

Rep. Frank Wolf
The “Bring Jobs Back to America Act”
Press Conference Statement

Today I am introducing today the Bring Jobs Back to America Act, which would start the process of bringing real jobs back to America that have gone overseas during the last two decades.

My legislation will build on language I included earlier this year in the fiscal year 2011 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill directing the Commerce Department to launch a job repatriation initiative to bring those jobs back home.

I believe that a strong manufacturing and technology development base is critical to job creation and the economic competitiveness of the United States.

Something has happened in our country. We’re making fewer and fewer things. Today, everything seems to be labeled: “Made in China.”

If you have ever taken the train from Washington, D.C., to New York and looked out the window, you can see our empty factories. You pass through my old neighborhood in Philadelphia. GE’s switchgear factory used to be one block from my home. Now there’s nothing there but an empty, littered field.

You pass through Trenton, New Jersey, and can see the famous bridge sign that reads: “Trenton Makes, the World Takes.” Trenton doesn’t make anything anymore.

Last year, General Electric CEO Jeffrey Immelt noted that in recent years in the United States, “Real engineering was traded for financial engineering.” Immelt called on the U.S. to grow manufacturing jobs to comprise at least 20 percent of American jobs - nearly double the current level.

In this era of intense global competition, we must work aggressively to bring jobs that have gone overseas back home to the U.S. to immediately start growing the percentage of these jobs, as Immelt called for.

It’s not enough to talk about creating jobs. We have to take immediate steps to create jobs.

I have been, and remain, a staunch supporter of free trade. Free trade has yielded benefits to the American people and our economy.

However, we have been far too slow in responding to our international economic competitors in this era of global markets and competition.

The irony is that as much as American firms have offshored manufacturing and development jobs, they remain reliant on America for support. And with American unemployment hovering around 10 percent, it’s time for some of these American firms to come home.

When an American plant manager in Mexico is kidnapped, the firm doesn't call the Mexican Federal Police, they call the FBI.

When the Chinese steal an American firm's intellectual property, the firm calls the U.S. Commerce Department.

It's time to bring some of these jobs home because America can be competitive in this global economy and it's the right thing to do. My legislation will start this process.

Overall, I believe that my bill helps to re-focus the United States to be more proactive and a smarter competitor in the global economy - both in the short-term and long-term.

Specifically, this bill requires the secretary of Commerce to set targets for job repatriation and creates multi-agency "Repatriation Task Forces" to identify American companies manufacturing abroad and work with states to bring jobs back to the U.S.

The goal is to bring back real jobs from overseas to the United States - jobs that are already created and an American could immediately fill.

This bill would require the Commerce Department to survey all American firms with significant manufacturing facilities in foreign countries, allowing the Repatriation Task Forces to proactively identify all firms interested in working with state and local governments to facilitate a mutually beneficial repatriation of jobs.

The bill would also comprehensively align federal resources in support of repatriation efforts. It allows state and local governments to use a variety of federal funding - at no new cost - to support job repatriation initiatives by state and local governments.

For example, my bill aligns Economic Development Agency (EDA) and National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) grants to allow state and local governments to use this funding for repatriation.

It also would direct the secretary of Commerce and the IRS to quickly study and report on the merits of a new federal tax incentive to encourage repatriation.

In addition to repatriating jobs today, we must redouble our efforts to foster emerging technologies to create our manufacturing base of tomorrow.

For too long, the U.S. has failed to strategically monitor emerging opportunities and threats in our competitive global economy. We are starting to see the ramifications of this failure in the rise of China as an economic power.

My bill would reconstitute President Reagan's "Project Socrates" as an independent "American Economic Security Commission" to identify and monitor emerging technologies and global economic threats.

Project Socrates was initiated during the Reagan Administration to address America's competitiveness challenge and determine the source of the nation's declining competitiveness and develop programs to address the source of the problem.

Our Commission - composed of 12 business leaders and economists appointed by the majority and minority leaders - will similarly take a comprehensive and unbiased look at all of our global economic competitors - both strengths and weaknesses - and help inform the Congress on how to bolster American economic security.

This will ensure that we have an independent mechanism to monitor new opportunities and threats to ensure that America can capitalize on revolutionary technologies and create new jobs in the U.S.

The bill also provides stronger protections for American intellectual property and helps to expedite the patent process for cutting-edge new technologies developed by universities.

The faster we can secure our innovations and move them to market, the more jobs we can create in this country.

We can no longer afford to ride the coattails of yesterday's innovations; we have to identify and support the emerging technologies of tomorrow that will create American jobs.

The Chinese, Indians and other international competitors are actively monitoring new technologies and trends to support their firms. To date, we have not.

Are Americans willing to continue to sit idly by and allow the Chinese to dominate new industries at our expense?

Norm Augustine, the former chairman and CEO of Lockheed Martin, best captured the situation we now find ourselves in when he said:

"In the technology-driven economy in which we live, Americans have come to accept leadership as the natural and enduring state of affairs. But leadership is highly perishable. It must be constantly re-earned.

"In the 16th century the citizens of Spain no doubt thought they would remain the world leader. In the 17th century it was France. In the 19th century, Great Britain. And in the 20th century it was the United States.

"Unless we do things dramatically different, including strengthening our investments in research and education, the 21st century will belong to China and India."

*Author Richard McGregor wrote in his new book, *The Party*, that the Chinese government, "still runs on Soviet hardware." It uses the full resources of the state to advance the interests of Chinese firms.*

The Chinese are spying on us. They are launching millions of cyber attacks against American companies and the federal government every day. The Chinese are funding the genocide in Darfur. They have Catholic bishops in jail, Protestant pastors in jail, and they have plundered Tibet.

If the U.S. is to be truly competitive in the global economy, we must be vigilant and proactive - in a manner that is consistent with our national interest and international treaties.

I urge swift passage of this legislation to help bring jobs back to the United States today and to lay the groundwork for tomorrow's manufacturing and technology base. We cannot afford to wait. Our international competitors aren't.