opposed the free trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama, but I supported the agreement with Peru. The Peru agreement incorporated the strongest labor and environmental provisions we have had to date. It will help elevate standards of living around the world and help ensure that our workers are not trapped in a race to the bottom. Also, the Peru agreement levels the playing field for American workers. Prior to this agreement, most Peruvian goods entered the United States duty free, but American goods entering Peru were subject to tariffs.

By signing this Questionnaire, I submit that these answers represent my commitment to formulating a fairer and more just trade policy when I become President, and my permission to share these intentions with your membership and with the people of Ohio.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Signature

February 28, 2008

Date

Thank you for completing this Questionnaire! The Ohio Conference on Fair Trade appreciates your willingness to address these important issues, and we wish you well in your campaign. We also look forward to the opportunity to work with you during your candidacy and during your term(s) in Public office.