

## **Obama's China policy gets labor union support**

Michael Bastasch - Published: 4:00 PM 09/18/2012

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"Today's announcement makes clear the President's commitment to enforcing U.S. trade laws and fighting for American workers," said United Steelworkers International President Leo W. Gerard.

The UAW represents skilled trades and production workers at General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler. They also represent auto workers at Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America and numerous workers at automotive parts companies.

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“The president has every incentive in the world, politically, to announce this WTO suit at this time,” said Ted Galen Carpenter, senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute.

“Organized labor is a major constituency of the democratic party, and especially at election time, there’s strong incentive to try and placate that constituency,” he added.

“But beyond that just consider the geographic factors with regard to the issue of auto subsidies and resentment against those subsidies,” he continued. “The two states that are affected the most by that are Ohio and Michigan.”

Reuters reports that some unions began a campaign to persuade the Obama administration to get tough on Chinese auto parts imports, arguing that the subsidies threatened 1.6 million jobs in all 50 states.

Reuters also reports that the steelworkers were behind the successful lobbying effort in 2009 to get Obama to curb Chinese tire imports, which the Chinese responded to by imposing a retaliatory tariff against U.S. poultry exports.

“The Obama Administration is committed to protecting the rights of nearly 800,000 American workers in our \$350 billion auto and auto parts manufacturing sector,” said U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk.

“Today we are continuing to make it clear to our trading partners that we will fight to support each job here at home that this sector supports,” he added.