

United Auto Workers CAP
Convention
Harrisburg, PA
October 30, 1989

Thank you John. It's good to be here with all of you today. The United Auto Workers stand up for the working people of America, and I am proud that you honored me with your endorsement during my re-election run last year.

I am especially grateful for your trust and confidence because the UAW doesn't endorse very many Republicans. To be more precise, in last year's Senate elections, the UAW endorsed only one Republican. John Taylor told me not to worry about it. It is quality not quantity that matters.

Sometimes I've had to take stands members of my party did not like. And the UAW and I haven't agreed on every issue over the years, either. But you and I have had a common interest in building a proud, productive, caring America; and we have shared more common ground in that fight.

We agree people have a right to organize and to bargain collectively. That's why we fought side by side when some wanted to weaken the Hobbes Act. Picketing must never be a federal crime. The criminal code should be used to stop crime, never as a means of union-busting.

We agree people putting in a day's work have a right to a living wage. That's why we are fighting for a higher minimum wage that provides a ladder of opportunity, and not a differential wage and treadmill which leads nowhere.

We agree that, when a plant shuts down, people shouldn't have to find out about it from a sign on a gate that says "Closed for Good." Men and women who have given all their working lives to an enterprise don't deserve to be summarily dispossessed of their hopes and dreams. That's why I'm proud to have fought for the plant closing law. It's the right and decent thing to do for people who have worked hard all their lives.

When the Volkswagen plant closed, it was a devastating blow in Western Pennsylvania, to your members and dozens of small communities. And, even though the company provided a year's notice, we found our work had only just begun. When the workers were threatened with the loss of their Trade Adjustment benefits---income support as well as job training---we agreed that we needed to do something about this injustice. That's why I amended the 1988 Trade Bill to guarantee them one year's income support and two years' job training.

But the best help we can provide workers is to make sure plants don't close at all. I happen to believe that the V-22 Osprey important for America's national security. But we also know that it is vitally important to the economic security of the 1,100 V-22 workers at the Boeing plant in Delaware County. That's why we are fighting doubly hard to make sure our Marines keep the V-22, which they have said is their #1 priority.

Our agenda contains unfinished business---like broadening federal support for child care, health care and retirement security. And we must continue economic growth and expand opportunities for working Americans.

That's not to say that we haven't come far. September marked the 82nd straight month of economic expansion. During that month, the economy produced 209,000 non-farm jobs. Industrial production is nearly 3 percent higher than one year ago.

Those are good numbers. They're the good news.

The bad news is that the numbers don't look good when it comes to manufacturing and trade. The Nation's merchandise trade deficit rose sharply in August to almost \$11 billion -- a 1/3 hike in just one month.

These are the worst trade numbers in the last 6 years and it ought to wake people up. For six years people have been dreaming the trade deficit away. Now maybe people will come back to reality.

When you are on a ship that hits an iceberg, you don't go out to get ice cubes. You get set to face an emergency. We have a trade emergency, and our biggest problem is Japan.

Last year, Japan accounted for nearly 15 percent of our trade but over 40 percent of our trade deficit. What are we doing about it? Negotiating an agreement. It will be the ninth in 8 years. Negotiating is great...negotiators get to travel...they employ lots of lawyers...they get plenty of news coverage...they get agreements that the Japanese will try harder...they get everything but the one thing that counts: RESULTS. Yes. Negotiations are great, but only if you're the Japanese.

The U.S. continues to seek "a level playing field"----equality of competition under a common set of rules---with countries such as Japan. A level playing field is nice. But it's wrong. It is wrong because there can be "no" level playing field when the teams are not playing the same game. We're out there playing badminton...NFL football.

Rather than complain and ask to negotiate every time Japan breaks the rules, rather than moan and groan every year that our trade deficit grows with that country, we need to say, "look last year our trade deficit with you was \$55 B., next year we expect it to be two-thirds of that. As the commercial goes, "JUST DO IT." Fail, and we start the hammer falling on access to our markets. In short, for those countries that attempt to make trade a one-way street we have an answer: lower the speed limit and if they don't cut back, we put up a stop sign as well.

That's just one way to fight for America. But there's another way. A moral and economical way--we need to change our thinking about people in the labor market.

People aren't a commodity that should simply trade based on today's supply and demand. That may be OK for cotton, or wheat, or timber. But people shouldn't be treated so many lumps of wood or sides of beef. People are the one resource that repays what is given or invested many times over. The love we give our children, the education we receive, are returned a hundred fold.

That's why we need to invest more in the education and training of our human capital. That's why Sen. Rockefeller and I wrote a billion dollar a yen displaced worker program in the 1987 Trade Bill.

And this year, when the Senate considers JTPA reauthorization, it's why I intend to strengthen this vital program further. I will offer an amendment which will give Governors the ability to target additional resources when unexpected disaster strikes---like VW. 9 percent of JTPA funds will be set aside in a special Governor discretionary account. I hope I can count on your support.

And we need to look at the big picture as well.

We've got 25 million new workers entering the labor force by the end of this century. They won't get decent jobs unless they receive an adequate education. One that's a lot better and goes a lot further. Not just high school but an educational or work experience equal to that of college otherwise we will find ourselves saddled with a learning deficit that's bigger and more dangerous than the trade deficit.

There's another responsibility to the future of America that's being ignored. One that affects every American worker. Social Security. Congress is using Social Security to cover the federal deficit. We are borrowing now to pay for today and it's not right. I've introduced legislation to stop this right now. To take Social Security off-budget. To do it now before our children retire to find nothing left.

The America our children inherit is being decided today. It's in our hands. In standing up for what I believe in, by demanding that Congress and the Administration make the right decisions. By asking the right questions about what kind of America we will leave for the generations who follow we will meet our responsibility and common interest in building a proud, productive, caring America. Yes, we've had some successes but we have so much more to do. With your support, I know that we can do it.