

Citizens Trade Campaign

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For Immediate Release:
January 23, 2004

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U.S. Trade Policy Will Loom Large for Candidates in Coming Weeks

Trade to Be a Decisive Issue for Democrats in Affected States Like New Hampshire, Missouri, and South Carolina

WASHINGTON – The results of Iowa’s Democratic Caucus have demonstrated that the poor state of the economy is the issue of greatest concern to voters. Candidates had to demonstrate their stand on issues that most directly affect Iowa communities of workers and farmers – communities that would be deeply impacted by proposed trade agreements. Media coverage leading up to the Caucus pointed to the impact that trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have had on Iowa – most notably in thousands of lost jobs that analysts now predict will not be replaced.

Focus on the failure of U.S. trade policy will likely be even more intense in South Carolina, where more manufacturing jobs were lost last year than any other state, in New Hampshire, where factory workers have lost one out of every five factory jobs since July 2000, and in Missouri, which has lost 51,200 factory jobs in the past four years. South Carolina and Missouri hold their Democratic primaries on February 3rd, following New Hampshire’s primary on January 27th. The candidates will hold a nationally televised debate in Greenville, SC on January 29th in which trade policy and jobs are expected to loom large.

“The Iowa Caucus has shown that jobs are going to be a central issue in deciding a Democratic contender against Bush,” said Bill Klinefelter, Legislative and Political Director of the United Steelworkers of America. **“The effect of trade on communities in states like South Carolina will be perhaps even more of a concern to voters there.”**

“I’ve been farming in Iowa for 27 years, and this is the first time I’ve seen all the candidates respond to the message of Iowa citizens that ‘free trade’ doesn’t make sense and the Iowa economy has been hurt by free trade agreements,” said George Naylor, President of the National Family Farm Coalition. **“Iowa farmers in particular made it clear that ‘export-oriented’ farm bills have not brought prosperity to rural Iowa, but have enriched grain exporters and corporate livestock factories.”**

“It’s the economy, stupid,’ is a more relevant slogan now than it was even twelve years ago,” said Gretchen Gordon, Director of Citizens Trade Campaign. **“The current U.S. trade policy is creating unsustainable deficits, wiping out millions of jobs, and driving the economy into the ground, all for the sake of corporate profits.”**

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The Citizens Trade Campaign (CTC) is a national coalition of environmental, labor, consumer, family farm, religious, and other civil society groups founded in 1992 during the fight over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). CTC members include the National Family Farm Coalition; United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society; Public Citizen; International Brotherhood of Teamsters; UNITE!; Friends of the Earth; the United Steelworkers of America; United Students Against Sweatshops; Communications Workers of America; Western Organization of Resource Councils; American Lands Alliance; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment; Defenders of Wildlife; and Americans for Democratic Action, as well as regional, state, and city-based coalitions, organizations, and individual activists throughout the United States.