



UAW ACTION GUIDE

STAND UP FOR OUR FUTURE: AUTO TARIFFS AND THE FIGHT TO END FREE TRADE

AUTO TARIFFS AND THE FIGHT TO END NAFTA:

Since 1994, when NAFTA was signed into law, over 90,000 manufacturing facilities have closed in the United States. NAFTA wrecked communities and ripped families apart, and left workers on unemployment or struggling to survive on low-wage jobs. The Big Three automakers alone have closed 65 facilities in the past 22 years. With the sectoral auto tariffs announced on March 26, thousands of good-paying blue collar auto jobs could be brought back to working-class communities within a matter of months, simply by adding additional shifts or lines in a number of underutilized auto plants. We support auto tariffs today because we have to stop the bleeding and we need to change the economics of offshoring and plant closures. Tariffs are a key tool in that toolbox.

But let's be clear: we're not here to back auto tariffs in a vacuum. We're not here to wave a flag for protectionism just for the sake of it. Tariffs are only a powerful tool when used strategically, not recklessly and arbitrarily. Tariffs can protect an industry. But only our union can protect us. Because when workers have no rights — when organizing is crushed — when unions are broken — when corporate greed is unchecked — all tariffs do is fatten the pockets of the very people who got rich shipping our jobs away in the first place.

Our broken trade system screws the American worker, the American consumer, and the American taxpayer. And it screws the Mexican worker too. The truth is that free trade isn't free. It's been a disaster for working people everywhere. This is about people's lives, not chaotic, abstract economic policy, with auto tariffs as just one piece of the puzzle. The real fight is still ahead: any job that comes back into the United States needs to be a GOOD, high quality, union job. We need union rights, a secure retirement with Social Security expanded and strengthened, healthcare including Medicare and Medicaid, and our rights protected on and off the job.

WHERE THE UAW HAS STOOD ON TARIFFS:

Opposing corporate-friendly trade deals and promoting investment in U.S. manufacturing are not new issues for the UAW. We have a long history of supporting the use of auto tariffs well before Donald Trump ever stepped foot in the White House. In fact, the UAW has been supporting tariffs to protect our members and their communities even before most UAW members were even born. In 1964, Walter Reuther supported President Lyndon Johnson's Chicken Tax, which included a 25% tariff on trucks and vans imported into the US. The UAW adamantly opposed NAFTA in the 1990s in part because the pact ended tariffs that helped protect American manufacturing jobs.

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WHERE THE UAW CAN LEAD:

RENEGOTIATE BROKEN TRADE DEALS:

- We call on the Trump administration and Congress to immediately begin renegotiating HIS OWN FAILED TRADE DEAL – the USMCA. This trade deal has only perpetuated NAFTA's harmful effects by increasing the trade deficit with Mexico, growing by nearly 50% for autos since its implementation under the first Trump administration, and allowing automakers to offshore U.S. jobs and drive a race to the bottom. Thousands of UAW Local 140 members at Warren Truck Assembly plant were told just a few months ago by former Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares that their good blue-collar jobs were moving to Mexico. This is where they can pay workers \$3 an hour and then ship finished trucks back over the border to sell back to Americans for \$100,000 a pop. Stop the exploitation on both sides of the border. Renegotiate USMCA immediately to prevent further job losses and to establish a North American minimum wage to curb auto worker exploitation.

ENDING THE FREE TRADE DISASTER:

- Both parties sold the lie of so-called “free trade” with NAFTA for over 30 years. A plant closing is like a bomb going off in a community. Thousands of communities have taken these hits – the lost jobs, shuttered houses on the block, neighborhood schools shutting down, hollowed out towns with empty buildings, and worst of all, people who lose hope for the future.
- We must fight like hell for this to end with a new approach on trade and U.S. manufacturing with a focus on good jobs in America. Between 2019 to 2023, the Big Three raised the average price of their cars by 34%. The companies translated this spike into 65% higher profits for the American automakers to pay out billions in stock buybacks and dividends for shareholders. If we are serious about ending the corporate chokehold on our economy and political system, we should crack down on corporate price gouging, ban stock buybacks and excessive CEO pay, stop union busting, and reinvest in the communities that have been destroyed by corporate greed.

WHAT THE WORKING-CLASS NEEDS ON TRADE:

- Autoworkers demand a new trade deal that fosters strong U.S. auto production with high labor standards, penalizes companies from closing plants and offshoring jobs, and fixes the auto parts supply chain with the same principles of fair wages, fair benefits, and an increase in American-made parts. Workers must be held harmless during any disruption that accompanies the reshoring process and must not pay the price for this transition back to good paying manufacturing jobs.