

April 19, 2005

Good Evening,

I would like to start in Connecticut and work my way back to Maine. This won't take long. Sikorsky helicopters are the best in the world, but this President has decided to outsource the construction of Marine One, the Presidential helicopter. The President's message is that something's wrong with the quality of American made products. Sikorsky, first in helicopters and known through out the world as the best, has been slandered by this President. This could threaten the stability of this American company and American jobs by insinuating that Sikorsky is no longer the best at what it does. But there is a larger issue here, National security. Marine One is equipped with the best of the best in avionics; some so advanced that our military has not been equipped with it, yet. This helicopter is now going to be built by an Anglo-Italian company that also deals with China and Iran. If you doubt that China won't succeed in stealing this technology, then we all are wasting our time here. I don't believe we are.

England and Italy are being rewarded for their support of the war in Iraq. Connecticut was a "blue" state, just like Maine. I am concerned that CAFTA will be used as a smokescreen to continue to reward other countries at the expense of our work force. NAFTA is a failure for us and CAFTA will be also. We cannot afford to continue to export our good jobs. It has become a race to the economic bottom and, unfortunately, we are winning. As good jobs disappear so does the middle class in America and the gap widens between the richest Americans and the rest of us.

This must stop. America should not export its jobs, skills and knowledge at the expense of the American worker. Maine is an example of NAFTA's effect: Bass Shoe, Dexter Shoe, Eastland Shoe, Wilner Wood, Foster Manufacturing, American Canneries, Carleton Woolen Mills, Hathaway Shirts, and the list goes on and on. All are victims of trade agreements. For all intents and purposes, Maine Textiles are dead, forever. The best we can do now is NO CAFTA, not now, not in the future. CAFTA is not "free or fair" and will not help the poor or middle class in any of the countries involved. Please stop CAFTA.

Thank you.

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