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CHAIRMAN



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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Madam Speaker,

Twenty-five years ago, I strongly opposed and helped lead the opposition against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). While our efforts narrowly failed in the House, I was proud to vote against it.

Then-President Clinton said that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would create thousands of good-paying U.S. jobs and would result in trade surpluses between \$9-\$12 billion. The reality, however, couldn't be further from the truth, and NAFTA has been an absolute disaster.

After railing against NAFTA and promising to deliver a dramatically improved deal or withdraw from the agreement altogether, President Trump and his administration delivered the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). By all accounts, the USMCA was nothing more than a continuation of NAFTA's same failed policies.

After months of extensive negotiations between House Democrats and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), important improvements have been made to the USMCA on a number of issues, including improvements I have long fought for and helped secure.

After extensive work with USTR, I am proud to have secured provisions in the USMCA that will better enable the U.S. to safeguard our roads. The deal includes language that allows the United States to restrict domestic long-haul services by Mexican trucks in the event of material harm to U.S. trucking suppliers, operators, and drivers. I am pleased that this restriction provides teeth to protect the U.S. trucking industry from unfair trade practices by Mexican motor carriers, and provides for consideration of impacts on driver wages and working conditions, to avoid a race to the bottom in trucking.

I am also pleased that damaging provisions that would have kept prescription drug costs high have been removed. House Democrats were able to successfully negotiate the removal of provisions that would have kept cheaper, generic drugs off the market longer.

Working Americans have been waiting for more than two decades for the opportunity to fix NAFTA's failed policies. Throughout my career I have fought for a truly transformative replacement that supports American workers while safeguarding the environment and protecting consumers. While it is an improvement from NAFTA, I do not believe that the USMCA is that transformative deal, and, as a result, I will be voting against it today.

The fact of the matter is that there is a deeply entrenched system of wage and rights suppression in Mexico. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs were lost to Mexico as a result of this system, and these jobs aren't coming back to our country. Without upending this entrenched system altogether, we will not be able to raise wages and standards for Mexican workers, which means we will continue to struggle to prevent the hemorrhaging of American jobs that are being outsourced to low wage jobs in Mexico. I do not believe Mexico has devoted the funding or the staffing necessary for these changes, nor do I believe

this agreement goes far enough in ensuring that workers and the U.S. have the remedies needed to prevent abuses from continuing to occur moving forward. Democratic and Republican administrations have shirked their responsibilities to fight for higher labor standards and fair trade policies, and I do not believe this agreement does enough to prevent those kind of abuses moving forward.

Further, the Republican tax bill enacted in 2017 actually promotes outsourcing by allowing multinational corporations to cut their tax rate in half if they shut a factory in the U.S. and move it to Mexico. I will reintroduce legislation next year to eliminate this incentive.

Beyond this, the USMCA is at its core a deal that will continue to promote pro-polluter, climate-denying policies. There are no substantive provisions to seriously curb air and water pollution, the deal completely ignores climate change, and its environmental enforcement mechanism is not nearly strong enough. We need to do much more to take bold steps to address climate change and to curb corporate polluting.

I am also disappointed that the administration abandoned its original position to eliminate chapter 19. I have long called for the elimination of this unconstitutional chapter which allows foreign tribunals to overrule U.S. trade protections against heavily subsidized foreign imports, and I am disappointed that the administration acquiesced to Canada.

While I don't believe this agreement sets forward a bold vision for a 21st century trade agreement, the reality is that this agreement will become law, and that means the real work of monitoring and enforcing the new provisions will begin. I will push for robust oversight and enforcement of the labor and environmental standards and work to ensure that any and all flaws are appropriately addressed when the USMCA's sunset provisions kick-in six years from now.

I have spent my entire career fighting on behalf of the American worker, including voting against every so-called free trade deal proposed to Congress that undermines our workforce and enables the destruction of our environment. I will continue to fight for truly transformative deals that create a new standard for how trade agreements should support the U.S. and its people.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Pete Aguilar", is written below the text.