

OBAMA'S SLOGAN FOR TRADE: "DISPLACED WORKERS ... MADE IN AMERICA"

When I saw Obama's pivot to creating Korean jobs on Tuesday, I actually thought he had mangled his script.

And I want Congress to pass a set of trade deals – deals we've already negotiated – that would help displaced workers looking for new jobs and would allow our businesses to sell more products in countries in Asia and South America, products that are stamped with the words "Made in America."

As I noted, Obama adopted the phrase used to refer to those who had lost jobs in past trade deals, "displaced workers," to refer to those who would get jobs out of these new ones.

And his suggestion that letting JP Morgan Chase and Goldman Sachs use trade deals to extend their financial gimmickry to South Korea and incorporate Panama's secrecy regime into the US orbit constituted products stamped "Made in America"? That's a cynical appeal to the nearly-unanimous call for the opposite: a move away from such financialized madness to actual manufacture.

But he didn't mangle the script. That is the script. Obama said precisely the same thing in his weekly address yesterday:

It's time Congress finally passed a set of trade deals that would help displaced workers looking for new jobs, and that would allow our businesses to sell more products in countries in Asia and South America – products stamped with three words: Made in America.

Shorter Obama: "Displaced workers ... Made in America."

Update: Here's how the Administration uses the term "displaced" when it's not trying to propagandize (this is from a statement Austan Goolsbee made on Friday).

Bipartisan action is needed to help the private sector and the economy grow – such as measures to extend both the payroll tax cut and unemployment insurance, as well as passing the pending free trade agreements with re-employment assistance for displaced workers, the patent reform bill, and a bipartisan infrastructure bill to help put Americans back to work. [my emphasis]

Goolsbee has used the same formula before, as in this statement on July 29. That is, elsewhere, the Administration admits that these deals will "displace workers," not directly benefit those who have already been displaced by trade deals.

Update: And Obama admits that the trade deals create displaced workers in this press conference on July 15.

I've got three trade deals sitting ready to go. And these are all trade deals that the Republicans told me were their top priorities. They said this would be one of the best job creators that we could have. And yet it's still being held up because some folks don't want to provide trade adjustment assistance to people who may be displaced as a consequence of trade. Surely we can come up with a compromise to solve those problems. [my emphasis]

And Jay Carney on July 8:

Q Speaker Boehner today rejected the idea of tying Trade Adjustment Authority

to the free trade agreements. He says four separate bills. Do you want it attached because you feel it can't pass on its own?

MR. CARNEY: Well, the agreement that was presented was worked out in a bipartisan way. Trade Adjustment Authority has been supported by members of both parties for years. And we believe it is very important to provide that kind of assistance to workers who have been displaced by free trade agreements. And that has been a notion supported, again, by members of both parties for a long time. [my emphasis]