

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 15, 2004

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to respectfully request your attention to a problem that is negatively impacting a growing number of New Yorkers. The Trade Adjustment Assistance program is floundering, and is in need of special attention from the Department of Labor.

I have recently been contacted by men and women from across New York State whose job losses have been certified by the U.S. Department of Labor as eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance. These constituents are anxious to use the career counseling, job retraining, and other support systems in order to recover from their loss of employment due to trade. However, it appears that funding in the Trade Adjustment Assistance program is growing smaller and smaller, at a time when more and more people are qualifying for the program's aid.

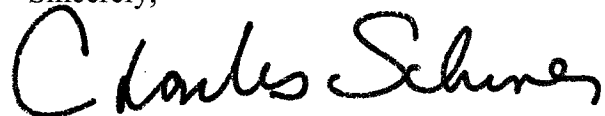
As a result, when former employees of New York companies like Vibratech, Oneida Limited, MT Picture Display, Carrier and Randolph Dimension, apply for TAA benefits, they are being placed on a waiting list. Many workers are forced to wait for months hoping that the program receives an influx of funds before their unemployment runs out. Their abilities to move on with their lives are being put on hold.

This assistance simply cannot wait until the FY 2005 Labor HHS Appropriation Bill is passed. It must be addressed now when thousands of workers who have lost their jobs to trade are struggling to recover from the trauma of losing their employment and the stress of balancing their financial responsibilities in the wake of joblessness.

Therefore, I write to seek your immediate assistance to this matter, through the immediate allocation of a National Emergency Grant to cover aid to those states that have been forced to create these waiting lists. I am hopeful that your assistance will help the government to surmount the unfortunate obstacles to aid that have developed this year.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If I may be of any assistance, please contact my staff or me.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate