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The Old Bag of Tricks Is No Complement to Free Trade

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In “[Biden Can Make American Trade Deals Great Again](#)” (op-ed, Dec. 11), Robert B. Zoellick argues that “Mr. Biden shouldn’t double down on protectionism. He could package openness to trade with assistance to workers and an increase in the minimum wage.” The problem is that trade adjustment assistance has never worked very well because union workers have little incentive to retrain rather than wait to be rehired at wage rates above what they could earn elsewhere. Meanwhile, increasing the minimum wage may help make union workers more competitive, but only by pricing less-skilled workers out of the market. By supporting a higher minimum wage, Mr. Biden would increase, not decrease, protectionism.

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