



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 12, 2018

American Business Coalition Launches Anti-Tariff Campaign Against Trump

A coalition of business interests, Americans for Free Trade, [launched a campaign on Wednesday](#) targeting Republican members of the House in five states. Its strategy is to persuade those members to bring pressure on the president to back off from his tariff/trade “war” that allegedly is hurting them.

Many big names are involved, including several with Deep State connections and anti-Trump inclinations. Exxon Mobil, Microsoft, Google, Apple, Chevron, Target, Autozone, Amazon, Macy’s, Walmart, IBM, Facebook, Mattel, Hasbro, and Barnes & Noble are numbered among the more than 60 members allied behind the campaign. The group claims that its intentions aren’t political, but the ads target five key states in Trump’s camp that helped him win the presidency in 2016: Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, and Tennessee. The group plans to target an additional seven states in its campaign before the end of the year.

The group was formed when it became clear that the Trump tariff strategy — a move to pressure countries dumping products into the United States or subsidizing certain industries in anti-competitive ways to come to the negotiating table — was going to take longer than they expected. A tariff is a tax, and in the short run, many of these companies are complaining that, as a result of Trump’s strategy, they are seeing their costs of imported raw materials rise. Yet the Trump-era rollback in regulations and taxation should lead to lower prices of *domestic* raw materials, enabling America to reduce its dangerous dependence on foreign sources for essential supplies. Such was the case with the surge in domestic oil production spurred by the fracking revolution, and America is better off for it.

One name notably missing from the list companies complaining about Trump’s tariffs is Nucor, the largest steel producer and recycler in the United States. Its gross revenues in 2017 exceeded \$20 billion and the company employs more than 25,000 people. Nucor is enjoying the reduction of unfair competition and just announced this week a major \$650 million expansion of one of its plants in Kentucky.

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Giff Daughtridge, vice president and general manager for Nucor, said things were going along pretty well even before the tariffs were instituted:





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There was a global recovery [and] then tax reform and some deregulation ... that really stimulated consumer and business confidence. And then tariffs came long.

Imports are still coming into our country [but] they are just not priced at illegal dumped levels.

Nucor is enjoying the leveling of the playing field that has been tilted against major American industries by international competitors such as China for years. A year ago domestic steel plants were producing at barely 70 percent of capacity. For the week ending September 1 the rate had climbed to 80 percent, Trump's initial target. Nucor is now running at 90 percent.

Daughtridge understands what Trump is trying to do, even if the inaptly named group Americans for Free Trade doesn't: "They [Trump's temporary tariffs] are leverage and a negotiating ploy to get trading partners to treat our country fairly. When that happens and we get fair trade, it is a win for the overall economy — hopefully for generations."

He added:

I hope that anger [over tariffs] is [directed] at the countries who first took advantage of unfair trade practices and now are targeting American products with retaliation in a war they started years ago.

Trade and tariff talks are continuing with Canada which appear at the moment to reflect a softening of her trade representative's stance. Its Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland told the world just a week earlier that "For us the only priority is a deal that's good for Canada and Canadians, and that protects Canadian interests and Canadian values." But as *The New American* pointed out:

Freeland is constrained by simple reality: Her country needs the United States far more than the United States needs Canada ... the world's GDP is \$87 trillion and the United States generates a quarter of it, while Canada's share of it is less than \$2 trillion. Worse, Canada's exports to the United States represents three-quarters of total Canadian exports, or about one-fifth of that country's total gross domestic product. In addition, Canada has been protecting its agricultural sector at America's expense for years, putting tariffs of 300 percent on various dairy and agricultural products coming from the United States.



This is definitely not the case with China, however, where talks have stalled to the point where Trump is threatening to up the ante even higher. He has already raised tariffs on some \$50 billion worth of trade from China and is about to launch another round on \$200 billion on the recalcitrant country.

Said Trump:

The \$200 billion we are talking about could take place very soon depending on what happens with them. To a certain extent it's going to be up to China.

And I hate to say this, but behind that is another \$267 billion ready to go on short notice if I want. That [hopefully] changes the equation.



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Translation: it could take longer — perhaps much longer — for his strategy to bear significant fruit in the reduction of tariffs, especially with China. For Americans for Free Trade, however, they appear not to be willing to wait that long.

Photo: Olivier Le Moal/iStock/Getty Images Plus

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelmann@thenewamerican.com.

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