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June 29, 2006

Encouraging Corporations that Commit to America and American Workers

If you want to make Americans of all stripes mad, tell them about the billions of dollars in subsidies and tax breaks our government gives to companies that outsource jobs and relocate to avoid giving back to our great country. A recent poll in Foreign Affairs magazine reported that nearly 90% of Americans worry about losing their jobs to corporate outsourcing.

Tell them about Accenture, for example, which advises other companies how to outsource jobs overseas while avoiding its fair share of tax payments by incorporating offshore in Bermuda.

Like many other US corporations, Accenture continues to qualify for tax breaks, and it currently has more than \$500 million in government contracts – paid for by taxpayers.

Meanwhile, urban communities and small towns are devastated by plant closings. Often these plants are owned by profitable corporations like Maytag, which moved its Galesburg, Illinois, plant to Reynosa, Mexico, in 2004, leaving 1,600 workers without their good-paying jobs.

In honor of our country and the great American patriotic spirit that is renewed at this time each year – and just a few days short of the 230th anniversary of the 1776 Declaration – today I announced that I'm introducing the Patriot Corporations of America Act.

It is time to rekindle the spirit of patriotism and encourage corporations that commit to America and American workers. The Patriot Corporations of America Act would do so by rewarding companies which invest in our nation's economic future. And, it would do so in a revenue neutral way.

To end this race to the bottom, to end the offshoring of jobs and research, Bill Edley, a former State Representative in Illinois, and political scientist Robin Johnson of Monmouth College, introduced a new idea of turning the tables around.

Bill Edley asked, "What if we stopped rewarding outsourcers and tax dodgers, and make corporations earn their tax incentives by investing in America and American workers?"

The idea of the Patriot Corporations of America Act was born, and I am honored to be introducing it in the US Congress – along with my colleagues, Sherrod Brown, Barbara Lee, Hilda Solis, Lynn Woolsey, David Obey, Tom Lantos, Peter DeFazio, John Conyers and Major Owens.

Instead of providing corporations incentives to slash benefits, offshore their finances, and outsource jobs, the Patriot Corporations Act would encourage American corporations to meet standards that would create a rising tide for all.

Those companies that choose to participate in the Patriot Corporation program would be provided with preferential treatment in government contracting and a 5% tax rate reduction for pledging their allegiance to our country by meeting a few no-nonsense standards.

To qualify, Patriot Corporations would need to:

- Produce at least 90% of their goods and services in the United States and do at least 50% of their research and development in the United States.

- Limit top managements' compensation to no greater than 100 times – or 10,000% – of that of their lowest-compensated full-time workers.

Patriot Corporations would commit to their workers by:

- Contributing at least 5% of payroll to a portable pension fund and by paying for at least 70% of the cost of health insurance plans.

Finally, Patriot Corporations would:

- Comply with federal regulations regarding the environment, workplace safety, consumer protections and labor relations, including maintaining neutrality in employee organizing drives.

And, the incentives would be paid for by closing corporate offshoring loopholes and reining in some of the new tax breaks for millionaires.

Patriot Corporations would be leaders in creating a new patriotic corporate ethic in America – one that unites workers and their employers in the mutual goal of building a stronger, more prosperous, more democratic business sector that can vigorously and proudly compete in the twenty-first-century global economy.

Patriot Corporations are an expression of the American spirit of our fore fathers and mothers when they took that brave step of declaring our independence and creating the United States of America.

