

# Understanding Our Economy

## Time To Get Tough With Trade Enforcement

by *Stephen Koplan*

(NAPSA)—Since the year 2000, the United States has lost 3 million manufacturing jobs. Last year, the U.S. trade deficit set a new record at \$764 billion and this has been happening year after year. China alone accounts for nearly 30 percent of that deficit.

Some free trade ideologues argue that we should basically dismantle our nation's trade laws to give foreign products greater access to our markets. They argue that the consumer will be better off.

With the size of our trade deficit, it's hard to argue with a straight face that products have trouble getting into our market. And while it's true that there may be some short-term benefit to consumers from allowing illegally dumped and subsidized imports into our market, a new study commissioned by the Alliance for American Manufacturing ([www.americanmanufacturing.org](http://www.americanmanufacturing.org)) shows that the long-term negative impact on our economy, our jobs, our producers and our communities vastly outweighs any small, short-term benefit.

The new study, "Enforcing the Rules," proves that our trade laws are vital to the health and success of our nation. For example, in the steel sector, lost profits and income between 1996 and 1998 amounted to \$2.66 billion. In the shrimp industry, the authors of the study computed that the nega-



tive impact was \$210 million between 2000 and 2003. And in furniture, the impact was \$333 million between 2001 and 2003. Other sectors of our economy, from agriculture to high technology, faced similar results.

Enforcing U.S. trade laws to prohibit unfair practices such as dumping and subsidies shouldn't be a question for our nation's leaders, it should be virtually automatic. People who work hard and play by the rules deserve to know that the government will stand by them and stand up for their interests when foreign countries try to cheat in the world trading system.

The message from this study is clear: Without vigorous enforcement of our U.S. trade laws, our domestic industries will suffer crippling losses and workers' jobs will be irretrievably lost.

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