

# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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JAMES P. HOFFA  
General President

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November 13, 2006

Vote No on Vietnam PNTR!

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.4 Million members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, I urge you to oppose granting Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status to Vietnam.

When China PNTR passed Congress in 2000, many forecasted that our trade deficit with China would improve and that granting China PNTR status would result in a win-win for both countries. The Teamsters warned Congress in 2000 that our trade deficit with China would increase and the employment in manufacturing would be depressed by China PNTR. Our concerns and predictions have become reality. Our Trade deficit with China today is at a record-breaking \$202 billion. We have lost more than three million manufacturing jobs. China manipulates its currency, putting our manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage. Labor abuses and violations continue to be a problem, and yet Congress and the Administration have done nothing to address this. By granting China PNTR status, the United States has lost much of its leverage. The same will hold true for Vietnam.

The Labor conditions in Vietnam are of great concern. Vietnam refuses to grant workers the most basic rights and protections. In Vietnam there is no freedom of association. The single national trade union is the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, which is firmly controlled by the Communist government of Vietnam. Child labor continues to be a problem in Vietnam. The Government reported that approximately twenty-three thousand children are working part-time or full-time in violation of labor law. There are also grave human rights abuses. The U.S. Department of State's 2005 Human Rights Report on Vietnam stated that, "the Government's human rights record remained unsatisfactory."

United States Representative

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Page 2

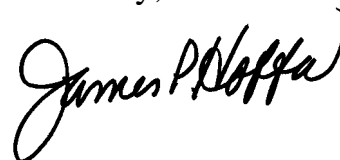
Because Vietnam is an authoritarian state, ruled and controlled by the Communist Party of Vietnam, its citizens are unable to change their government. There are grave restrictions on freedoms of speech, press, and assembly, restrictions on freedom of movement and freedom of religion, among many others. When the people of Vietnam express their political or religious dissenting views, the government is known to pressure, harass, and imprison them. Currently, there are U.S. citizens who have been imprisoned in Vietnam without a fair trial. After discovering this, some Members of Congress have used PNTR as leverage to force Vietnam to release these U.S. citizens. What will happen when we lose this leverage?

Wages are extremely low for Vietnamese workers. According to the State Department, the minimum wage for the state sector is \$22.15 a month. This is less than 80 cents a day. Vietnam PNTR will further provide multinational companies with another venue to further diminish our manufacturing sector and to close shop in the U.S. and relocate to Vietnam, where wages are low and workers have no voice. We will certainly see U.S. job loss and an increase in our trade deficit as a result of granting Vietnam PNTR status.

It is time that we change the direction of our trade policies. It is outrageous that even though we are faced with an increasing record-breaking deficit; a decline in middle-class wages; a decline in pension and health care benefits; and, the disappearance of manufacturing jobs, the Congress continues to pass flawed free trade agreements and PNTR status with non-democratic countries. These will only benefit multinational companies at the expense of workers everywhere.

It's clear from the recent elections that Americans voted for change. It's time for Congress to change our trade policies to stop ballooning trade deficits and the flow of jobs overseas. Please oppose granting Vietnam PNTR status when this legislation comes before the Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Hoffa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James P. Hoffa  
General President

JPH/ypl