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**PORTER FEARS A.K. STEEL LOCKOUTS IN OHIO AND PENNSYLVANIA**

Dr. Steven Porter, Democratic candidate for Congress in the 3<sup>rd</sup> district of Pennsylvania, spoke out in a press release today against the probable lockout of union workers by the A.K. Steel plant in Middletown, Ohio.

“I fear that what is happening in Middletown is a harbinger of what is likely to happen at the Butler plant in September,” said Porter. Referring to a notice posted today saying that Middletown employees were to clear their lockers of personal belongings by Monday or company management would cut the locks, Porter observed, “It appears that replacement personnel are being readied to take over in the event there is no resolution in negotiations between Armco Employees Independent Federation (AEIF) and the A.K. Steel management by the Tuesday midnight deadline.”

A.K. Steel employs 6,100 people, 2,700 in the Ohio plant. It has recently suffered major losses due to the globalization of the steel industry and the skyrocketing costs of health care and pensions.

“In 2003, a new CEO came on board at A. K. Steel after a bitter and violent 39-month lockout at the company’s Mansfield plant. He cut losses by eliminating jobs and selling non-core assets,” Porter continued. In a Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> letter, management warned that any settlement would have to ‘reflect the reality of today’s competitive global steel environment with regard to total employment cost and job flexibility.’ “It is likely that further job cuts and more concessions in the areas of health care and pensions will occur,” predicted Porter.

“I am deeply concerned that there will be more jobs lost in the 3<sup>rd</sup> district when the Butler contract runs out in September, and I am infuriated that the Bush Administration and my congressional opponent, Phil English, who marches in lock step on trade with his Republican masters, have done virtually nothing to stem the tide.

“Mr. English was the deciding vote on CAFTA. He voted repeatedly to give China Most-Favored-Nation status and to re-impose WTO standards. Mr. English boasts that his positions on the Ways and Means Committee and the Steel Caucus give him legislative clout, but the many thousands of Pennsylvania workers who have lost their jobs during Mr. English’s long congressional tenure, have yet to see any positive benefit from that alleged ‘clout’. All they get are the same warmed-over, empty slogans that the Republicans trot out every election.

“When I get to Congress, I will fight tooth and nail to improve the manufacturing situation of our region.

1. I will fight for the passage of HR 676, the universal health plan offered by Democratic Congressman Conyers, which takes the 800-pound gorilla off the back of American business.

2. I will fight for a portable pension law and for strengthening Social Security so that pensions become more affordable.

3. I will initiate public works projects that make business and government partners in infrastructure improvement, in new energy industries, and in new transportation facilities that will reduce our dependency on foreign oil and help clean up our environment. A Great Lakes Wind Farm project allied to a clean-up of the lakes and high-speed rail connections between the major cities of the Pennsylvania and Ohio “T” are just two examples.

4. I will fight for a law mandating that all Defense Department contracts be awarded to American businesses employing American workers on American soil.

5. I will fight to rescind the tax breaks now given to U.S. companies that relocate overseas.

6. I will work to give tax breaks for “buying American.”

7. I will work to revise trade agreements that have impacted American business unfairly, and I will refuse to support new trade agreements that do not provide equal benefits to the U.S.A. or that fail to improve the wages and employment conditions of foreign workers.

8. I will fight for a law that would apply to products entering our country at artificially low prices because of unfair currency manipulation a tariff equal to the amount of the manipulation.

“Those are some of the things I will fight for when I represent the 3<sup>rd</sup> district in Congress. And I will be **able** to fight for them because, unlike my opponent, I will not be under the thumb of an administration that is owned by the same corporate giants which have outsourced the American economy. During his six terms in office, Mr. English has taken millions from these companies, and he could no more oppose them and fight for the retention and promotion of our manufacturing base than he could fly to the moon.

“The time for new voices and new approaches is long overdue. If the voters do not change things soon, they will see the A.K. Steel scenario repeated over and over again for millions more Americans. The time to act is **now**.”