

Job-Killing Trade Agreement Perpetuates NAFTA & CAFTA Flaws

Teamsters

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WASHINGTON-- Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 4340, the U.S. Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, dealing another blow to Teamsters and workers everywhere.

"Once again, this out-of-touch Congress has passed a trade agreement that fails American workers," said Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa. "These millionaire politicians need to wake up and stop ignoring working families and the economic difficulties they are facing today."

Last year, the United States' trade deficit was an unprecedented \$617 billion. Workers' wages have failed to keep pace with inflation, median family income continues to decline and more than 3 million manufacturing jobs have been lost since 1998.

"This administration wants to turn the entire Middle East into a free trade area by 2013, and the Bahrain deal is part of that scheme," Hoffa said. "While our brave men and women in uniform are putting their lives on the line in the Middle East, the administration is pushing free trade agreements that are bad for workers both here and in that region. This is the wrong deal at the wrong time."

The Bahrain trade deal largely replicates the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) model that has cost the United States millions of jobs. NAFTA has allowed violations of core labor standards to continue, resulting in numerous challenges to laws and regulations designed to protect workers and the public interest.

Next week, the World Trade Organization will hold its next round of negotiations in Hong Kong. The Teamsters will be there to make sure that core labor and human rights issues are part of the debate on global trade.

Founded in 1903, the Teamsters Union represents more than 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States and Canada.