

**Statement Of Senator Frank R. Lautenberg
Democratic Policy Committee Hearing On Shipping American Jobs Overseas**

March 5, 2004

Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for holding this hearing on a timely subject that is affecting so many hard-working Americans: outsourcing American jobs to foreign workers.

The jobs creation record of this administration is atrocious. We have lost more than two million jobs since President Bush took office.

Each year, President Bush and his economic advisers have boasted that their policies would create millions of jobs. Each year, those predictions have been dead wrong. First, they predicted 5.5 million new jobs, and they created zero. Then they predicted 2.1 million new jobs, and they created zero. Now they're predicting 2.6 million new jobs.

It has gotten so bad that not even President Bush is willing to stand behind his economic advisers this time, which confirms what by now is abundantly clear: the President's economic policy team doesn't know what it's talking about. The President's economic policies are an abject failure.

Against this backdrop, is it really any surprise that Greg Mankiw [*Man-cue*], the Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, would actually come out and say – and I'm quoting – that outsourcing jobs to foreign countries is “just a new way of doing international trade.”

The callousness of that remark reveals the administration's lack of concern about the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have lost their jobs, many to workers overseas.

Bush has refused, time and again, to extend unemployment benefits, thinking that if joblessness isn't acknowledged, the problem will just go away somehow.

As our colleague Senator Dodd pointed out on Wednesday, this administration has cut funding for assistance programs in the Small Business Administration, vocational education, manufacturing extension partnerships – the list goes on. To top it off, the administration is cutting funding for the Workforce Investment Act by nearly half a billion dollars.

The Administration and Republicans in Congress just don't seem to care about ordinary Americans.

As I said, I support free trade under the right conditions. The right conditions include negotiating labor and environmental protections as part of trade agreements. Other countries may have a comparative advantage in some areas. But I believe that comparative advantage should not come from exploiting desperately poor people in developing countries or polluting their environment.

Cheaper production of a good or service abroad at the expense of our values and sense of decency and fairness is no comparative advantage at all.

The record is clear. This administration does not care about American workers who have lost their jobs to outsourcing. It does not care about foreign workers in sweatshops. It does not care about clean air or safe water. It has a single-minded obsession with boosting corporate profits to the advantage of the investor class.

What President Bush and his Republican colleagues don't understand is that enriching stockholders at the expense of hard-working Americans isn't a bargain for America. When Americans lose their jobs to outsourcing through no fault of their own, and the administration refuses to provide any meaningful help, that's a problem.

The purpose of this hearing is to examine why jobs are being lost, what can be done to reduce outsourcing, and what can be done to help the people who have lost their jobs. That's why this hearing is so important. I'm eager to hear from our witnesses.

Thank you.