

NOVEMBER 1, 2001

SCHAKOWSKY CALLS FOR FAIR TRADE POLICIES & DEFEAT OF H.R. 3005, TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON, D.C. - I wish to commend Jobs with Justice, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America for their leadership in organizing against H.R. 3005, the Trade Promotion Authority.

For too long, our country's trade policies have either totally ignored or seriously downplayed labor rights, human rights, and environmental protections. These critical issues must no longer be treated as secondary considerations, as afterthoughts to trade negotiations designed primarily to protect corporate interests and profits. But that is exactly what fast track legislation seeks to do.

Your commitment and your presence here today will help turn those dangerous and shortsighted trade policies around. In Chicago and all across this nation, working people, people of faith, environmentalists, farmers, women's and consumer advocates and others are joining together to block H.R. 3005 from ever being enacted.

Today, the Economic Policy Institute has released a study detailing the tragic record of NAFTA - the loss of over 140,000 jobs in Illinois and 3 million jobs across the country. Not only has NAFTA cost jobs here in the United States, it has contributed to poor working conditions and environmental damage in other countries. We all know that unfair and unjust trade policies do not only hurt Americans, they hurt people all across the world. We must be sure that there are no more NAFTAs.

Fast track legislation in Congress must be derailed and derailed now. Congress must not be allowed to abdicate its responsibility and its authority to review trade agreements and insist on high standards. The Administration must be told that it cannot continue to protect corporate interests at the expense of working people, struggling communities or environmental safeguards. We must not allow intellectual property rights to trump the right to fair wages and decent working conditions, good public health, and economic opportunity here and around the world.

We are not here today to oppose trade but to oppose unfair trade policies. We are here to demand that our nation's trade policies promote democracy and accountability, that workers are given a voice, that countries and companies that attack human rights or women's rights are not rewarded, that child labor and sweatshops are abolished, and that we adopt the highest environmental standards instead of countenancing environmental degradation. We can have trade policies that promote economic justice. That is our goal and, together, we can achieve that goal.