### SKFTA passing- bipart

Portland Press Herald 8/2- Portland Press Herald, August 2, 2011, “Move forward on trade agreements”, http://www.sentinelsource.com/opinion/columnists/guest/move-forward-on-trade-agreements/article\_ca239a9a-946c-50ef-b917-8893789407e9.html

Waiting in the wings are trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea that have been held hostage to the debt crisis. And what’s amazing is that while there are deep philosophical divides between Democrats and Republicans, these trade agreements are not that controversial. There are enough members of both parties, including the president, who see these deals as a way to boost exports and stimulate job creation at a time when the country needs it.

These deals, particularly the Korean agreement, would be good for America and good for Maine.

Maine is already a net exporter of goods and services to Korea, which buys Maine-made computer chips and airplane parts as well as paper and wood products.

If a trade deal is finalized, dropping Korean tariffs on American goods, other Maine products such as lobsters (now subject to a 20 percent tariff) and blueberries (30 percent tariff) could find new markets overseas.

The trade deals have predictable opposition from some labor groups and their supporters in Washington, including Rep. Mike Michaud, who extrapolated the loss of manufacturing jobs that resulted from the North American Free Trade Agreement to this deal. We think that analysis is flawed.

Korea is not Mexico. Korean workers are better paid and enjoy better labor protections than Mexican workers — and even some American workers — and would be better able to buy U.S. imports. The overall trade deficit between the United States and Korea is a fraction of the imbalance that exists with other trading partners and would not be expected to change dramatically if Korea were to drop its barriers to imports. Our barriers are already low.

The United States won’t be able to maintain this relationship by doing nothing. U.S. manufacturers have to compete with Chinese companies that pay lower wages and with European competitors, who have signed a trade agreement and will soon see their tariffs disappear.

At a time when there is broad political agreement that the United States has to boost job growth, this seems like an ideal time to pass these trade deals and increase American exports. Congress has its hands full with unbridgeable ideological differences on some issues, but that shouldn’t stop members from working together on the areas in which they agree.

The United States should stop holding all other business hostage to the debt crisis and find a way to move forward on these trade deals.

### SKFTA passing- Obama will push after debt deal

Chi-dong 8/3- Lee Chi-dong August 3, 2011, “Obama, buoyed by debt deal, urges Congress to pass FTAs”, Yonhap News, http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2011/08/03/13/0301000000AEN20110803000100315F.HTML

Immediately after resolving a federal debt crisis, U.S. President Barack Obama called Tuesday for lawmakers to work on free trade deals with South Korea, Colombia and Panama.

"I want Congress to pass a set of trade deals -- deals we've already negotiated -- that would help displaced workers looking for new jobs and would allow our businesses to sell more products in countries in Asia and South America, products that are stamped with the words 'Made in America,'" Obama said in a press conference.

He was speaking shortly after the Senate passed a bill to raise the debt limit by at least US$2.1 trillion. The House of Representatives approved it a day earlier.

He said voters want politicians to solve problems even though Washington is sharply divided.

"And that's why, when Congress gets back from recess, I will urge them to immediately take some steps -- bipartisan, common-sense steps -- that will make a difference; that will create a climate where businesses can hire, where folks have more money in their pockets to spend, where people who are out of work can find good jobs," he said.

Government officials have strongly indicated that they will push for the ratification of the three trade pacts as soon as Congress reconvenes after a month-long break beginning Aug. 6.