

# Kucinich Calls for an American Manufacturing Policy

Tuesday, 11 November 2008

We have to save our auto industry, our steel industry, and our aerospace industry as a matter of national security, says Congressman Dennis Kucinich in an exclusive interview with 19ActionsNews.

REPORTER: ...record losses last week and last quarter. Joining us now to talk about this is Congressman Dennis Kucinich. Congressman, thanks for joining us.

DENNIS: Thank you.

REPORTER: Back when it happened in September or October, you called Wall Street's bailout plan immoral. Do you feel the same way about a bailout plan for the auto industry?

DENNIS: No, it's not; the Wall Street bailout plan was about helping finance capitalists to engage in speculation that hurt this country and hurt their investors. We have over a quarter of a million jobs directly and four-million jobs indirectly that are affected by the auto industry. We have to save our auto industry and our steel industry and our aerospace industry as a matter of national security.

This isn't just a matter of what we make here; it's about the fact that we need the productive capacity to protect our country. And so we must do something to cause America to take notice, to have a national plan to save these industries, to save the jobs connected, and to help secure our country.

REPORTER: Today the government announced that it is giving even more money to AIG, which is part of the 700 billion-dollar bailout plan. And, in announcing that, they're essentially acknowledging that the original term could not be met; that they have to give the AIG more money that will allow them to pay back the government. So the government is essentially saying, "This original deal, this would have been money down the toilet.

DENNIS: Well, you know, the whole bailout package idea was wrong. We borrowed money from the banks at interest to give to the banks. The banks offload their toxic debt, or they hoard the money, or they use it to buy other banks, as in the case of National City.

We have to get a handle on this bailout. I'm having a hearing on Friday of the Domestic Policy Subcommittee of which I'm Chair to find out exactly how the money is being spent and what good it is doing for the American economy. These banks are hoarding the money. There is still a credit freeze, which is one of the problems; why we have a 32% decline in auto sales right now. People can't get the consumer loans to buy cars.

REPORTER: Back to bailing out the auto industry and helping our area, Mr. Kucinich -- how quickly could the Federal Government come up with something that would help this industry and help our area?

DENNIS: Well, I've asked Nancy Pelosi and Democratic leaders last week in a phone call to move this idea of saving our auto industry and steel industry and aerospace up front. We need this to protect our country, and I'm hopeful that I'll get a responsive ear to this. President-elect Obama has also indicated an understanding of how important it is to protect our basic industries.

But this isn't just about manufacturing policy. It's about our trade policy. We're going to have to get out of NAFTA and the WTO in order to protect our basic industries, and we're going to have to do something about the cost of health care by having the government become more aggressively involved in a single-payer system.

REPORTER: I want to say congratulations on your re-election recently, Congressman, and thank you very much for joining us.

DENNIS: Thank you. Let's talk again. Thank you.