

American Priorities For Working Families

Fair Trade NOW!: No One Wins a Race to the Bottom

THE BIG PICTURE

Because of differences in geography and climate, there is an unequal distribution of commodities around the globe. So from earliest times, people traded items they had in abundance for others they lacked. But modern advances in manufacturing, transportation and communication now make it possible to produce goods and services almost anywhere on the planet. Multinational corporations locate operations where wages are lowest, consumer and environmental protections fewest, and democracy weakest; then use their artificially cheap products to bring down standards everywhere else.

FACT CHECK

- > Under so-called "free trade," companies keep shifting their operations to ever more economically deprived communities (the U.S. to Mexico to China to Vietnam), driving down wages everywhere
- > "Free trade" agreements often forbid important environmental and consumer protections, endangering families' lives and savings
- > Democratic government is threatened by "free trade" agreements: often they overrule laws made by the people's representatives and allow companies to avoid being sued in local courts

THERE'S NOTHING FREEING ABOUT "FREE TRADE"

The only ones freed by so-called "free trade" agreements are multinational corporations, who are free to chase low wages; free to destroy indigenous crafts and industries with cookie-cutter globalization; and free to void any national laws that interfere with their ability to make a profit. The victims of free trade include workers, consumer and environmental safety, and democratic government.

THE ALTERNATIVE? FAIR TRADE

Being anti- "free trade" doesn't mean being anti-trade. Fair trade promotes widespread prosperity by respecting the rights of workers and local industries; the needs of consumers, and of social and natural environments; and the sovereignty of nations the world over.

MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.citizenstrade.org/ctc/>
www.sierraclub.org/trade/

