

Statement by Sue Levy, UAW CAP Coordinator Region 1D
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Hello, my name is Sue Levy and I am the UAW CAP Coordinator for Western Michigan. In my view the US trade policies have more impact on American life than any other factor. From economics to the war on terror; US trade policy has affected every American yet I am constantly amazed at how little union members as well as the general public know about the provisions and ramifications of these trade agreements. Information about specific provisions of these trade proposals is not made available through traditional media sources. Reporting on opposition for trade agreements from any organization or group outside of Labor is virtually non-existent, and those articles often focus on the job losses; mainly the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs. In fact searching the records and public documents of local media, the major TV stations and the Grand Rapids Press there was only one story in the press referring to the efforts of the Michigan Sugar Industry lobbying to oppose this legislation. That story referred to a compromise that the Industry may support. The Sugar Industry was not placated with the compromise and did not support the passage of CAFTA, the Press never did a follow-up to report on the effects to Michigan's sugar industry or the fact that the Michigan Sugar Industry did not support CAFTA even with the new provisions included.

Opposition for CAFTA came from many sectors. The US Business and Industry Council representing over 8500 companies in dozens of industries opposed CAFTA, Michigan Sugar Industry, Michigan Farmers Association, the Dominican Sisters, numerous Christian Groups, Student against Sweatshops, and environmental groups here in Michigan along with Labor opposed CAFTA but none of this was reported by the local media outlets.

The lack of coverage on specific provisions of CAFTA and other free trade agreements is to me the most frightening aspect of our Free Trade policies.

NAFTA's Chapter 11 rules which are expanded under CAFTA have never been scrutinized by the media although they could have a devastating effect on the citizens of Michigan. Multinational Corporations have already filed over 40 claims seeking more than \$6 Billion in compensation from municipalities, states, and nations resulting in millions of dollars worth of settlements and negating laws that had been enacted to protect public health and the environment. CAFTA expands these investor-to-state challenges to include 6 developing countries that have just begun to enact laws to protect their citizen's health. We need to ask; what will happen to our Great Lakes when they come before the WTO tribunal?

Our national sovereignty is also threatened by expanded investor rights included in CAFTA. Governments can no longer have preferential policies for local content, environmentally safe production methods, or even prohibiting goods made with child labor. Michigan is one of the states that signed a letter stating they would not use preferential procurement policies and then rescinded the statement when it was brought to light by CAFTA opposition groups. None of this has been reported by the media. The most troubling unreported fact is that decisions and rulings by the WTO resolving any trade disputes are being made not by elected officials in public debate and legislative actions, but by appointed trade bureaucrats in closed tribunals. Too often those rulings are also not disclosed by the mainstream media.