

Congress 'Doesn't Get It,' Kucinich Says After Peru Trade Vote, and Neither Do Other Democratic Presidential Candidates

Kucinich for President 2008
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WASHINGTON /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- This morning's passage of the Peru Free Trade Agreement by the U.S. House proves that the Democrat-controlled Congress is totally out of touch with the American people and refuses to abide by promises it made to voters in last year's elections, Democratic Presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich said immediately following the vote.

"They just don't get it," said Kucinich, D-OH, one of 132 members who voted against the measure, "and neither do the other candidates for President whose campaign rhetoric on trade is a smokescreen to conceal their voting records on trade."

"When they are standing in front of a union audience or outside a closed plant somewhere, they bemoan the three millions jobs that have been lost because of free trade agreements," Kucinich noted. "When they had a chance to vote as a member of Congress, they supported those agreements, which means they voted against American workers."

Kucinich cited an analysis conducted by Public Citizen in August (<http://citizen.typepad.com/eyesontrade/2007/08/how-the-prez-ca.html>) showing the actual voting records of all of the Presidential candidates on trade agreements. The report, titled "Eyes on Trade," gave Kucinich the highest ranking of any candidate: 93% for supporting "fair trade" measures. He would have received a 100% ranking except he was absent for one of the votes.

The closest Democratic candidate, former Senator John Edwards, received only a 63% favorable score. In fact, Kucinich pointed out, two Republican candidates -- Reps. Duncan Hunter and Ron Paul - scored better than Edwards and all of the other Democrats running for the nomination.

"My colleagues are trying to sound like Democrats on the stump, but they have voted like corporate Republicans on the floor of the Senate," Kucinich said.

He pointed out that Edwards has been critical lately of dangerous and defective products being imported from China, but, "he carefully avoids telling voters that he supported the China Trade Agreement in 2000."

In fact, Kucinich noted, Edwards made a statement in 2000 acknowledging that "it does us no good to pretend that these remedies are perfect and that people will not be hurt."

"Vote for a trade agreement that will hurt people? Vote for a war that will kill people? Vote for the Patriot Act that robs U.S. citizens of their Constitutional rights? When it really mattered, these other candidates were wrong, and no amount of apologies, excuses, or evasion can change that," Kucinich said.

Edwards' recently announced opposition to the Peru Trade Agreement "hardly makes up for a record of supporting the disastrous China agreement and refusing to support the cancellation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)," Kucinich said.

But, he added, "voters are beginning to see through the smokescreens." He pointed to his stunning sweep of 47 states in an online poll by the grassroots political action committee Democracy for America. More than 150,000 Democratic voters and activists cast ballots, and, among declared candidates, Kucinich was the top vote-getter nationally and in 47 states. "I have been right on the issues when it mattered. I have been consistent on the issues all along. And my positions reflect the core beliefs and values of real Democrats."