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Job losses that result from outsourcing work overseas are more than offset by gains that globalization brings to the U.S., author says

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San Bernardino, Calif. (Oct. 7, 2009) - Daniel Griswold, a Washington-based writer who advocates for increased free trade in a new book, used his own closet to illustrate the impact of international commerce.

Of the more than 120 clothing items in that closet, only 10 were made in the U.S., and nine of those items were ties, Griswold said. The other items were made around the world, in places like China and Mexico. One item had a tag that read "Hecho en China," a cross-cultural reference if ever there was one.

"Before you question my patriotism, look into your own closet," Griswold said during a presentation at California State University, San Bernardino. "Americans have voted with their dollars for more participation in the international marketplace. We are more globalized now than we ever have been."

Griswold spoke as part of the county's Business Stimulus Series, which highlights business leaders and visionaries who are impacting the economic recovery. The series is sponsored by the Economic Development Agency of San Bernardino County in partnership with CSUSB's College of Business and Public Administration.

Griswold, director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute in Washington, DC, argues in a new book that the benefits of increased globalization and free trade far outweigh the accompanying U.S. job losses.

Griswold, author of "Mad about Trade: Why Main Street America Should Embrace Globalization," said free trade is responsible for creating a higher standard of living, especially for low-income residents. Clothes, toys and consumer electronics, among other things, are much cheaper to buy as a result of open markets, saving a family of four as much as \$5,000 a year, Griswold said.

"The biggest winners in globalization are consumers," Griswold said. "Politicians always favor the small minority of people who are negatively affected by free trade, but trade is the working family's best friend."

The lowest trade barriers since World War II are enabling more U.S. companies than ever to compete in the global marketplace, Griswold said, and improving technology is the key to that.

"Globalization has been turbocharged by technology," Griswold said. "Technology has done more to drive globalization than any trade agreement."

Pundits on cable television often claim that the U.S. is exporting good-paying manufacturing jobs overseas and importing low-paying jobs back home. But the opposite is actually true, Griswold said.

"This is the big lie of the trade debate," Griswold said.

Globalization has allowed American companies to compete in the international marketplace at a time when 75 percent of the world's buying power rests outside the U.S. More than 30 percent of the exports from the U.S. are exported by more than 250,000 small and medium-sized businesses, Griswold said.

"The evidence is pretty clear that countries that open up their markets tend to grow their economies better and faster," Griswold said. "The opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses are tremendous."

Griswold's comments were echoed by several government, business and educational leaders who attended the presentation.

Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales encouraged attendees to embrace diversity as a good business decision.

"We must be able to embrace the diversity of our backgrounds and the ideas of others as we move forward, keeping in mind that our focus is on making money and strengthening our businesses," Gonzales said. "Globalization has come to San Bernardino County, and we must embrace it."

Globalization also has helped California State University, San Bernardino, attract a stream of motivated students, especially in the MBA program, according to university President Albert K. Karnig.

"Global education is a vital component of the university," Karnig said. "There are people here who are connected to every country in the world and, indeed, to every region in the world."

Mark Dowling, Administrator of the county's Economic Development Agency, said the Business Stimulus Series brings together business professionals, non-profit agencies and other key organizations to share information and create professional networks.

"It's extremely important that we show our support on the educational level, as well as the business level," Dowling said.

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