



From: White House: Office of the Vice President info@mail.whitehouse.gov   
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## Office of the Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2019

### REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT PENCE AFTER TOURING R&J JOHNSON FARMS

R&J Johnson Farms  
Glyndon, Minnesota

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you all for being here. And I especially -- would you all join me in thanking R&J Johnson Farms? (Applause.)

Thank you all for coming out and really putting a face -- not just for Minnesota, but for America -- on the importance of agriculture, the challenges that American agriculture is facing today, and the vital importance of expanded trade to the vitality of the American family farm.

The stories that I've heard today, I hear as I travel all across the country. America is prospering today. Great news over the last week: 5.8 million jobs created over the last two and half years. More Americans working today than ever before in our nation's history. For the first time ever in the last year, there are more Americans looking -- there are more Americans -- excuse me, there's more job openings in this country than there are Americans looking for work. That has actually never happened before the last year.

And I believe it's a testament to the progress that President Trump has made, working with the Congress -- where we've cut taxes, we've cut federal red tape. We eliminated the Waters of the USA rule. We stood by private property rights. We've expanded American energy.

But President Trump and I believe that expanded trade is absolutely vital to the success of the United States of America in the city and on the farm. And we are fighting for trade deals that are more fair and more free and more reciprocal.

And as we speak today, a delegation from China has arrived in Washington, D.C., for the latest negotiations. And I want to assure all of you, particularly those of you in soybeans, who export to China and understand that we're working literally hour by hour to reach an agreement with China.

The President and I remain hopeful that we'll be able to reach an agreement, but we're going to continue to stand firm. We're going to continue to stand firm for putting American jobs, American farmers, and American workers first to reset that trading relationship with China that is so out of balance in so many different ways.

But the good news is, we've got a trade deal done with Mexico and Canada. It's the USMCA. The President has done his job. And I'm here to say it is time for Congress to do their job and approve the USMCA this year. (Applause.)

As we heard from these farmers, the USMCA is a huge improvement on NAFTA. We all remember the North American Free Trade Agreement enacted in the mid-1990s. Its impact on manufacturing in places like Minnesota and Indiana did not benefit American workers broadly. And the new USMCA really puts American jobs and American workers first. It levels the playing field. It removes the unintentional incentives in the last deal for companies to leave our country, and particularly go south of the border.

But with regard to agriculture, there's no question -- and Ray and I were talking about it; many of us were -- the USMCA is a win for American farmers. It's a win for Minnesota. And it is time for Congress to act and approve the USMCA. Okay?

I'm here in this district because this district is really emblematic of all that's best about American agriculture. In fact, it reminds me an awful lot of home, back in Southern Indiana. We grow a lot of the same things and we -- we enjoy the same quality of life and communities as you do here in Minnesota.

But I'm also here because Congressman Collin Peterson is a vitally important leader in the Congress of the United States. You know, before I was Vice President, before I was Governor of Indiana, I was a member of Congress for 12

years. I actually served on the Agriculture Committee with Congressman Peterson. He's a good man. And he's now the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. And I'm here to call on Congressman Collin Peterson, who supports the USMCA, to call on Speaker Pelosi and tell her to bring the USMCA to the floor and bring it to the floor soon.

We really do believe that if Speaker Pelosi puts the USMCA on the floor of the House of Representatives, it'll pass. It is a win for American farmers. It's a win for American workers, American manufacturing, and jobs. But it's absolutely imperative that the Democratic leadership in the Congress act to move the USMCA to the floor.

And so I wanted to come here to Minnesota, and particularly to my friend Collin Peterson's district, to encourage him to tell his leadership in the House the time has come to vote on the USMCA and give Minnesota agriculture, the people of Minnesota, and the people of America a great, great victory. Okay? You with me? (Applause.)

So, with that, thank you all again. Thank you all for being here. I'd be happy to take a question or two.

Q What's your reaction to what you heard today? Obviously, it is kind of like being back in your home district and talking with your neighbors, but are you hearing some of those same stories, some of the same concerns?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I really am. I mean, the reality is, as Congress -- as Congress delays in considering the USMCA, many family farms are struggling. I mean, you heard about the prices today. We hear that all across the country -- the lack of certainty in our trading relationship with our partners to the north and to the south is impacting real world choices that family farms are making here in Minnesota and across the country.

And it's the reason why the President and I feel such an urgency about this. We drove hard -- on the USMCA, we drove for a deal that would really level the playing field, not just for manufacturing, but also for agriculture in this country. And we secured that deal.

We're particularly proud of the progress that we've made on dairy with our neighbors to the north. We -- you know, there were some inequities for dairy farmers in this part of the country. And you all recognize that and understand

that. And those have all been addressed to our neighbors in Canada, but we really do believe that the time has come for us to act and to act now.

And again, I want to emphasize: Congressman Collin Peterson is my friend. I served on the Agriculture Committee with him. I know the people of this district appreciate him and appreciate his leadership. And I just -- I want you all to know that Congressman Peterson is in a unique position, as Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, to carry the urgency that I heard today to the Democratic leadership in the Congress and get them to act.

If Speaker Pelosi puts the USMCA on the floor of the Congress, it'll pass -- and we'll pass it out of the Senate, and we'll create real opportunities for certainty in our trading relationship here in North America.

And, in the midst of all of that, we'll continue to work -- continue to work a free, fair, reciprocal deal with China, which is so important to agriculture as well.

Q Why did you choose to come here to Glyndon? Of all places, why Glyndon, Minnesota?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, Ray and JoLyn invited me. (Laughter.) I'm delighted to be here.

No, I really do believe that Glyndon and this part of Minnesota are really emblematic of the heart of American agriculture. This is a great, great region -- a great region of the country.

But to hear these stories, to listen to the families who are here -- most of which have off-farm income; to hear about the challenges of input costs; and particularly to hear what they're hearing from their neighbors and friends -- it's going to make it -- it's going to give me a better opportunity to go back, as I engage with people on Capitol Hill, and tell the story of the real-world impacts here.

I mean, the truth is, for everything that's happening good in this country -- I mean, more Americans working than ever before, 5.8 million new jobs created, the stock market is soaring -- for many people on the farm across this country, this is a challenging time. And it's challenging because of the uncertainty around our trading relationships with Mexico and Canada.

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But Congress can fix that. Congress can enact the USMCA. And once we do that, we believe it's going to have an almost immediate impact on agricultural prices, on commodity prices. It's going to help the bottom line of all these family farmers. And it's that real-world story that I came here to hear.

Q Thanks for commenting. If the China trade deal takes longer than you anticipate, would you guys consider implementing a second trade assistance program this year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say again, the Chinese delegation has arrived in Washington, D.C. Those negotiations are ongoing. But as President Trump has made clear, we're prepared to continue to expand on the tariffs that we've implemented because things have to change in our relationship with China.

I mean, China, today, is fully half of our international trade deficit, and that doesn't even account for issues like the intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, and, frankly, all the things that really work against American workers in the city and on the farm. So we're going to take a strong stand. We're going to make it clear to them: We believe we're in a strong position either way, but we're going to continue to drive forward.

And if we have to go the tariffs route -- if we have to expand tariffs to reset the balance in our relationship -- you can be very confident that President Trump and I and our entire administration are going to look for ways to provide additional support to American farmers that would be impacted by the negotiations or uncertainty in our relationship with China. And those discussions have already taken place.

Q So to be clear: Will there be an additional payment for farmers? And, if so, when can we know more about that? When are you expecting us to know a little bit clearer path forward?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I -- look, I think we are day-to-day in our negotiations with China right now. I think the President said earlier today that we're hoping -- and hoping that they're coming to make a deal. And that would have an immediate impact on the need for additional support or subsidies for American farmers.

But make no mistake about it, we have already had preliminary discussions in the White House for additional support for farmers if this impasse with China continues.

But the important thing to remember here is the USMCA is already negotiated. It's done. And all Congress needs to do is put the USMCA on for -- on the floor for a vote. And we believe it will pass.

And it's the reason why I came here, to my friend Congressman Collin Peterson's district, to say: As Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, the people of Minnesota, the people of America would do well if Congressman Collin Peterson told Nancy Pelosi to put the USMCA on the floor. We'll pass it, and we'll have a brand new trade deal with the United States, Mexico, and Canada that will be a win for American farmers and American workers.

Q Do you think that they're not voting on it because they think it will pass or because they think it won't pass? Do you think Collin Peterson hasn't made that clear? And do you think that has more to do with other kinds of tariffs issues that you might have some control over?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well -- you know, I was in Congress for 12 years and -- you know, I don't make a habit on speculating about why Congress is hesitating to act, okay? I know we've got the USMCA done. There were retaliatory tariffs that were put into place following some strong action the President has taken on steel and aluminum in this country. All of those discussions are taking place.

What I can assure you -- and I can assure Congressman Peterson and every member of Congress -- is that we believe there is a way forward here to approve the USMCA and deal with all of these issues in a way that puts American jobs and American workers first.

Q Do you think he's already applied as much pressure as he can?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I would -- it would be a good question for you to ask him. (Laughter.) I -- but what I would tell you is we're grateful that Congressman Collin Peterson is supporting the USMCA.

Q Did you invite him here with you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But I believe it's absolutely essential that Congressman Peterson, who chairs the House Agriculture Committee, carry the message of agriculture here in Minnesota and across America to the Democrat leadership in the House and say: American agriculture and America need Congress to vote on the USMCA.

Thanks, all. Thank you, everybody.

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