



## **Make America make things again**

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Detroit was a fitting site for Thursday's GOP debate.

There we find virtually all the dysfunctions that bedevil our country – unemployment, de-industrialization, deficits, decay.

Asked what he would do to bring manufacturing jobs back, Ted Cruz said Detroit was “decimated” by 60 years of failed left-wing policies.

No doubt liberal policies have hurt Detroit and places like it.

But that doesn't tell the whole story, unless you consider the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute left-wing outfits.

Detroit is Exhibit A of the results of the free-trade theology Washington has pursued relentlessly under the leadership of both Democrats and Republicans.

Once synonymous with America's unsurpassed industrial might, Detroit is now reverting to farmland.

The factories that made Detroit the car capital of the world – and made America the arsenal of democracy – have been razed. While politicians promised American workers a level playing field in the global economy, Americans saw the workshops where they once earned a living leveled into rubble-strewn fields.

Cars, trucks and tanks used to roll off the assembly lines of greater Detroit. Now cars roll off foreign ships in the port of Long Beach, and the Chinese provide crucial components for our weapons.

For decades, pencil-necked theoreticians calling themselves liberal, conservative or libertarian have told us not to worry. We don't need manufacturing. The “new economy,” “service

economy” or “information economy” would provide “new, better jobs” for those who once worked in the factories that have been moved beyond our borders.

But few if any of those new jobs ever materialized, and most of those that did paid far less than the old jobs.

That produced yet another problem.

People who don't have jobs – or who earn little more than minimum wage – don't pay taxes. As revenues fell, budget deficits at the local state and federal levels ballooned.

Cities like Detroit were still obligated to pay for upkeep on streets, sewers and water systems, not to mention teachers, police and other services. Forced to scrimp, you can see the results in Flint.

Fewer workers paying into the trust funds also took a toll on Social Security and Medicare. When politicians talk about raising the retirement age, cutting grandma's monthly check or hiking taxes to “reform entitlement programs,” they miss the big picture.

Putting Americans back to work is the best way to fix the problem. About 58 percent of Americans over the age of 16 are working. If the percentage of working Americans increases to 64 percent, budget deficits disappear, according to a Wall Street fund manager.

Simply put, working Americans and profitable businesses pay taxes and replenish the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. Jobs in China and Mexico do not.

Our trade deficit, which rose to \$45.7 billion in January, shaves a full percentage point off our GDP annually. Not coincidentally, the nation lost 16,000 manufacturing jobs last month.

The debate moderators didn't ask Donald Trump what he would do to bring manufacturing jobs back to Detroit, but he addressed it at a campaign rally in Michigan the following day.

“The car business is being abused,” he told the crowd to cheers. “Mexico is becoming the car capital of the world whether you like it or not. And we're going to turn that around.”

The auto industry moved from Michigan to Mexico following NAFTA. Trump says he would use the incentives of lower taxes and higher tariffs to encourage business to invest in America and bring jobs back from Mexico and China.

Mitt Romney and his fellow globalists at the Wall Street Journal editorial board say this would start a trade war, hurting American consumers and workers.

Memo to Mitt and company: we are already in a trade war – and we are losing. That's why Americans are hurting.

While Washington tries to do what's good for “the global economy,” every other country games the system to do what's best for them.

If we want to cure what ails Detroit and too many other places in our country, it's time to forget about the global economy and put America – and Americans – first.