

# ROB PORTMAN: CONTINUING THE TRADITION OF DEFICITS, OUTSOURCING, AND CRONYISM AT OMB

## ROB PORTMAN: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

<b>Born:</b>	1955
<b>Current Position:</b>	US Trade Representative [www.ustr.gov]
<b>Previous Positions:</b>	From 1993 to 2005, Rob Portman represented Ohio's 2 <sup>nd</sup> District in Congress. While in Congress, Portman served as the Chairman of the House Republican Leadership Conference. Prior to serving in Congress, Portman was an associate in the Washington law firm of Patton Boggs from 1984-1986. He worked as an associate and then a partner at the law firm of Graydon, Head and Ritchey from 1986-1989 and 1991-1993 in Cincinnati. From 1989 to 1991, he served at the White House, first as Associate Counsel to the President, then as Deputy Assistant to the President, and finally as director of Office of Legislative Affairs. [ <u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u> , 11/30/05; www.ustr.gov]
<b>Education:</b>	Portman received his BA in anthropology from Dartmouth and his J.D from the University of Michigan in 1984. [ <u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u> , 11/30/05]

## MORE OF THE SAME: PORTMAN IS ANOTHER BUSH-ROVE INSIDER

**Portman Is A Close, Longtime Friend of George Bush; Was Also A Pioneer.** The New York Times wrote, "A friend of Mr. Bush for 17 years, Mr. Portman is credited with helping the president win Ohio's 20 electoral votes in a close contest in November. He is on a first-name basis with Karl Rove, now deputy chief of staff for policy at the White House, and Joshua B. Bolten, director of the Office of Management and Budget, who regularly consult him on domestic issues." The Times called Portman, who was a 2004 Pioneer, "one of [Bush's] closest friends in Congress," and "President Bush's man in the House." The Hill wrote that Portman "and Bush met at the 1988 Republican convention in New Orleans, where Portman was a young delegate. He remembers Bush, who is fond of nicknames and now calls him 'Robby Bobby,' as relaxed and friendly, wearing cowboy boots and holding a cigar." [New York Times, 2/16/03, 3/18/05; The Hill, 10/18/05; www.whitehouseforsale.org]

- **Portman Did Debate Prep With Bush and Cheney.** Portman practiced with Dick Cheney before the vice presidential debates in 2000 and 2004. Cheney said Portman "makes a pretty good Joe Lieberman and John Edwards...He was tougher than either one of them." [The Hill, 10/18/05]
- **Portman Worked at the White House Under George H.W. Bush.** Just after graduating from college, Portman worked as an advance man for then-vice president George H.W. Bush. From 1989 to 1991, during Bush's tenure in the White House, Portman began his tenure there as an associate counsel, then became director of the legislative-affairs office. [New York Times, 2/16/03; Plain Dealer, 3/20/05; South China Morning Post, 12/16/05]
- **Portman Often Says That He Owes His Career To the Bush Family.** Talking about George W. Bush, Portman said, "I feel like I really owe my political career to his father." Portman also said, "I have a loyalty and allegiance to making them (the Bush administration) successful. I have a real commitment to that." [The Hill, 10/18/05; Cincinnati Enquirer, 3/18/05]

**Portman is Quintessential Washington Insider.** CQ Weekly wrote, “Rob Portman of Cincinnati, the House Republican leadership’s designated conduit to President Bush, is one of the few people in the current GOP hierarchy who can be labeled a quintessential Washington insider.” [CQ Weekly, 1/25/03]

**After His Nomination As Trade Representative, Portman Was Criticized For Inexperience.** When Portman was nominated as Trade Representative, one European diplomat said, “Portman is the John Roberts of the trade world. It’s a short record, with little to go on.” [National Journal, 10/15/05]

## **PORTMAN ON THE JOB: DEFICITS, OUTSOURCING, LOWERING WAGES**

**Portman Was Criticized For His Advocacy Of Outsourcing Jobs.** When Portman was nominated as Trade Representative, Alan Tonelson, a research fellow with the U.S. Business and Industry Council, which represents companies affected by free trade and opposes current free-trade policies, called Portman’s nomination a “slap in the face to the U.S. domestic manufacturing base.” “Rep. Portman has been a dedicated outsourcer throughout his career in Congress,” Tonelson said. [Congressional Quarterly Today, 3/17/05]

**Portman “Enthusiastically” Supported Tax Cuts Leading to Record Deficit, Voted to Make Tax Cuts Permanent.** In Congress, Portman was known for his “enthusiastic” support of Bush’s tax cuts, voting for them in 2001 and 2003, and voted to make the tax cuts permanent in 2002. According to Citizens for Tax Justice, if the Bush tax cuts set to expire in 2008 are extended, as Bush has called for, the impact on the budget will be a \$176 billion larger deficit. [CTJ Fact Sheet, <http://www.ctj.org/pdf/binge03.pdf>; Columbus Dispatch (Ohio), 11/28/04; Vote #45, HR 3, 3/8/2001 Passed 230-198 D 10-197 R 219-0 I 1-1; Vote #103, HR 586, 4/18/2002, Passed 229-198 D 9-196 R 219-1 I 1-1; Vote #182, HR 2, 5/9/03, Passed 222-203 D 4-199 R 218-3 I 0-1]

**While Portman Served As US Trade Representative, US Trade Deficit With China Soared to \$200 Billion, Leading to Loss of American Jobs.** Portman served as US Trade Representative from May of 2005 to April of 2006. During 2004, America’s trade deficit with China was \$161 billion. During 2005, the trade deficit with China rose to \$202 billion. U.S. manufacturers contend that China’s yuan is undervalued by as much as 15 to 40 percent, giving Chinese goods an unfair advantage that has cost America nearly 3 million manufacturing jobs since 2000. Portman was criticized by members of Congress for failing to effectively address China’s continued manipulation of its currency and for failing to take new action in the WTO or launching new efforts to enforce trade laws. [Knight Ridder, 4/13/06; US News and World Report, 4/24/06; The Hollywood Reporter, 2/15/06; Census Foreign Trade Statistics, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)]

**Portman Fought to Pass CAFTA, Which Exported Jobs and Depressed Wages.** When Portman was became Trade Representative, his first priority was gaining passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement. The deal was 15 votes away from passage when Portman joined the administration, but Portman lobbied members hard, even in the two months before his confirmation while he was still a member himself. The bill passed in July - on a 217-215 vote. The bill was criticized by technology workers, the American sugar industry, and the labor community as exporting jobs, depressing wages, and failing to protect workers rights. [Cincinnati Enquirer, 11/30/05; National Journal, 10/15/05; South China Morning Post, 12/16/05; Washington Alliance of Technology Workers, 5/05 Fact Sheet; American Sugar Alliance release, 6/23/05; Baton Rouge Advocate, 1/25/04; Los Angeles Times, 4/12/04; Washington Post, 9/20/04]

**Portman Called For Steep Cuts To American Farm Subsidies.** On domestic farm subsidies, Portman wrote, “To jump-start our stalled negotiations, the U.S. is prepared to move, and move aggressively, by supporting a 60 per cent cut in ‘amber box’ support - the most distorting type of subsidies - during the next five years. This will require significant reforms to U.S. farm programs. WTO members agreed in the framework to establish a new cap in the less trade-distorting support programs under the “blue box” and further define this type of domestic support. Getting control of ‘blue box’ payments has been a top priority of many WTO members. Recognizing its importance, the U.S. is prepared to move here too and go beyond the framework. Over the next five years we suggest reducing the agreed cap by half - a step that also requires changes in U.S. farm programs.” [Grand Forks Herald, 10/17/05]

**Portman Said Passed Medicare Bill Would Lower Drug Costs 15 Percent; Independent Research Shows Drug Bill Increases Costs for 25 Percent of Medicare Beneficiaries.** “Portman also addressed last Tuesday’s passage of the Medicare bill that includes a prescription drug benefit for seniors, saying more market-based solutions to health-care problems are needed. ‘We have research that shows that this benefit could reduce drug costs by 15 percent,’ Portman said. Independent research by the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that one in four Part D participants - 7.4 million - are projected to have higher out-of-pocket spending under the new Medicare drug bill than they would have had without the drug benefit in 2006, with an average increase of \$492. [[Cincinnati Enquirer](#), 12/2/03; Kaiser Family Foundation, 11/04]