

AMERICANS' ROLE IN THE WORLD: TRADE ISSUES

Points to think about from the National Issues Forum video that you will view at the salon.

The Global Market Prescription: Lifting all Boats

Our economic strength is the underlying reason for America's prosperity and its preeminent position in the world. Global stability depends on raising the standard of living in the rest of the world. To help achieve that we must rigorously promote the principles of free trade. Chiefly, this means knocking down the barrier that have heretofore protected business—American businesses included—from global competition.

Positions in favor:

Make free trade the guiding principle in public policies and international agreements.

Resist pressure to provide protection from global competition for specific industries.

Provide more resources to retrain and relocate workers displaced by foreign competition.

Support citizen actions aimed at ensuring human rights for workers in foreign companies that sell products in the U.S.

Tradeoffs

In the short term, free trade can cause wrenching dislocations for American workers and encourage sweatshops or child labor in some other nations.

Globalization may lead to a certain standardization of products that wipes away longtime cultural distinctions.

What the critics say

A world dominated by global corporations focused on maximizing profit is hostile to the interests of most people.

Companies in other countries from whom we buy cheaper products may allow human rights abuses.

We have learned from the past that globalization has steadily increased the gap between the rich and the poor.

