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Hayes bashes China trade policy after changing course on CAFTA

CHARLOTTE - Four days after reversing course and casting a vote that helped secure passage of a free-trade agreement with Central America, Rep. Robin Hayes sharply criticized Chinese trade policy, calling it the greatest threat facing North Carolina manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Hayes appeared Monday with Rep. Phil English, R-Pa., author of a measure that would slap tariffs on China for controlling the value of its currency to gain a trading advantage. Mr. Hayes said he and Mr. English are both lobbying for passage of that bill and other legislation aimed at deterring what they called China's unfair trade practices.

Both men argued the Chinese are a much larger threat to U.S. manufacturing than the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Each said he voted yes on CAFTA – Mr. Hayes doing so after repeatedly pledging to vote no – after receiving assurances that the Bush administration was prepared to crack down on Chinese trade violations.

Mr. Hayes said his position to lobby for a tougher trade line with China has "never been any better" than after his last-minute switch early Thursday helped secure 217-215 passage of CAFTA in the U.S. House. The deal eliminates trade barriers between the United States and Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.
