

MR. LUTES: My name is Brian Lutes. I'm from Fayette County. We're about an hour south of here, and I wanted to tell you about some of the results that we've had in Fayette County about some of this stuff.

My occupation is a legal and government researcher, formerly in law enforcement, and I'm currently running for office in Fayette County, so I've gotten to meet a lot of people face-to-face and know what they're going through personally as I'm out knocking doors.

But in Fayette County, we've lost companies such as Fruehauf -- they manufacture trailers to haul things -- we've lost Steel Scaffolding; we've lost a clothing factory in Masontown, Pennsylvania, which is a town of about 5,000 residents, and they closed up and moved to El Salvador.

We're also losing -- and I have a letter here with me today from a company called Gallet Mills, Incorporated, and they're a clothing factory in the city of Uniontown -- about 13,000 people live there -- and they manufacture sweaters. And they're closing up at the end of this year. They've been in business for 56 years, and they're closing up, because they cannot compete with foreign imports.

And there's a lot of talk, and we're being told that there's a boom economy. There's isn't a boom

economy. This trade policy has been devastating to this country, especially in Fayette County, and some of the statistics in Fayette County -- we have 27 percent poverty rate in the County of Fayette; we're number two in welfare-dependent residents, and this is only getting worse as time goes on; number one in child poverty -- this is in Pennsylvania -- number one in infant mortality in southwestern Pennsylvania; number one in suicide in southwestern Pennsylvania.

And I can tell you, having worked in law enforcement and being on calls such as domestic violence calls, family dispute calls, I have seen this first-hand what happens to a family when the breadwinner gets laid off and has to go to work for one-third of the wages. The turmoil that that causes in a family is absolutely devastating to the family. Families break up, and then they become more dependent upon the rest of society. They can't provide for themselves.

This is a disgrace that this would be happening to these people in this country. It is absolutely appalling. And it can only be happening by design, and the Trade Adjustment Reassistance Act that the gentleman spoke about earlier was put in place to help people who would be laid off. They knew people would lose their jobs, and yet they told us it was

going to be a job creation program. It is absolutely false, and it is terrible what has happened.

Anyone who doesn't believe it, I invite you, come to Fayette County and see. We have areas of Fayette County that are still using outhouses in 1999. It is unbelievable. People don't have heat in some of their homes; they exist on kerosene heaters, because they don't have the money. The average income in Fayette is \$9,500 a year on an individual basis. It is absolutely astounding that people are surviving on this kind of money, and they're getting by.

And the American people are amazing. They will do whatever it takes, and they are. Our most significant business development in Fayette has been in the food and retail sectors. There is no manufacturing. Like I said, Gallet Mills in business 56 years, and they're closing as a result of these trade policies. And I would invite you, have one of these hearings in Fayette County and see the people who will come to talk to you and tell you how they've been devastated.

Sensus Technologies, part of it went to Mexico, part of it went to China. Nukote, part of it went to Mexico, part of it went to China. And we're concentrating a lot on NAFTA today, but let's not forget the free trade area of the Americas is coming

along. In China, they want to give normal trade relations to China. This is wrong, and it shouldn't be done. And there's been some talk about the WTO, and I'm glad to hear that. This is a precursor to world government and the loss of national sovereignty. These policies are designed to bring us to our knees, and that's exactly what is being done. That's exactly what's happening. It is doing exactly what it was designed to do -- destroy the American way of life and our ability to fend for ourselves. And it must be stopped.

And, again, I would invite you to come to Fayette County and see the results there and view these homes and how people are living there, and you, too, will see exactly what I'm talking about.

And I thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER BECKER: Thank you very much.

I think we've covered everybody who had signed up or wanted to speak. I want to make one comment before we close.

I was told by somebody, a supervisor or a company, that what they were doing was improving the standard of living of Mexican workers. I would like to stick a pin in that balloon just a bit. I've been to Mexico many times within the last several years, at all levels of the maquilas, starting from Tijuana all the

way to the Matamoros and Brownsville. I've gone into the colonias; I've seen American companies, state-of-the-art advanced companies in the United States, that have moved down into those areas and employed people.

Workers come from deep down in Mexico trying to scratch out a living and they get jobs. They work many, many hours, and they can't make enough money to even feed their children; living in hovels with dirt floors, packing crates, and cardboard and plastic to shelter them; with no sewage, obviously; no sanitation of any kind. Water in every instance is in some kind of a device, a 55-gallon drum that housed chemicals or something, where it had been cleaned out, and water is delivered in it, and they buy that. They pay a terrible price for this, but the bottom line is after working hard all day, day after day, week after week, they can't make enough money to feed their children. I mean, that's the other element of this.

Mexican workers feel betrayed. The trade union movement in Mexico is not a free-trade movement. It's aligned with the political structure. Most of the companies that come into those areas have signed protection contracts which really keeps an independent free-trade union movement from representing the people.

Those who strive to organize under those circumstances have been beaten, and the provincial police bust their

lines. Even if they go to court and they win the court battle, they can't move; they are not able to get to the point of representation.

It's been a failure from the Mexican end. Illegal immigration has increased as a result of this, and the environmental degradation along the border is worse now than when NAFTA came into being. So, it's a failure for Mexican workers.

I encourage people to go down there. We've taken trips; we send steel workers down continually. People wonder why we're involved. We think an education is very vital to all of this. We take people from all over the United States and we send them down there so that they can see firsthand what happens.

That's the other side of what's happening here. I mean, there's a lot to be answered for in this whole process and a lot to be concerned about.

Do any of the Commissioners have any statement or comments they'd like to make in closing?

COMMISSIONER LEWIS: Just, George, that this is really very helpful, and thank you very much for chairing this.

COMMISSIONER BECKER: Well, you've seen the good side of Pittsburgh, and you've heard about the soft underbelly.

COMMISSIONER LEWIS: Sure have.