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—Allen H. Neuharth
Founder, Sept. 15, 1982



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Illegal trade threatens industry

OPPOSING VIEW Workers pay price of steel dumping with their jobs.

By Pete Visclosky

On March 17, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Bipartisan Steel Recovery Act by a vote of 289-141. This bill would end the flood of illegal imports that threatens the American steel industry.

No one disputes that foreign companies are illegally dumping steel on U.S. markets. The Clinton administration and the opponents of my legislation agree to that. We disagree on what to do about it. I believe we need a global, comprehensive approach to end dumping.

This bill limits monthly imports from all nations to their monthly average during June 1994-June 1997. It requires that all importers obtain a license from the Commerce Department to bring steel into the country. Commerce would issue weekly reports on steel imports, providing an early-warning system for any future import surges. Foreign steel producers still would control 25% of the U.S. market.

This legislation is vital. Consider these facts:

► Foreign nations are breaking U.S. trade laws and dumping steel on U.S. markets. The

Department of Commerce recently issued trade case rulings against Japan and Brazil. In preliminary findings, Japan was found to have underpriced a variety of steel products by 25%-67%. Brazil was found to have underpriced by 50%-71%.

► In 1998, according to the Clinton administration's January report, 10,000 U.S. steelworkers lost their jobs. Each day, 24 more are thrown out of work. U.S. steelworkers and steel companies should not have to pay the price of illegal imports.

► Every ship in the Navy and every tank in the Army are made from steel. A secure domestic source of steel is vital to keeping our armed forces running. Anyone who remembers the oil embargoes of the 1970s knows that we cannot become dependent on foreign sources for vital resources.

We should encourage fair and legal trade, but we should not tolerate illegal trade. When illegal trade threatens one of our vital industries and its workers, we must take action. I and my colleagues will not stand by and let American steelworkers and the American steel industry be sacrificed to foreign companies that break our laws.

Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., is the chief sponsor of the House steel imports bill.