

Plain Talk

An Open Letter to 1600 Pennsylvania

COLUMN BY ROB BUKSAR

(Editor's Note: February's "Plain Talk" column was all about why and how to be an active advocate for rebuilding. As promised, Rob has written a letter to President George Bush, and is inviting our readers to do the same. Please choose to be a part of the solution.)

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500



Dear President Bush:

I am asking today for your assistance in a matter that greatly impacts my small business and thousands of other businesses around the country as well. The issue to which I am referring is the unlevelled commercial trade pact between our country and Communist China.

I am an auto and truck parts rebuilder. My industry found its humble origin shortly after World War II when the nation converted from a war footing to a consumer one. The rebuilding industry was able to repair, restore, or rebuild almost any auto or truck part profitably for 60 percent of its new cost. Furthermore, rebuilders have been and still are the ultimate recycler. By very nature of what we do and how we do it we have always been frugal with natural resources, energy, and good stewards of the environment long before it was fashionable to do so.

A study done by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the remanufacturing of auto parts indicates that nearly 85 percent of the energy expended in the manufacture of the original product was reserved in the remanufactured product. The raw material saved yearly through remanufacturing would fill 155,000 railroad cars. Furthermore, the energy saved each year through global remanufacturing efforts equals the electricity generated by five nuclear power plants or 10,744,000 barrels of oil.

The rebuilding industry has been a small but vital component of the U.S. economy. For decades, rebuilders have been incredible producers and contributors at all levels. Our industry has produced and revitalized most of the replacement auto and truck parts used in the country for over 50 years. It's only since our playing field has become terribly unlevelled that we find ourselves threatened with extinction. Our numbers are diminishing daily.

The favored nation trade agreement with China will be the cause for the end of our industry. The unlevelled playing field allows China to produce new replacement parts, ship them 10,000 miles, then dump them in the U.S. market cheaper than domestic rebuilders can buy material to repair rebuildable parts.

Mr. President, let me be very clear. Rebuilding has been and still is good for America and rebuilders are good Americans. Don't look for news of our industry on the CNN business report. There is no glitz or glamour in what we do. Yet what is happening to us is just downright wrong! An evolving market is not what is killing us, it's a poorly conceived trade agreement with China which is adversarial in nature.

Mr. President, you said in the last State of the Union Address that with a level playing field American companies could compete with anyone. We need your help to regain a level playing field. I know of no one in my industry looking for something for nothing. All we want is a chance to compete, which is not going to happen without your direct intervention.

Please help us get back into the game before there aren't enough of us left to play.

I thank you in advance for any assistance that you can provide. May God be with you and God bless the United States of America.

Sincerely,
Robert Buksar, Owner
Hoosier Electric
Gary, Ind.