

News From
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Democrat from Maryland



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 5, 2004

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MIKULSKI FLOOR STATEMENT CALLING FOR ECONOMIC PATRIOTISM

Madam President, I want to thank the Senator from North Dakota for his passion and vigor in presenting this amendment. I also thank him for his story about the Red Rider, good old wagon. I had a Red Rider wagon. Growing up in a blue-collar neighborhood in Baltimore during World War II, my father had a little neighborhood grocery store. And one of the ways the groceries got delivered was in this good old red wagon we had. I could use the wagon for a couple things.

Dad would sometimes say: Barb, take the wagon down to Mrs. Smith or Yankowski or Coalino -- it was a very ethnic neighborhood -- they called in and ordered late. Run down those oranges and take the wagon.

I loved that red wagon. I was also a Girl Scout during World War II. Dad would let me use the wagon to go around the neighborhood to collect newspapers because we were recycling a variety of things for the war effort. I felt like a little soldier on the move with my red wagon and my little Girl Scout uniform, along with other kids from the troop going around. I was the kid with the wagon. I loved that wagon. I loved that neighborhood so much because in that neighborhood there were men off to World War II, saving Western civilization, saving the world.

We were the neighborhood of factories. We made liberty ships. We turned out a liberty ship, one ship every 3 weeks. We put out turbo steel to make the tanks. We had Glenn L. Martin that made the seaplanes that helped win the battle of the Pacific. We were in the manufacturing business. We were in the war effort business. And this little girl in her Girl Scout uniform with the little red wagon made in the USA felt she was doing her bit.

Guess what. Those jobs now are leaving. Our shipyard jobs have left. Our steel mills have shrunk to miniscule levels. We don't make ships. We don't make steel. We don't make clothing. We are really down. The blue-collar Baltimore of World War II and Korea and Vietnam just isn't what it used to be.

Where did those jobs go? Those jobs were on a slow boat to China. They were on a fast track to Mexico. And other jobs are in a dial 1-800 anywhere. And why did they go? They went because there were tax breaks that rewarded those corporations to move not only the red wagons but so much of this manufacturing overseas.

Today, as we know, if you are in business and in the good old United States of America, you get a tax break if you move those jobs overseas. I think it is wrong to give companies incentives to send millions of jobs to other countries when millions of Americans are losing their jobs. It is wrong to put companies who stay in America at a competitive disadvantage because they have their business and hire their workers at home, pay their share of taxes, and provide health care to their employees.

We should be rewarding these companies with good guy tax breaks for hiring and building their businesses right here in the United States. We should be giving good guy bonuses to American

corporations who are providing health care to their workers and to their retirees. But, no, we give tax breaks to those people who want to take their jobs and to another country.

It is time we look at our Tax Code and call for a patriotic Tax Code. I want a patriotic Tax Code. We walk around the floor of the Senate, we go to rallies, we love to be in parades. We wear our flags because we want to stand up for our troops -- and stand up for our troops we should -- but we have to stand up for America.

We have to stand up for America by having a strong economy. That is why I want a patriotic Tax Code. This amendment we are proposing is about patriotism. It is about economic patriotism. We have to start putting our might and our muscle and our Senat votes behind this.

What does a patriotic Tax Code do? I think it would focus on bringing our jobs back home and bringing our money back home. That is what a patriotic Tax Code would do. The Dorgan-Mikulski amendment is step one. It ends these huge tax breaks for manufacturing companies that send jobs overseas, only to sell the products they make right here in the United States of America. The current Tax Code lets these companies move the jobs and not pay taxes on the profits, even though they earn the profits by their sales of those products in the United States.

Our amendment tells these companies if you want to export jobs out of America, you need to pay the taxes on your profits. Our amendment says the Tax Code can no longer be used to boost corporate rewards at the expense of American workers. I have watched those jobs I have talked about leave. A couple months ago, we were hard hit on the eastern shore. There is a company headquartered in Maryland called Black and Decker. It makes many of the wonderful tools you use in your home. It was started by a Maryland family. The jobs were in America. Now the headquarters is in America, but the jobs are not here. The eastern shore jobs at that major manufacturing facility have left. Over a thousand people were laid off; 1,000 people in a little community like Talbot County. That is a tremendous impact. The impact has been felt by the whole community. People lost their jobs, and people had to cut back in terms of their homes, the way they shop at their grocery store; and there is great shrinkage in the United Fund. I could go on about that. Those jobs left this country.

At the same time, there are other examples. Take Maytag. Oh, gosh, every woman in America loves Maytag and that friendly guy who comes to service them. Well, I hope he speaks a foreign language to try to read the manual, because those Maytags are made somewhere else. By the way, they used to be made in Illinois. So those 1,500 jobs left. They were washed out, if you will, in this country.

Now, there is the exit of the service jobs. A lot of people in manufacturing who lost their jobs busted their backs and their butts to send their kids to higher education, community college, or college. They said go to college, kids, learn technology; it is the new field. You are not going to be laid off like me. You are going to have a future. America will be the tech country of the world. Well, guess what happened. Now the tech jobs are going. In the next few years, the IT sector will move over 500,000 jobs overseas. People are saying train -- you have to be kidding. Even our State governments are outsourcing jobs by hiring companies to do call centers overseas. I joined with Senator Dodd to stop the outsourcing of Federal jobs overseas to call centers.

That is why I stand here today with my colleague from North Dakota to call on us to think about economic patriotism, think about a patriotic Tax Code that, first of all, gives rewards to American companies that keep jobs here, and also a tax code that gives good bonuses to those companies that provide health insurance to their workers and also look out for their retirees.

Then the other thing is to end the despicable process and breaks and rewarding those companies who move not only the little red wagons, but very big manufacturing items overseas. That is why I want to stand up today for what I believe is the right thing to do. I call upon my colleagues to think about where America is going in the 21st century. Where are we going to be? Are we going to create more opportunity? Are we going to create more jobs that pay living wages, that have a benefit structure you can reward? Or are we going to resemble the economy of a third world country?

I really want to have a tax code that brings our jobs back home, brings our money back home, stands up for America. So pass the Dorgan-Mikulski amendment and take your first step toward economic patriotism.