

## [Trade Unions Rip Bush Policies](#)

By Tom Ramstack - THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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Leaders of the nation's industrial unions lashed out at the Bush administration yesterday for the loss of manufacturing jobs.

Democratic members of Congress who met with the union leaders denounced the administration's policies on international trade and Medicare.

"It is time to get them out," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky, Illinois Democrat, during a legislative conference with AFL-CIO national labor federation representatives at the Cannon House Office Building.

The main issue that angered union leaders is international trade agreements that result in the export of American manufacturing jobs. They also complained about Bush administration proposals to rewrite overtime rules for hourly employees.

"American manufacturing remains deeply troubled," said Richard Trumka, the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Council chairman. "We've lost 2.6 million manufacturing jobs since George Bush took office."

The administration announced on Jan. 17 a plan to strengthen U.S. manufacturing with tax cuts and litigation reform.

"This is our strategy to remove the barriers that are holding back American manufacturers and costing jobs," Commerce Secretary Donald L. Evans said on announcing the plan.

Union leaders said, however, that the plan is a revamped version of long-standing Bush administration policies intended to improve his image but doing little to retain American jobs.

"It was more duct tape," said Mr. Trumka, during a speech at the Washington Hilton and Towers Hotel.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, California Democrat and House Minority leader, said, "The best way to create jobs is simple, to fire George Bush as president."

Democratic members of Congress also said Medicare reform legislation signed by Mr. Bush in December risks diminishing the quality of care for the elderly.

The legislation offers modest prescription-drug coverage and increases federal government payments to health-maintenance organizations for care of seniors.

Rep. John D. Dingell, Michigan Democrat, said yesterday that the law relies too heavily on HMOs as health care providers for the elderly.

"There are whole large areas of this country where there are no HMOs," Mr. Dingell said.

He urged union members to use Medicare as an issue to get rid of the Republicans who supported the legislation in the upcoming election.

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The unions also want the administration's proposed revisions to overtime laws scrapped.

The revisions, they say, would eliminate time-and-a-half pay for 8 million hourly employees.

The administration says the revisions would extend overtime pay to 3.5 million low-income workers who now lack it.

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