

Why buy Union-made, American Products?

America has always been the birthplace of freedom, prosperity, and diversity. Affectionately known as the “land of milk and honey” by people across the globe, the American dream and entrepreneurial spirit are tied deep to our nation’s roots. Since our forefathers laid these unique ideals in our founding documents America has risen from a small newly independent nation to an economic superpower respected and idolized globally. As the American economy struggles to regain a foothold as the world’s leader in innovation and success, Americans must bind together and remember the roots that this nation was founded on so long ago. As people across the country lose their jobs, Americans must learn to value the local merchant once again, we must honor the patriots of the American Revolution and bond together during trying times. Since the dawn of our first governmental systems we have formed unions to bind against the powers of the government and make sure employee rights are protected. In a truly global world where Asia and Europe are simply a click away, we must reserve the temptation to reach for the product made on foreign shores. Once one of the nations largest sectors, the manufacturing workers and blue-collar jobs are slowly disappearing. As we learn to rely on technology, we must not forget our domestic economy, from the small mom and pop shop down the street, to the large steel corporations, Americans must bond together to right the ship and put friends and family back to work.

By definition a union is supposed to protect a workers wages as well as their working conditions. By buying the comparable and cheaper products at chain stores such as Wal-Mart or Target the American public is in essence contributing to and supporting the poor working conditions, unfair wages, and the use of child labor. By backing these governments Americans everywhere are supplying the necessary capital that enables and encourages this substandard of living. The average dollar spent locally within an economy circulates and gets re-spent roughly a dozen times. When we reach for the bargain product and save a few dollars on our grocery bill or foreign car, we give up the greatest opportunity of all, the opportunity to better the lives of those around us. By acting as enablers for countries with little to no working condition standards, Americans are proving that they have forgotten what made us the land of opportunity.

When Unions first arose, workers referred to a union as a form of a brotherhood. A brotherhood designed to protect the rights of workers, keep wages fair, make sure working conditions are safe, and give back some control to the employee. When we as Americans over consume we often settle for a product of lesser standards. In the meantime we risk thousands of jobs for the middle class American without even realizing it. It happens everyday, you buy foreign coffee, drive on foreign oil, come home to watch the game on your foreign television set, and even sit down for a meal of foreign grown foods. In the meantime American manufacturing and productions continue to decline. By consuming products made in the rest of the world we are often giving up quality for quality and risk exposure to dangerous chemicals or goods prone to malfunction. Count the endless times you have caught yourself saying, “They sure don’t make them like they

used to,” the reason for this phenomenon, they sure aren’t making them in America. Epidemics such as tainted foreign meats, fruits and vegetables ridden with uncontrolled pesticides, and of course cheap quality of goods should be enough reason alone to support the middle class American union worker. In addition to all the potential dangers we are exposing our bodies to, we are also trading an American man’s job for that of a ten-year-old Chinese boy forced into the mills or the fields. As Americans these are not the values we live by, or the standard we set for ourselves, yet by buying imported goods we are supporting these practices.

Some may argue that the rare occurrence of malfunction or recall is worth the reward of saving money. However, the sad truth of it is this, Americans remain vastly unemployed, the quality of products has continued to diminish, and every time I walk into a store I struggle to find an American made product. For a country that once took great pride in stamping a finished good with a “proudly made in the U.S.A.” sticker as products rolled off the manufacturing line into final inspection, that time is since passed. To me the value of knowing we pay our workers an honest wage, give them benefits and keep them safe while working in humane conditions, is worth the small amount more I pay for an American good. In order to shift our economy back in our favor we must rethink the value of putting America first. We must stop spending abroad and begin to take care of troubles here at home. We must once again value the fact that we are investing into our country, our practices and our ideas. We must cherish American jobs, and love home grown, home made and home spun products. It is imperative for the success of future generations that we rekindle brotherhood and buy home made American products. We must again value the union not just in the work place, but also of this nation.