

Subcommittee Oversight Hearing: VA Procurement: Made in America

September 20, 2023

Statement for the Record

Thank you, Chairwoman Kiggans, for holding this important hearing.

The Biden Administration's policies have decimated the American middle class. Americans are now paying higher prices at the grocery store and gas pump due to inflation caused by Democrats' reckless spending policies. Last week, the United Auto Workers announced a strike over disagreements with management over pay and benefits for workers.¹ The 1,000-pound donkey in the room is that the Biden Administration's push for electric vehicles has harmed the industry and led to the disastrous situation we now find ourselves in.

Since the 1930s, preferences for domestically produced goods and services have existed in federal procurement. Specifically, the Buy American Act is the primary federal procurement law providing a preference for domestically produced goods and services.² It makes sense to support American small businesses as opposed to large foreign multinational companies when federal agencies are making procurement decisions. For too long, leaders in both parties have sold out American workers for cheap, Chinese labor.

Under President Trump's visionary leadership, American manufacturing was prioritized again. He issued an executive order "Maximizing Use of American-Made Goods, Products, and Materials." Realizing how

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/uaw-detroit-three-automakers-try-reach-deal-before-strike-widens-2023-09-18/#:~:text=The%20union%20and%20companies%20are,UAW%20is%20demanding%20through%202027.>

² <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46748>

popular President Trump's actions were with the American people, President Biden has paid lip service to building on his legacy. Unfortunately, this lip service has resulted in very little concrete action by the Biden Administration.

In Montana, we have seen firsthand the disappointing effects of Biden and federal agencies not enforcing the law, which has harmed domestic industries. I have had the pleasure of visiting the Center of the Nation of Wool in Billings. From the Revolutionary War to the present day, wool has been an important component of U.S. military uniforms.³ The Berry Amendment requires that all U.S. military uniforms be made from 100 percent domestic products, protecting domestic wool from offshore competition.

According to the CRS, the items covered by the Berry Amendment have varied over the years; currently, the law applies to DOD purchases of textiles, clothing, footwear, food, hand or measuring tools, stainless steel flatware, and dinnerware. DOD purchases of these items must be entirely grown, reprocessed, reused, or produced in the United States. However, over the last few years, DOD has bought wool from overseas in violation of the Berry Amendment. This has harmed Montana wool growers and is unacceptable. I remain focused on helping Montana wool growers and will continue to press the Department of Defense to ensure that our servicemembers have their uniforms made from American wool.

Congress must provide proper oversight of the Executive Branch, particularly the Biden Administration, which has been selling American workers down the road. Thank you, Chairwoman Kiggans for your leadership. I yield back.

³ <https://www.sheepusa.org/blog/newsmedia-sheepindustrynews-pastissues-2017-january2017-woolinthemilitary>