

By Kevin McCarthy September 7, 2011 [Link](#)

Right now, there are three pending export agreements negotiated by the White House that could create and support thousands of jobs. But after two years of delay, the Obama administration still has not sent them to Congress for consideration.

These free-trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea would have a significant positive effect on our economy. They would support 250,000 jobs spanning all sectors of our economy, including manufacturing, services and agriculture, according to the administration's own calculations.

Every \$1 billion in new exports of U.S. goods supports up to 6,000 additional jobs here at home. Trade directly translates to support for local economies and jobs. In my district, California's Central Valley, 139,627 jobs are directly supported by exports. In 2010 alone, \$44.3 billion in merchandise was exported from businesses there. Similar statistics abound across the country, and the potential for U.S. job growth only increases with these new agreements.

Yet, Americans listening to President Barack Obama this summer may mistakenly believe that Congress has delayed passage of these export agreements. There is nothing further from the truth.

The reality is that the White House messaging on trade is misleading: While the president was on his taxpayer-funded bus tour, giving lip service to job creation, he was trying to obscure the fact that he has stalled these job-creating trade agreements because of partisan political concerns.

The president has even gone so far as to request a joint session of Congress to talk about job creation. But Americans don't need more rhetoric about jobs — they need action and smart solutions.

The Obama administration's track record on economic growth and job creation is poor, at best. Their Keynesian stimulus spending experiment has backfired, and rather than a decrease in the jobless rate, as White House officials predicted, the number of unemployed Americans has skyrocketed.

More than 1.7 million Americans have lost their jobs since the stimulus was signed into law in February 2009. And the increased economic uncertainty has kept small businesses, the economic engine of our country, from hiring.

Another prime example of misguided policy that has hampered, rather than encouraged, job creation is the president's signature health care legislation — Obamacare. Despite claims that it would "create 4 million jobs — 400,000 jobs almost immediately," various studies have found that the law forces higher costs on businesses through reduced flexibility, increased mandates and taxes on employers that can lead to lower wages, fewer workers or both. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that Obamacare will further reduce the supply of labor by about 800,000 workers.

Now, the administration is striking another blow to job creation by allowing these trade agreements to languish on the president's desk.

It is disingenuous for Obama to talk about his commitment to job creation when his inaction here has led to U.S. businesses losing market share in countries like Colombia. For example, the U.S. share of the Colombian market for corn, wheat and soybeans plunged from 78 percent in 2008 to 28 percent in 2010.

Meanwhile, Colombia is deepening ties with China. In fact, a recent study found that China is expected to overtake the United States as the world's largest trader by 2015. If our country doesn't keep its competitive edge globally, it will put more U.S. jobs in jeopardy.

But there is no question we can avoid that future since trade can have a dramatic positive effect on an economy. The European Union's trade agreement with South Korea, for example, resulted in a 16 percent increase in exports in the first month.

The simple fact is that Obama has put politics before job creation and America is missing out on opportunities for economic growth. To get the economy going again, we need to make a commitment to advance policies that promote increased trade.

These trade agreements are the just the first step. House Republicans look forward to working with the president on real transformative job creation initiatives.

America's job creators, in every industry, are the most imaginative and hardworking business owners in the world. Their commitment to innovation and success is what drives our economic engine — and what has long made the U.S. free-market system the envy of the world.

Rather than limit the opportunities available to our entrepreneurs, we should ensure that they have the chance to market their products and be competitive around the world. Implementing these trade agreements is an important part of a multiprong approach to getting our country's economy back on track.

I encourage the president to turn his rhetoric on jobs into action and send Congress the trade agreements, free of extraneous political additions demanded by special interests, as he has previously promised.

We cannot afford to wait any longer.