

**Testimony of Jason Alexander
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**Before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee
Subcommittee on Tax**

Hearing on

“Your Paycheck, Returned: How the Working Families Tax Cuts Delivered for Americans”

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Good afternoon Chairman Smith, Chairman Kelly, Ranking Member Thompson and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Jason Alexander; I’m a millwright at Optimus Steel, a small, family run steel mill in Beaumont, Texas. I feel blessed with the opportunities the steel industry has provided me and my wife. Steel built this country, and the work we do every day continues to strengthen everything from our national defense to the next generation of manufacturing. Over the past year, actions taken by Congress and the administration have made a meaningful difference, strengthening both our industry and the people who depend on it, and helping workers like me build a family and pursue the American dream.

As a millwright, I inspect, repair, install, adjust, and maintain the equipment that keeps our mill running. That means welding, brazing, cutting, precision assembly, whatever it takes to keep production moving safely and efficiently. It’s demanding work, and the hours can be long, but it’s work I’m proud of. Steel is essential, and downtime isn’t an option when the country depends on a steady supply of American-made materials.

That's why policies like the Working Families Tax Cuts have mattered so much. When my wife and I filed our taxes this year, we saw the impact firsthand. The year before the Working Families Tax Cuts, I actually had to write a check when I filed my taxes. This year, instead of owing money, we received an incredible refund of more than \$10,000. That's money I earned through hard work, often through long overtime hours, and for the first time, it felt like the system recognized that effort instead of punishing us for it. It's not a handout, that's our money back in our pockets. My wife and I are planning to start a family, so this refund feels like a meaningful head start, a nest egg that will help us take that next step with more confidence. It's something that would've been harder for us to do before.

We don't talk much about policy where I work, but we talk about this. I've heard the same from my coworkers. Many of us say it feels like we got a raise because of the no tax on overtime. In Washington, policies can sometimes feel distant, but this is one impacts all of us who work in the mill.

At the same time, we need to make sure American companies can keep investing here at home. I'm thankful for the provisions that have helped companies like mine grow and stay competitive. Full expensing of capital equipment, for example, has allowed Optimus Steel to expand and modernize. As a result, we've been able to install equipment that drives measurable gains in both quality and output, strengthening our ability to serve customers more effectively. Among these advancements that the Working Families Tax Cuts helped us achieve is substantial progress toward completing our second rolling mill, a key milestone that will further expand our production capacity and operational efficiency.

I would also like to take the opportunity to talk about some of the other policies that have been crucial to support steelworkers across the country. I can't emphasize enough how important

the 232 steel tariffs are for us. Steel is foundational to any nation's economy and security, which is why countries like China continue to target our industry. American steelworkers produce the world's cleanest steels, made to the highest quality standards, in the most efficient way possible. And our country cares about our workers, and our environment, which can put us at a competitive disadvantage with countries that do not. It is not possible or desirable to compete with China's forced labor rates or live with their pollution, but we do need a way to level the playing field to keep American manufacturing competitive.

The 232 tariffs have revitalized our industry and protected jobs in communities like Beaumont and across the country, communities that have grown up around steel mills and depend on them. Our industry is thriving; for example, the U.S. just passed Japan for the first time since the 1990's to be the third largest steel producer in the world, which simply wasn't going to happen without the 232s. This revitalization ensures our country's economic and national security.

Another important step forward is the Leveling the Playing Field 2.0 Act. This bipartisan legislation would give the Department of Commerce stronger tools to enforce our trade laws. Without enforcement, our trade laws aren't worth the paper they're written on. And it's been nearly a decade since those laws were updated. Passing this bill would be a major step toward ensuring fair competition and supporting American workers.

Thank you to the Lord for putting me in a place to tell my story. And thank you again for the work you do and for the opportunity to speak today. The policies you're shaping have real impacts on people like me. My wife and I are grateful for the ways the Working Families Tax Cuts have helped us build a better life.

Steelworkers helped build this country, and we're ready to keep supplying the materials that will carry it forward. All we ask is a fair chance to compete. And if we have that, I'm confident, we will win every time.