California looks to keep trade flowing

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Keeping business flowing amid a trade conflict between California and China was the purpose of a forum in Southern California on Thursday.  
The "Export and Trade Roundtable Discussion" was co-organized by US Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, the city of Duarte and the Duarte Chamber of Commerce. It aimed to promote subnational trade ties and investment opportunities between local businesses and China.  
"Foreign countries have imposed retaliatory tariffs of $60 billion worth on US exports, and that is beginning to hurt my businesses, and I don't like it," said Napolitano, who represents California's 32nd District.  
The US imposed 25 percent tariffs on $34 billion in Chinese goods on July 6 and duties on another $16 billion in coming weeks is planned. China has responded in kind.  
US President Donald Trump also has directed US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to consider increasing the proposed tariffs on another $200 billion of Chinese goods from 10 percent to 25 percent, the USTR said in a statement on Wednesday.  
In May, Canada imposed tariffs on $12.8 billion of US goods in response to American tariffs on imported steel and aluminum.  
The 32nd District in Los Angeles County covers several cities and communities in the San Gabriel Valley, including Duarte.  
According to the US-China Business Council, the district exported $208 million worth of goods to China in 2016. Exports from the 32nd District to China supported 1,600 US jobs in 2015.  
Napolitano, a Democrat, highlighted the importance of international trade for the local economy and said she will continue to pressure the current administration to support exports, instead of making it harder for businesses owners to trade with other countries.  
Zhang Ping, Chinese consul general in Los Angeles, said the trade war is hurting business interests in many US states, especially those small- and medium-sized companies that rely on the Chinese market both for export and supply of immediate products.  
China is California's largest trading partner, its third-largest export destination for goods, and the fourth-largest export destination for services, Zhang said. In addition, China was the 32nd District's third-largest export market for goods in 2016 and its fourth-largest export market for services in 2015.  
"There is too big a stake in the China-US economic and trade relationship that we can hardly afford to see it going downward," Zhang said. "A trade war is in nobody's interest, and benefits no one. There will be no winners, only losers. Once the market is gone, it's difficult to get it back. It is better to stop the trade war before it is too late."  
Chinese have invested a cumulative $21 billion in the state since 2000. The state has 530 Chinese establishments that provide 16,000 local jobs in high-tech and real estate.  
"I tell everybody, every dollar you are able to go ahead and make in America, you are able to go ahead and make five in China. It's a huge opportunity. Why should we not work together and create this good relationship?" Duarte City Council member Samuel Kang asked.

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