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Statement by UAW President Bob King on loss of auto supply jobs

For the United States to remain a middle class society, we must have a strong manufacturing sector. The auto parts industry represents 75 percent of all auto manufacturing jobs in the U.S. Jobs in auto parts manufacturing have declined by nearly half in ten years. It is the responsibility of the UAW to speak up for jobs in American communities.

There are two primary reasons for the loss of auto parts jobs in the U.S. First, American manufacturers have been outsourcing these jobs to Mexico. The priority of the UAW in collective bargaining is to convince American companies to return as many jobs as possible to the U.S.

The second cause of the loss of these jobs is imports by American companies from China, where the government provides large subsidies to companies in order to grow their own manufacturing sector. We very much appreciate President Obama's commitment to the auto industry, and we commend the U.S. government's efforts to enforce rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) so that the U.S. does not allow huge sectors of our manufacturing base to be exported.

We have great respect for the Chinese people, and we stand in solidarity with Chinese autoworkers and their unions. Many of these Chinese autoworkers work for the same multinational corporations as we do. The UAW has been working hard to build relationships of trust, respect and cooperation with auto unions around the world, and we look forward to building a strong relationship with Chinese autoworkers and their unions. While discussions and negotiations over trade issues will continue, we will never allow these discussions or negotiations to disrupt our friendship and common bond with autoworkers around the globe.

We call upon all global corporations to refrain from fostering or joining a "race to the bottom" to find workers to whom they can pay the least. We call on American corporations that operate around the globe to respect the rights of all workers to join unions and bargain collectively in order to achieve fair wages, benefits and decent working conditions.

Unions are the essential ingredient in globalization that builds a middle class rather than globalization that concentrates wealth in the hands of a few.

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