

The auto industry is already experiencing significant economic difficulties, and the Big Three automakers have announced widespread layoffs. In light of this background, the UAW submits that this is not the time to impose onerous, discriminatory fuel economy standards on the auto companies that will only lead to further jobs loss, with potentially adverse impacts on the overall economy.

Thank you for considering our views on this priority issue that directly affects the jobs of thousands of UAW members and other workers.

Sincerely,

ALAN REUTHER,
Legislative Director.

UAW,
WASHINGTON, DC,
March 13, 2002.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: Today the Senate is scheduled to vote on amendments dealing with the CAFE issue. The UAW strongly urges you to vote for the Levin-Bond substitute and against the Kerry-McCain amendment.

The Levin-Bond substitute would require the Dept. of Transportation to issue new fuel economy standards on an expedited basis, after taking into consideration a wide range of factors, including employment, safety, technology, economic practicability and the relative competitive impacts on companies. The UAW supports this substitute because we believe it will lead to a significant improvement in fuel economy, without jeopardizing the jobs of American workers.

In contrast, the Kerry-McCain amendment would mandate an excessive, discriminatory increase in fuel economy standard that would directly threaten thousands of jobs for UAW members and other automotive workers in this country. The 36 mpg fuel economy standard that would be required by Kerry-McCain for both cars and trucks goes far beyond even the most optimistic projections by the National Academy of Sciences. In addition, the structure of the proposed fuel economy increases—a flat mpg requirement for both cars and trucks—would impose a much heavier burden on the Big Three automakers and jeopardize production and jobs associated with their large car and truck plants. Furthermore, by eliminating the distinction between foreign and domestic car fleets, the proposal would enable the Big Three auto companies to outsource their small car production to other countries, resulting in the loss of additional jobs.

The UAW believes it is critically important that any increases in fuel economy standards be economically and technologically feasible, and that they be structured in a manner that does not jeopardize jobs in this country. To accomplish this objective, we believe the Senate must approve the Levin-Bond substitute, and reject the Kerry-McCain amendment.

Thank you for considering our views on these two priority votes.

Sincerely,

ALAN REUTHER,
Legislative Director.

Mr. BOND. The last time I spoke on this, I pointed out there were a number of other things we have done that really do endanger jobs. I mentioned the small engine proposal where, fortunately, we were able to stop the California Air Resources Board from mandating the use of catalytic converters on small engines for lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and chainsaws that would have forced the closure of plants in the United States that make those small

engines and in all likelihood outsourced 22,000 American jobs to China.

I also talked about asbestos litigation which has driven much of the refractories business out of the United States because of the excessive burden of the asbestos claims. We need to move on a good asbestos reform bill to pay those who are truly sick and stop the jackpot justice for plaintiffs' attorneys who seek to sue anybody who has had anything to do with asbestos, whether plaintiffs are sick or not.

Finally, natural gas is a major source of outsourcing right now. Not only does it hit homes that heat with natural gas with high bills; it puts heavy costs on farmers who use fertilizer coming from natural gas. The artificially inflated demand Congress has mandated and the artificially constrained supply Congress has mandated have pushed the cost of natural gas so high that many natural gas producing industries have had to move their operations to other countries where the demand is not artificially inflated and the supply is not curtailed.

We are outsourcing jobs because of our policy on natural gas. We have forced natural gas use in electric generating boilers which is not an effective use of that valuable commodity. We need a good energy bill. We need to stop the filibusters and get an energy bill done. We need to move forward on the asbestos litigation reform bill. We need to move forward on the FSC/ETI bill. All of these are being filibustered or stopped or delayed, and we need to get about it.

We need to get the Workforce Investment Act. We need to appoint conferees so we can train these people. One of the great needs is for more workers with scientific engineering and technological backgrounds because those are the jobs of the future. We need to train them. Senator MIKULSKI and I need money in the VA-HUD bill to increase the National Science Foundation so they can develop more student interest in basic science and get more minorities and women involved. We have a lot of challenges to meet the changing needs of the job force in the 21st century. Rather than bloviating about one part of the problem, we need to fix the entire problem.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized for 20 seconds.

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I can't imagine what I am going to do with all that time. I thought there might be a few more minutes.

I look forward to this welfare reform debate. I hope we can have a good and enlightened debate on an issue that is vitally important for millions of Americans and that we keep to the subject of welfare, try to pass this bill, get it to conference and get a bill done this

year to help millions more leave poverty and get gainful employment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. I yield our remaining time for morning business to the Senator from Vermont, and I will yield additional time to him once we are on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

CHILD CARE AMENDMENT

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the Snowe-Dodd amendment to add \$6 billion more in child care funding to the welfare bill that is before the Senate.

There is no issue more important than child care assistance in the context of this reauthorization. I commend Senators SNOWE and DODD for their leadership on this issue.

Child care assistance is critical for a number of reasons.

First, there is a strong connection between access to child care and the ability of parents to join and stay in the workforce.

Second, quality child care is critical to building the foundations for school readiness and later academic success.

Third, states are facing tough economic times and they are cutting back on support for child care. Our children need additional help from the Federal Government.

Child care is the No. 1 issue facing families today. Seventy-five percent of American children under the age of five spend at least part of their day in child care.

In Vermont, over 80 percent of women with children under the age of six are in the workforce.

Without access to child care, these families are often forced to leave their employment and seek public assistance.

We must support additional child care funding in order to support low-income parents and help them remain in the workforce.

Quality child care helps lay the groundwork for school readiness and success later in life. We know that the most crucial time for a child's brain development is from birth to 5 years old.

Elementary and secondary education are extremely important.

But without a positive, high-quality experience in the earliest stages of development, too many children are set up for failure in elementary, middle and high school.

By adopting the Snowe-Dodd amendment, we will give more parents the power to choose high-quality child care for their children and give those children the opportunity to get the most out of their early years.

If we are truly serious about closing the achievement gap among our students, and between the United States and our international competitors, then funding for high-quality early childhood care is the place to begin.