

Opening Statement
The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-WI)
Committee on Science and Technology
Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight
American Decline or Renewal? Part 2—The Past Future of Skilled Work

June 24, 2008

Today's hearing is the Subcommittee's second hearing on globalization in a month. These hearings closely follow a series of four hearings on the same topic in the Science and Technology Committee. In addition to these hearings, and over vocal objections from the minority, the Committee also hired an outside consultant and paid \$20,000 for "studies and advice" on issues of globalization.

Last March, Chairman Gordon wrote to Members of the Committee and asked that they support the consulting agreement. In his letter, he argued that, the consultant, Dr. Ron Hira, had "unique knowledge and experience in this field" that could not "easily be duplicated by Committee staff."

Without doubting Dr. Hira's qualifications, the minority questioned the need to hire him as a consultant. With numerous hearings planned, why not invite Dr. Hira to testify? Why did the Committee have to enter into a costly consulting agreement when experts routinely testify before Congress for free?

Those questions are renewed now that we have seen the majority's report. The report was due to the Committee by December 31, 2007. It was presumably delivered on time, but the minority was not given a copy until a few weeks ago, when it was made publically available as a "Committee Print." The Print has an official look and lists all the Committee's Members—even though nearly half of us never saw it before it was released.

The report itself is 12 pages long and includes 5 full pages of background. This report, which reportedly could not have been accomplished by Committee staff, is little more than a summary of the Committee's hearings on this topic.

I would like to enter the report into the record for taxpayers to decide if their \$20,000 were well spent. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses, who like most Congressional witnesses, have generously agreed to testify without charge.