

recourse for decades. But we're not just talking the serious stuff like breast cancer or heart disease—we're talking about previously having had a c-section. Or acne. Should someone who is rejected by an insurance company because they had acne be in a high risk insurance pool? All that does is incentivize insurance companies to reject even more people and fight over the remaining cream of the insurance risk pool crop: healthy, young people. And thus further incentivize insurers to reject people they deem not worth the risk (ie: a risk to their high profits).

Already the Affordable Care Act is helping millions of Americans living with a chronic health condition like me. And for us, 2014 can't come fast enough because that's when the majority of the Affordable Care Act provisions come into effect. The thought that some would want take this law away—and the peace of mind that comes with it—is maddening to me. Is the law a cure for all the problems of our current health care system? Of course not. Could the law be better? Absolutely—I could point you to several places. But to repeal the whole thing? No way. We can't go back. I know I've waited 28+ years for this law—and there are millions who have waited far longer.

That's why today I'm one of millions saying, Happy Anniversary to the Affordable Care Act; here's to many more years to come.

EXTENDING THE GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES

SPEECH OF

HON. ALLEN B. WEST

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Mr. WEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Free Trade Agreements with Panama, Korea and Columbia. These long overdue trade agreements will increase exports, lower the trade deficit and stimulate much-needed economic growth in the United States.

Free market competition is the proven way to create wealth and jobs in the economy. When the Federal Government attempts to create winners and losers, the American people get the short end of the stick.

South Florida is the gateway to Latin America, and the trade agreements with Colombia and Panama will support and create jobs in Florida and throughout the nation by leveling the playing field for United States goods and services.

Today, nearly all imports from Colombia and Panama enter the United States market duty free, but these countries continue to impose tariffs on our farm and manufactured goods exports that often soar into the double digits. Colombia currently collects \$100 in tariffs on United States exports for every \$1 the United States collects in tariffs on Colombian goods, and a similar lopsidedness holds back American export sales to Panama.

The free trade agreements will eliminate these tariffs and other barriers United States exporters face, and will create new opportunities for the sale of American products. In addition, they will secure the intellectual property of United States inventors, researchers, and creators; open services markets; and protect American investors and the jobs they support in the United States.

The independent United States International Trade Commission estimates that implementation of the three pending trade agreements would increase American exports by at least \$13 billion and add at least \$10 billion to our nation's Gross Domestic Product per year, which would mean 250,000 new jobs in the United States. Passing all three pending trade agreements will directly benefit small and medium-sized businesses, as well as the hundreds of thousands of American jobs they create.

Exports are critical to United States economic growth, and will have a significant, positive impact to my Congressional District that is home to two major ports—Port Everglades and the Port of Palm Beach. In 1986, exports equaled 7.2 percent of GDP. In 2010, exports equaled nearly 13 percent of GDP.

In 2010 alone, the State of Florida exported more than \$4.2 billion to Colombia, Panama and South Korea combined. This represents a significant increase over the last decade. With the passage of the Free Trade Agreements, all indications point to significantly increased exports for the State of Florida.

Finally, the implementation of each of these Free Trade Agreements is important for our security and geostrategic goals. Each of the agreements will strengthen the United States' relationship with South Korea, Colombia and Panama, some of our country's strongest partners in advancing both regional and global security.

However, in May of 2011, President Barack Obama's Administration announced that it would not submit these three long-pending, job-creating trade agreements to the United States Congress unless "trade adjustment assistance" benefits (TAA) were renewed and expanded.

Quite simply, TAA is a federal program that sends cash and provides other benefits to workers whose jobs are purportedly affected negatively by trade. As a letter that was sent to Republican Leadership earlier this year states, "TAA is undoubtedly—and deliberately designed as—a federal wealth redistribution program that has no business existing in a free society."

Furthermore, the central components of these TAA programs—job-training, unemployment subsidies, and health-care subsidies—are available under dozens of other federal programs. In all, there are currently 47 government-sponsored and taxpayer-funded job training programs that received over \$18 billion in Fiscal Year 2009. There are eight taxpayer-funded programs that provide unemployment insurance, and six taxpayer-funded programs that provide health insurance—all duplicative to programs found within TAA.

TAA accepts the premise that free trade is bad and needs to be offset by another federal program paid for by the American taxpayers. By strictly assisting workers who claim job losses due to trade, the program provides an incentive to exaggerate the negative impact on jobs due to free trade. In my assessment, TAA programs amount to subsidized excuses. Americans can openly compete with anyone in the free market—we do not need government creating victims.

I will not support H.R. 2832 because TAA programs allow the Federal Government to pick winners and losers. As The Heritage Foundation recently analogized, "the worker who loses his job to a foreign competitor

should receive the same treatment as the Blockbuster employee who lost his job to Netflix."

Free trader benefits all parties involved—from consumers to business owners and farmers, to the port employees in my Congressional District. Free market competition and enterprise through free trade agreements should not be held back by what amounts to another duplicated, wasteful Federal Government program.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Ekoji Buddhist Temple on the occasion of its 30th anniversary and to recognize the commemoration of the 750th Memorial for Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Ekoji Temple, which was founded in 1981 by Rev. Kenryu T. Tsuji and Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, shares the Pure Land Buddhist teachings of Shinran Shonin, which is based on the Nembutsu Teaching of Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Life and Light. The Nembutsu Path is to become aware of the ignorant self and to transcend the petty selfishness of the individual. The aim of the Ekoji Temple fellowship is to live the life of gratitude and share the rejoicing with others.

The name Ekoji, selected by Rev. Numata, means "The Temple of the Gift of Light." Ekoji Buddhist Temple shares this gift with all who wish to enter. Ekoji is a place where the differences of race, color and creed disappear and all who seek the truth are welcomed.

The 11th Congressional District of Virginia is blessed by its diversity. This district is more than 40% minority and is home to people of many ethnic heritages, cultures, and religions. Ekoji Temple adds to this rich tapestry and benefits our entire community by its presence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues rise and join me in congratulating the Sangha of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple in the celebration of its 30th anniversary, and also in thanking the Rev. Kazuaki Nakata and Rev. Shoji Honda, Emeritus for their leadership and inspiration.

UNITED STATES-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the proposed free trade agreement with Colombia, which, of the three agreements we are considering today, is the one with which I have been most personally involved.

My support for this agreement did not come lightly. As the representative of the Research

Triangle region, I have witnessed the transformative impact of trade on our state's economy, and I have supported free trade agreements that help create a truly level playing field for American workers through the inclusion of robust labor and environmental standards. When agreements have failed to meet this test, I have opposed them, as I did the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

I am keenly aware of the unique challenges that Colombia has faced throughout its history and the relationship between these challenges and international trade. The country has only recently emerged from a long period of civil conflict and political instability, one of the darkest features of which has been a campaign of intimidation, violence, and murder against Colombian labor leaders. At best, the Colombian government failed in the past to adequately respond to this campaign, and at worst officials turned a blind eye to, or were even complicit in, the violence.

This left me with a fundamental decision to make when the Bush Administration proposed a free trade agreement with Colombia: I could reflexively oppose the agreement from the outset, notwithstanding the potential benefits it could bring to both of our countries. Or, using the relationships I have built through my work in Colombia, I could help shape the agreement, using it as a source of leverage to achieve meaningful progress on issues such as labor violence. I chose the latter.

From the beginning, I have been very clear about what it would take for me to support the agreement in the end. Any agreement that failed to strengthen Colombia's labor and environmental standards or to ensure meaningful progress toward addressing labor violence would be unacceptable. And, in the current economic environment, I wanted assurance that no agreement would be approved without an extension of Trade Adjustment Assistance for displaced workers.

In two subsequent visits to Colombia, and in regular consultations with the Obama Administration, I have carried this message to the highest levels. During a visit in 2007, in addition to meeting with President Uribe, members of the Colombian parliament, and Colombian labor leaders, I requested a briefing by the special Attorney General unit that was created to prosecute labor violence cases. I was not impressed with what I heard, and I made this clear to the Colombian government.

When I returned in 2009 and received a similar briefing, the progress made over the past two years was significant and encouraging. Since then, and particularly since President Santos came to office, the Colombian government has made further strides in prosecuting incidents of labor violence, legislating improved labor protections, adopting judicial reforms, and enforcing its new labor law. Colombia has welcomed an ILO office to Bogota to monitor labor violations and appointed a Ministry of Labor to guide the executive on pressing labor issues and reforms.

Has Colombia done enough to solve this problem? No. One incident of labor-related violence is too many. I believe it is critical for us to continue to hold the country's leaders accountable for prosecuting labor violence and protecting labor rights. I was among the group of Democratic Members of Congress urging the Obama Administration to go beyond the text of the free trade agreement on the issue of labor rights.

The result was the Labor Action Plan negotiated between the Obama and Santos administrations, which represents an unprecedented mechanism to hold a trading partner accountable to a set of concrete commitments on labor rights. The Obama Administration has made its commitment clear to ensure compliance with this Action Plan for as long as it takes, a commitment I confirmed with Ambassador Ron Kirk as recently as this morning.

I remain concerned about the potential impact of this agreement on Colombia's subsistence farmers, particularly among Afro-Colombians and other indigenous communities. The land reform law recently approved by the Colombian Congress is a step forward, and the agreement before us today (unlike NAFTA) allows Colombia to protect its most sensitive agricultural commodities for up to 19 years. But we must do more to mitigate any displacement caused when reduced trade barriers are combined with subsidized imports, leaving local farmers unable to compete. This means addressing the significant threat to small farmers in Colombia and around the world posed by the distortive agricultural subsidies some of our own farmers receive.

On balance, however, I believe the labor and environmental protections in the agreement, along with the Labor Action Plan and the extension of Trade Adjustment Assistance, largely meet the demands I made when I decided to participate in the negotiations surrounding this agreement. The Colombian government has made undeniable progress and continues to move in the right direction. By any metric, labor violence in Colombia is down. Colombia's land and agricultural reforms are working, albeit slowly. Progress on these fronts is much more likely with an agreement than it would be without.

We also have to consider the best way to encourage further reforms and further progress. Is it by walking away from an agreement at a time when Colombia is expanding trade with China, Canada, the EU, and other partners? Or is it by using a free trade agreement with the United States as a catalyst, as leverage, for further reforms to address the underlying causes of the country's conflict: poverty, inequality, and a lack of economic opportunity.

The best way forward is to support a robust and vibrant Colombian economy. A higher standard of living in Colombia results in greater social stability and a lower crime rate. It is important that we remain a powerful and progressive force in the development of its democracy and economy, and I believe the best way to do that is to approve the Colombia FTA. For me, to oppose this agreement now, after encouraging—even demanding—that the Colombian government enact reforms, would amount to changing the rules in the middle of the game.

THE KOREA, COLOMBIA AND PANAMA FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, as the House considers the Korea, Colombia and Panama trade agreements, I would like to set forth my

analysis of the effects that these agreements will have on my home state of California. In all three cases, the facts are overwhelming that California will benefit from these agreements.

At the outset, it is important to note that these agreements are mis-labeled. They do not provide "free trade" in the sense of unfettered, unregulated commerce. In reality, these agreements are a set of detailed rules that provide for regulated commerce in terms that apply to both parties. They specify the tariffs that may apply, the non-tariff restrictions that may be imposed, the rules of origin to prevent third-countries from benefiting, and the enforcement and dispute resolution procedures that will provide discipline and order.

KOREA-U.S. TRADE AGREEMENT

CALIFORNIA BENEFITS

With regard to the Korea-U.S. agreement (KORUS), California stands to benefit substantially. California already exports \$8 billion a year to South Korea, accounting for one-fifth of all U.S. exports to that country. For California's 60,000 exporting companies, there is potential for growth; in 2010 only 6 percent of California's total \$143 billion in exports went to South Korea. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that KORUS will lead to increases in 9 of the 10 products that now account for \$6 billion of California's exports to South Korea. Of these, 5 categories are high value-added products, produced by skilled California workers: semiconductor manufacturing equipment, computers, electrical equipment, optical and other medical equipment and aircraft and aircraft engines.

In addition, KORUS will increase exports of California-grown edible fruit and nuts, in particular walnuts and almonds. We will sell more chemicals. And, we will sell more reusable iron, steel and aluminum scrap.

According to the U.S. Trade Representative, some 6,000 jobs are supported for every \$1 billion in manufactured exports and some 4,500 jobs are supported for every \$1 billion in services exports.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTIONS

KORUS has important benefits for California's entertainment industry. KORUS relaxes a number of Korean content quotas and should increase the U.S. motion picture and television industries' opportunities to compete in the Korean market. KORUS obligates South Korea to decrease the domestic content quota on films and animation products. KORUS improves the opportunity for U.S. ownership in the broadcast sector, by permitting U.S. firms that establish Korean subsidiaries to have 100 percent ownership of program providers, phased in over 3 years.

In a side letter, South Korea has agreed to place a priority on enforcement against Internet piracy, aimed not only at direct infringement but also those who profit from services that induce infringement. KORUS also obligates South Korea to implement the World Intellectual Property Organization Internet Treaties and expands intellectual property protections and penalties against unlawful decoding of encrypted satellite TV signals. It also covers cable and satellite signals that are retransmitted without authorization of the signal distributor. Further, the side letter to KORUS ensures that copyright owners have the exclusive right to make their works available online.