



BOB KING, President

DENNIS WILLIAMS, Secretary-Treasurer

VICE PRESIDENTS: JOE ASHTON • CINDY ESTRADA • GENERAL HOLIEFIELD • JIMMY SETTLES

IN REPLY REFER TO

September 19, 2011

1757 N STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
TELEPHONE: (202) 828-8500
FAX (202) 293-3457

Dear Senator:

Today the Senate is expected to take up legislation renewing the 2009 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, as an amendment offered by Senator Baucus to HR 2382, a bill to revive the Generalized System of Preferences. On behalf of one million active and retired UAW members, I urge you to vote for cloture, to oppose any weakening amendments, and to support the Baucus substitute amendment.

For more than 35 years, the TAA program has provided critical assistance and job training to many dislocated workers whose jobs were sent outside the United States as a consequence of our nation's trade and tax policies, which reward companies for off shoring work. In 2009, the Trade and Globalization Adjustment Assistance Act made significant improvements to the 2002 TAA program, including: expanded eligibility to workers whose jobs are shipped to countries with which the U.S. does not have a free trade agreement -- such as China and India -- as well as to service workers and public employees; increased the funding available for job training; provided a higher subsidy under TAA for Workers Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC), to 80 percent from 65 percent; and made important procedural changes to make it easier for recipients to access needed job training.

In December 2010, the House of Representatives voted on a bill to continue the 2009 TAA program, and it passed on suspension with no objection. Unfortunately, the Senate did not take up the bill before it recessed, and that program expired. The Baucus amendment does not contain all of the improvements that were made in 2009, for example, it lowers the HCTC subsidy and disqualifies public employees from coverage. But it does maintain the most critical aspects of the 2000 program, including coverage for workers whose jobs have moved to China or India.

At a time when our country's economic recovery is very fragile, when unemployment is still unacceptably high, and when hundreds of thousands of American workers have been adversely affected by our tax and trade policies, there is no justification for eliminating or scaling back TAA benefits to pre-recession levels.

For these reasons, the UAW strongly urges you to vote for cloture, to oppose any weakening amendments, and to vote for final passage of the Baucus substitute to HR 2382.

Sincerely,

Barbara Somson
Legislative Director