

Weekly Video Address: Exports Help Generate Jobs

Written by Grassley Press
Monday, 11 July 2011 13:31

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Advisory for Iowa Reporters and Editors

Friday, July 8, 2011

During his weekly video address, Senator Chuck Grassley discusses three international trade agreements that can help generate jobs for workers in the United States.

[Click here](#) for audio.

The text of the address is available below.□□

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Exports Help Generate Jobs

This week the Senate Finance Committee turned to three international trade agreements that have been ready for action by Congress for four years. It was a big mistake to let these agreements get sidelined. Jobs supported by exports pay 15 percent more than the national average. Manufacturers, farmers, and the service sector need new markets for their products. So, it's a matter of retaining and creating jobs. And final approval of these agreements needs to be part of America's economic recovery effort.

Getting to a congressional vote has been a frustrating process. A year and a-half ago, President Obama said he wanted to double exports within the next five years. Still, he let the three trade agreements languish. This spring, the United States Trade Representative said the trade agreements were ready, but then the administration changed the terms and is insisting that the Trade Adjustment Assistance program be passed with the trade agreements.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance program should be voted on separately, rather than used to bog down job-generating trade agreements. The focus needs to stay on helping to spur manufacturing, services and agriculture-related jobs in the United States. The opportunities are significant. Today, U.S.-Colombia trade is a one-way street. None of our ag products have duty-free access to the Colombian market, but more than 99 percent of Colombian ag exports enter the U.S. market duty-free. With a trade agreement, Korea is expected to absorb five percent of total U.S. pork production. The insurance and financial services industry in the United States, including Iowa, says Korea represents the largest insurance market yet in a free-trade agreement and presents enormous opportunities for domestic job growth. Panama has tariffs on U.S. beef and corn that would go to zero under a trade agreement.

I talked with an Iowa cattleman who took a trip to Korea less than three weeks ago. He had a tremendous trip promoting U.S. beef. But one of his takeaways was that all of Asia is watching how the United States handles these trade deals. And want to know if the United States wants to be in a leadership role for international trade. They want to know if we are people of action, or just words. They want to know if we will follow through with these agreements or will we let them languish even longer. This cattleman came away with the message loud and clear. Either we get this done, or our trading partners will be looking at other places for the trading terms that they desire.

For the sake of U.S. exports, these trade agreements need to be implemented without delay.

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