

**DAN SIMMONS**  
**President, Local 1899**  
**UNITED STEELWORKERS (USW)**  
**Written Testimony**  
**U.S. HOUSE STEEL CAUCUS HEARING**  
**Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2362**  
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Good morning. My name is Dan Simmons. I want to thank my Congressman Jerry Costello and the other members of the Congressional Steel Caucus for inviting me to speak to you today.

I am the newly-elected president of United Steelworkers Local Union 1899. Before being elected president I was chairman of the grievance procedure committee for 6 years. I am a second generation steelworker and I have been employed at the Granite City steelmaking facility for 31 years.

Local Union 1899 is one of three United Steelworker local unions at the Granite City Works of United States Steel Corporation. Out of a total United Steelworker membership of 2,100 at Granite City Works, my local union represents 1,250 employees.

Late last year, because of the financial crisis and the resulting severe economic down-turn in the U.S. economy, the capacity utilization of the American steel industry fell to under 40 percent. Steel production at the Granite City Works was completely shutdown in December 2008. More than 2,000 steelworkers were laid off. We have previously experienced downturns in the economy and layoffs, but this is the first time in 130 years of producing quality steel that the complete steel mill was closed.

### **A Six-Month Plant-Wide Shutdown**

Appearing before you today, we are now at six months of unemployment for most of the Granite City steelworkers. It is a disaster for our families and communities. No American working family should ever have to face this level of personal economic crisis.

Last Friday, we got welcome news that United States Steel Corp. was initiating plans to re-start steelmaking at Granite City as soon as possible following a recent surge in orders for steel. After being on layoff for the past six months, we certainly hope this start up indicates a real upturn in the economy and the increase in orders is not temporary.

Although it's great news for us in Granite City to be pouring steel again, the problems facing steel manufacturing in the U.S. remain. Workers incomes are being devastated and their standard of living attacked. Necessary medical care is beyond their reach because their health insurance has ended.

Granite City Works is a fully integrated steel mill. That means, as we like to say, its operations extend "from the rocks to the docks". We steelworkers make a wide variety of

steel products with the ability to run orders for a range of customers. In 2008, our product mix was 45 percent pipe and tube, 20 percent service center, 10 percent automotive, 10 percent construction, 10 percent railcar, agriculture, and light poles, and 5 percent tin.

### **5,000 Granite City Steelworkers Demonstrated in February**

On February 10 just before Congress voted on the Recovery and Stimulus Acts, more than 5,000 steelworkers, their families and community supporters marched through the streets of Granite City, calling on Congress to pass meaningful legislation in response to the economic crisis and to restore and preserve manufacturing in the United States.

Since passage of the Recovery Act, our local union has been very active in the communities surrounding Granite City, urging city councils to pass resolutions committing to purchase American made manufactured products with stimulus act money. Many cities in the area we call “Metro East,” across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, have passed USW-sponsored Buy American resolutions.

### **Unemployed Steelworkers Watch Train Loads of India-Made Steel Pipe**

During the time my members were being laid off and while many of them were losing their health care, we watched train load after train load of 30 inch diameter pipe being unloaded only one mile from the mill. This was steel pipe being used for an oil pipeline stretching from Alberta, Canada to a town close to Granite City. This pipe was made in India. This pipe should have been made by American workers with American steel.

There is something truly wrong in our country when thousands of steelworkers are being laid off, including 2,000 workers at Granite City, while government subsidized steel pipe made in India is being unloaded in our backyard. Certainly India’s government could find uses for the pipe in their own country, rather than hurting American workers.

### **Lone Star Pipe: A Granite City Customer**

One of our biggest customers at Granite City Works was a sister United States Steel plant, Lone Star Steel, in Texas. We supplied the flat rolled steel that was used to make pipe at Lone Star. Lone Star was shut down in December, 2008 around the same time we were shut down. Steelworkers there have been certified for Trade Act Adjustment benefits because they lost their jobs due to steel pipe imports. Our TAA petition is pending.

We applaud the trade case our union and US Steel have jointly filed in April against China for dumping and subsidization of oil tubular imports. After an initial investigation, the U.S. International Trade Commission voted unanimously in May to proceed with a complete government investigation of China oil tubular pipe. We hope the U.S.

Commerce Department will also issue an affirmative decision on China subsidy findings in September, the next scheduled step for this case.

We support the idea of fair trade, but American workers cannot compete if we don't enforce our trade laws against countries like China who cheat and don't obey the rules of global trade. Right now, because of foreign government subsidies and currency manipulation, foreign steel imports are not traded fairly. We need strong action to stop these predatory practices. We need it now.

USW members recognize the Congressional Steel Caucus members initiate legislation that can stimulate manufacturing jobs while saving the planet. The recently-passed U.S. House bill called the CARS Act, the "Consumer Assistance to Recycle and Safe Act," is an example of the kind of creative and positive programs that Congress must enact.

### **Health Care Crisis in Granite City**

Finally, I can't end my comments without talking about health care. Last week I met with laid off local union members who have lost their health care benefits. Thank goodness I was able to explain to them the COBRA subsidy included by Congress in the Recovery Act. Without that subsidy, COBRA coverage would be completely unaffordable.

We need health care reform now to make certain that in the future, workers don't face losing health care just because they get laid off. I have witnessed the fear our members of Local 1899 experienced when faced with not having health care for their families. No one in America should have to feel that fear.

USW Local 1899 represents workers at other employers in addition to U.S. Steel. Among them are workers who process slag from Granite City Works. They faced losing their health care when the insurance company announced it would terminate the health care plan because so many laid off workers were signing up for the COBRA subsidy. The insurance company claimed too many sick people were taking COBRA.

We need fundamental health care reform and we need it now!

Thank you for the opportunity to allow the serious economic problems faced by the workers I represent -- and their families -- to be raised here today. We believe the leadership in the Congressional Steel Congress is prepared to do the right thing and will actively legislate good policies and good solutions.

USW Local 1899 members will provide you the support needed when you do.

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