

into somebody else's neighborhood or somebody's home or into their country, you go there as a guest, not as an intruder.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this House, I hope the Committee on the Judiciary, will consider H.R. 7, and at least have the guts to raise the issue and quit ducking the issue. The 5th article of the 14th amendment specifically says Congress will have the responsibility to enforce the appropriate statutory sections. This is our responsibility. It is not the states of the United States, it is not even the illegal aliens' responsibility, it is our responsibility.

If those of us think that this is too hot an issue to talk about, too hot to take care of, then maybe we ought to talk about going somewhere else, because the Constitution says this issue falls square in the lap of the Congress of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to clarify this, and I ask the Speaker and the leadership to allow H.R. 7 to be brought up for a vote and to move through committee so this issue can be debated at length. It is one that has been ignored for too long, it is one with many misperceptions, and it is one that can be really clarified very quickly.

I am sure there are those that will say if somebody is in the United States illegally by their presence, they have obviously showed they are not obedient to the Federal Government's laws. If somebody is here in the United States illegally, they are not held to the same loyalty standards, which is obviously one of the conditions.

With those two conditioning clauses, the children of illegal aliens and the children of tourists who are just passing through fall in the same category as native-born Indians did before 1924 when Congress, Congress, had the guts to finally give all Indians automatic citizenship. The children of illegals, of tourists, fall in the same category as children of diplomats, and the Congress, as it had the guts to address the issue in 1924, has to have the guts to address the issue now in 1997.

FAST-TRACK AUTHORITY SOUGHT ON TRADE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THUNE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] is recognized for 41 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I will not be using all my time tonight, but I do want to say a few comments. Today the President and Vice President came to the legislative hill, to the Capitol Hill to detail for us, at least the Democratic Caucus, the fast-track trade authority that the President would like this Congress to approve.

As I listened to the comments being made by my colleagues and others on fast-track legislation, and I hope the

listeners understand that fast track means give the President the authority to enter into a trade agreement mostly with South America, Chile, and the Caribbean Basin, and that authority or that agreement, frayed agreement, that the President would negotiate on behalf of his negotiators, would then come before the Congress for approval or disapproval. There would be no opportunity to amend this fast track. You have no opportunity to alter it. You have to accept it as is and vote yes or no.

I sit on the Subcommittee on Health and Environment of the Committee on Commerce, and as we have dealt with over the past few years food safety and food standards in this country and how it was affected by the NAFTA agreement, and what can we expect as we look for a new round of trade negotiations under a fast track authority with South America, Chile, or the Caribbean Basin. In the caucus today when the President came, we heard a lot of discussion about labor standards and environmental standards, and those are very important, and those standards in and of themselves would be enough to defeat any kind of fast-track legislation, if not adequately covered.

But I come to the floor tonight because I did not hear a lot of discussion about the food safety issue and the pesticides that are used in other countries. As food is developed in other countries and shipped here to the United States, of course the United States being the largest consuming Nation, do those standards underneath these trade agreements, our standards, the U.S. standards, the highest in the world, are they going to be upheld? Or do the trade agreements, as is pointed out in NAFTA, will they be lowered, either due to the written word of the agreement or because of the lack of inspection of the vehicles, container ships, coming into the United States?

Understand when a container ship comes into the United States, and let us say it has bananas in the container, the large container on the outside may be marked bananas from Ecuador. But once they are removed from that container and put into boxes and on our grocery shelves, we do not know where they come from. There is no way. There is no labeling required.

Therefore, you do not know what pesticides, what country it even came from, and do they have standards that you wanted for yourself and for your family?

Recently in this country we have had a lot of outbreak of E. coli and hepatitis A breaking out throughout this country, including my own State of Michigan. How does it get by our inspectors?

If you take NAFTA alone, if you look back at NAFTA, North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada, coming up through Mexico, 12,000 trucks a day, 3.3 million trucks a year cross the border. Less than 1 percent are inspected.

Now, there is not enough inspection, there is no enforcement. I am not talking about the trucks, which are another story in and of themselves, but I am talking about the container and what do these trucks contain, what kind of food, what have we found?

The Government Accounting Office in May of 1997 reviewed NAFTA and the effect of the food and use of pesticides on food products coming into this country, and they found strawberries alone, about 18 percent, just a random sample, 18 percent violate our standards for food safety and the use of pesticides. Head lettuce, which we get a lot from Mexico, 15 percent is in violation of our food standards in the pesticide use. Carrots, another 12 percent of them.

There is not enough enforcement, there is not enough inspection, not just the vehicles they are traveling in, but also what pesticides are used on these food products and how they are shipped, handled and labeled and sent to the United States.

I mentioned hepatitis A. If you take a look at Texas, where most of the food comes in through this country from Mexico, you will find that along these border communities, hepatitis A outbreak is 2 to 5 times greater than other parts of the country. In fact, there are some counties in Texas where it is 10 times greater than the state average and the national average.

I mentioned Michigan, and being from Michigan, even in Michigan we have the strawberries where we had 130 children affected with hepatitis A because of strawberries, when after we traced back, came out of Mexico, because they do not have the same sanitation requirements, the same safety inspections, the same food inspection. Once they get across the border, again, in a truck, only 99 percent of them are not inspected, less than 1 percent are inspected. Of 12,000 trucks per day, then you can see how these things easily get into our society, into our food chain, and on our dining room table.

Pesticides, if you take a look at it under NAFTA, and in the past agreements and the studies have shown, that basically we have waived our standards. When we come to food safety, we should not be waiving our high standards, and we have. It is not necessarily a trade issue, but reality is a health issue, about the health and safety for our families.

□ 2315

So those who would argue that those of us who may oppose any kind of NAFTA or fast track authority, it is not because we are against trade, it is the health and safety of our families that we are concerned about.

In fact, the concern is not just for our own families and what is happening from other countries and food being shipped into this country that we are consuming, but even if we take a look at it, what have we seen? Even the Department of Agriculture, Secretary

Glickman has been on Capitol Hill and has called upon us, the legislative branch, to push for more regulation of meats and poultry, and he continues to raise concerns about the pesticide safety in this country. But yet at the same time that administration and the Department of Agriculture, the opponents of a fast track extension actually make it easier for unsafe food to enter into this country.

So the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN], who sits on the Subcommittee on Health and Environment with me, will be sending a letter to the President urging him to include specific food safety provisions in his fast track proposal. Again, we did not hear much about it at the caucus today when the President and Vice President were there, but we welcome all Members of the Congress, Democrats and Republicans, to join on the letter.

What we are asking the President to do is to renegotiate the provisions of NAFTA which relate to border inspections and food safety and to ensure that any future request from this fast track authority includes strong food safety protections.

We would like to see increased funding for border inspections, or alternatively, limit the increasing rate of food imports to ensure the safety of our own food supply that we put on the table every night. We would like to see an aggressive program of labeling on all foodstuffs, including fresh and frozen fruits, meats, and vegetables, and also what country were they grown in, what is the country of origin. We think these are just some very basic things we should do to assure the health and safety and security of our families.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is fair to ask the American people, when we start talking about fast track or NAFTA, to start lowering our own high standards for the health, safety, and welfare of our children. When we take a look at it, what is the rush to enter into another fast track agreement? There are many arguments for and against, and I am not here to argue trade agreements but I am just trying to say, what is the rush here? Why are we continuing to enter into these trade agreements? Why do we have to have fast track agreements we cannot amend or alter?

I think it is a bad deal for American workers and American consumers. I think we need to take a very serious look, and I think if we do, the country would say, why are we making these trade agreements so quickly? Why are we giving the President so much power? It is really not necessary. The economy is going well; let us keep it going.

I see the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is here on the floor, and I yield to him.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the gentleman that I agree with him with respect to fast track and the fact that when Americans buy especially agricultural goods now that are

grown in other countries, they are really buying a pig in a poke. We have a number of countries that still allow the use of DDT-like pesticides, pesticides and chemicals that this country banned long ago due to the experience of our researchers who found that they had a very unhealthy effect on America's populace.

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker. My kids do a farmer's market every week, and the farmer's markets in San Diego County, in fact in all of California and I am sure in the gentleman's State, generally in farmer's markets one can only sell produce that is grown in the State. We have so many people who ask us, "Can you prove to us this does not come from Mexico, because we know that they can use DDT and other pesticides in Mexico and other places." We can assure them, because there is a certificate there that shows that in fact it is grown in the State of California, that it does not come from those places where some very dangerous substances are placed on the agricultural produce that our population ultimately buys. So I think there is a real value in slowing down the so-called fast track.

I can remember my friend was not a fan of NAFTA, at least I believe he was not a fan of NAFTA, and we were told when NAFTA was before us as an issue that since we had approximately in those days a \$3 billion trade surplus with Mexico, that we were going to build on that surplus by passing NAFTA. I glanced at the figures today, and the Clinton administration admits that this year we had a \$17 billion trade loss with Mexico. I just wonder what kind of a track record that is to justify a new fast track for other countries that have not yet been able to take advantage of the United States and drive us into such a trade loss.

I appreciate the gentleman for his remarks. I think it would be good, because we have so much produce now that comes from other countries, to at least allow the American people to see by some sort of a labeling system what in fact is grown in America, so that they know that that produce grown in America has protections that we afford it. I know the gentleman, and I think the gentleman from California [Mr. BONO] is offering legislation to that effect, and perhaps the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] is as well.

So I want to add my support for what has been said and tell the gentleman that I will work with him to see that we slow down this fast track.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman and I appreciate him coming out and saying a few words. I know some people thought, and I do not have much auto in my district, in fact basically none, maybe some parts but no cars are being built there, that it was all a manufacturing issue. A lot of us, and I know the gentleman did also, were against NAFTA, and he is from California and we see the wave of these trucks coming in every day and not getting inspected.

In particular, I know the gentleman was familiar with chapter 7, which dealt with NAFTA, the food trade chapter. Actually, when we read it, it limits our border inspections of food and similar items, and also chapter 9 basically comes right out and says we are going to have an open border to Mexican trucks of limited inspection.

We are seeing these problems developing. The gentleman mentioned DDT as being one of them, and the gentleman is right that they allow DDT being used on lettuce and tomatoes and carrots and vegetables and fruits. One of the things we are saying is, let us renegotiate some of these provisions of NAFTA which relate to border inspections and food safety, and ensure that future requests for fast track would include strong food safety protections. My concern in coming to the floor tonight is we did not hear that today in the caucus when the President appeared.

Also, we want to increase the funding for border inspections to limit the increasing rate of food being imported in. The gentleman was absolutely correct when he said the gentleman from California (Mr. BONO) has the legislation that puts in an aggressive program to label all foodstuffs, including fresh and frozen vegetables, meats and fruits, and label the country of origin, because the gentleman is correct. The farmer's market has an insurance that it is grown in his State and in the local area, it has been inspected, and not being brought from outside the country where we have all kinds of chemicals being used.

So we are concerned here as we start another round of fast track that we want to make sure there are adequate protections, that child labor laws are there, there are workplace and environmental safety standards and some basic human rights. But I would hope that we do not fast track our standards, our safety, and our family's health and security.

If I just may close, once again I find it amazing that at a time when the administration is pushing for more regulation in meats and poultry due to what happened with the Hudson hamburger, and they tell us Burger King, and I am not slamming the company, but in this State we still cannot determine where the meat that goes for those hamburgers comes from. We do not know if it is from Europe, we do not know if it is from Mexico, we do not know if it is from Canada or Kansas; we really do not know, but yet we certainly consume them as a nation, because we are a consuming nation. So those assurances we want in any kind of fast track legislation.

So we, certainly the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and I have been urging Members to make sure there are the food safety provisions in any fast track proposal, and we still have not seen it. As I say that I see that my friend the gentleman from Ohio has joined us on the floor, and I will yield to him at this time.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Michigan's time and the work that he has done with food safety, a real leader in the House of Representatives on that issue in regards to NAFTA and fast track, and whether or not this Chamber allows the President to continue to negotiate these trade agreements in a way that unfortunately Presidents of both parties, President Bush, President Reagan, President Clinton, have been negotiating over the last many years.

One of the statements that the gentleman was talking about, we do not know where food comes from. One of the things I thought of the other day, if one travels to Mexico, if an American citizen goes to Mexico, people will tell that visitor, that American, other Americans will say in certain parts of Mexico one should not eat the food, one should be careful about the water one drinks; one should just be careful, there are certain things one should not eat. Yet those same places in Mexico send food to this country and we do not really know where it comes from. Some irony. We should not eat that when we are in Mexico, but it is good enough for our kids when it comes here.

That is why it is so important that before we move ahead and rush headlong into another series of trade agreements that cost American jobs and trade agreements that endanger our food supply and trade agreements that put unsafe trucks on the roads throughout the United States, that we stop and we fix the North American Free-Trade Agreement, that we do take care of food safety issues, that we do in the North American Free-Trade Agreement take care of truck safety, that we do deal with the problems of drugs at the border, that we do take care of especially the jobs issues with NAFTA.

One of the real interesting aspects of this is that the administration loves to tell us and the Republican leadership of the House love to tell us that we are exporting more than ever to Mexico, we are sending all of these goods all over the world, that American exports are up and that is why our trade policy is working. Well, the fact is that while we do sell more goods to Mexico than we did 4 years ago, our balance of trade is worse because we import so much more. So we went from a \$2 billion trade surplus with Mexico 4 years ago to a \$20 billion trade deficit today.

Mr. Speaker, even the things that we sell to Mexico are not really exports. So often they are what somebody termed industrial tourism. We send parts to Mexico. They may be in Mexico only a day or two or three. Those parts are then made and assembled into a car or assembled into something else and then sent back to the United States. So those things that we are exporting to Mexico so often end up being just put together, assembled in Mexico and sent back to the United States.

The other thing we are sending a lot of to Mexico, are so-called capital goods or various kinds of machine

tools, where we are sending things to Mexico which they use to build high-technology plants and produce things and then send them back to the United States.

So we really are not sending more goods to Mexico, that really are exports that stay in Mexico, than we were in 1993. The fact is that we are doing things that are only costing us jobs more and more. The people that are the losers in this trade deal that we have going on, whether it is NAFTA or whether it is fast track down the line, the people that are the losers are people in this country that lose their jobs, work with their hands, the people that there are not enough people in Congress caring about.

□ 2330

That is why it is especially important that we slow down on fast track, we fix the things that are wrong with NAFTA, we fix things that are wrong such as the jobs issue, we fix the food safety issues, we fix the truck safety and the drug problems at the border. Because we owe it to the people whom we represent, we owe it to them that when they go to the store, that they do know, in fact, where this food comes from, whether it comes from Michigan or New Jersey or Ohio, or whether it comes from Mexico, or wherever it comes from.

Just like the food labeling that is now on soup cans or anything we eat, it says how much sodium is in that can of soup. We want to know what is in it. We want to know the ingredients in foods and where those foods come from. That is what we are asking.

That is one of the things we can do to fix NAFTA. We can do better inspections at the border, where, as the gentleman [Mr. STUPAK] said, less than 1 percent of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables are examined and inspected at the border. We have to do better than that.

We are asking the President to simply slow down. Do not rush headlong into this new series of trade agreements. Let us fix what is wrong with NAFTA. Let us make those things better with food safety and truck safety, and all of the jobs issues. Let us make that better before we move on into another trade agreement that costs jobs and endangers our Nation's food supply.

Mr. STUPAK. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman made a good point about the trade deficit, how we had a surplus, and now we have somewhere between a \$16 to \$20 billion deficit. And the idea of parts going down to Mexico, they are being assembled, and they come right back. The gentleman mentioned tourism. When we take parts and assemble them in another country and send them right back as a finished product at a high rate of cost, such as vehicles, we call those things industrial tourists. They just go down for a few days, enjoy the sunshine, come right back up and be

sold to us northerners up here. Industrial tourists is what we call this.

That is why we see the big trade deficit. I know the last time we did a special order we talked about the twin deficits, not just the budget deficit but also a trade deficit which needs to be addressed. What we are asking for, and it is not that we are against free trade, and we are not protectionists, but what we are really saying here is what are the rules of trade here?

We have standards for intellectual property, we have standards for patents, we have standards for compact disk players or CDs, as we call it. Can we not take those same standards, those same rules we apply to intellectual property, to CDs, and to patents, and should they not apply to things like labor standards, environmental standards, but especially food safety standards?

What we are saying, before we have this new fast track, what are the standards we are going to live by, what are the rules of the game, and let us all have the same rules of conduct, whether it is food safety, intellectual property, truck safety, whatever it might be, because we insist, and we have strong consumer standards in this country, and we insist that they be part of any trade agreement.

I see my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is here, and I gladly yield to him.

Mr. PALLONE. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to start out by saying that I appreciate the remarks that my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK], and also my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN], have been making in talking about fast track, and also talking about the experience that this country has with NAFTA, and expressing their concern over where we are going with this fast track legislation.

I know that the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] have been doing special orders on this issue for a number of months now, and I have listened to some of it. I certainly agree with everything that the two of the gentlemen have been saying. They have really been taking the lead on this.

I just wanted to very briefly, if I could, follow up and talk about the environmental aspect, because it is something that concerns me a great deal. What I find so strange is that the advocates of this new fast track authority, and I guess we are going to be voting on this probably within the next week or two, keep suggesting that somehow we should not even make reference to NAFTA and the experiences of NAFTA in deciding how to vote on fast track. To me, that makes absolutely no sense at all, because if anything, the best indicator to me of what might happen once this fast track authority is given, and if it is given, and these trade

agreements are negotiated, that the best experience I have is the experience that we have with NAFTA.

I was very much opposed to NAFTA. I voted against it. For those who at the time were having a debate on NAFTA, I remember distinctly how we were being told that if we were concerned about labor conditions, if we were concerned about the environment, that certain so-called side agreements were going to be entered into, and that those should basically alleviate the concerns of people like myself who felt that enough was not being done to deal with the environmental and labor issues.

I did not buy that at the time, but it was sort of a bill of goods or whatever that was being sold to people at the time to try to persuade them to vote for NAFTA. Frankly, I think that the experience of the last few years with NAFTA has shown very dramatically that there was no result from those side agreements; that, in fact, labor conditions in Mexico got worse; that there were more job losses here in the United States as a result of the loss of jobs and the transfer of factories and manufacturing to Mexico.

The same thing was true of the environmental agreement. The environmental side agreement was supposedly going to improve environmental conditions in Mexico, and what do we have? For the last few years we have more companies going down to the border area, polluting the area so the level of pollution has gotten worse, coming back to the United States, and having a negative impact on the United States.

My understanding was there was about \$2 billion in funds that was supposed to be used to clean up some of the toxic wastes and other problems on the border area with Mexico, and not one penny of that money has been spent so far. So for those who say, do not look back at NAFTA in deciding whether to vote for fast track, the only reason they are saying that is because NAFTA has been a failure.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. If the gentleman will continue to yield, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is exactly right. When NAFTA passed, obviously the three of us and our friend, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER], voted no on it back in 1993, but the people that supported NAFTA never really prepared, they never really prepared the border area for what was going to happen.

They really were disingenuous about it, because they knew that there would be more traffic coming across the border, they knew there would be more pollution, as the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] says, more pollution along the maquiladoras, along the area near the border, and they simply did not prepare for building any kind of an infrastructure to deal with what was going back and forth across the border.

When truck traffic is such that I believe there are 12,000 trucks a week, something like that—

Mr. STUPAK. Twelve thousand trucks a day.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. One truck every 7 seconds across the border, they knew truck traffic was going to increase. They knew more than likely there would be drugs in some of those trucks smuggled in. They knew there would be huge loads of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables crossing the border coming north every day, and they knew a lot of these trucks would not be safe, and they knew there would be environmental problems because of the increased activity.

Yet, there was no planning in NAFTA; there was no real appropriation to build the infrastructure at the border to take care of that, to accommodate that. It did not just mean hiring more inspectors, because there simply are not enough stations, way stations, and the actual infrastructure itself, gates coming across the border, to be able to manage all that. So they did not prepare, I think, purposely did not prepare this country for the problems at the border.

There is no sign that they are doing it this time with fast track with Chile, with any other trade agreement. That is why we need to stop and say, wait a second, show us you can fix the infrastructure at the border, that you can clean up the environment at the maquiladora, that you can deal with the problems of truck safety and food safety and drug smuggling. Then we can talk about fast track, then we can talk about trade agreements that are actually in people's interests in the Western Hemisphere, American workers' interests, Chilean workers' interests, and not just the investors that benefit from these trade agreements that make the rich richer. That is really what these trade agreements have been all about.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman talks about the investors getting richer. Those are the only people who have benefited from this. I look at these agreements and say, OK, you have the United States and you have Mexico. As far as I am concerned, from the United States point of view, if as a result of NAFTA more people have jobs and more people have higher wages for the jobs that they have, or, similarly, that somehow the environmental standards go up in the United States, or looking at it from Mexico's point of view, that the wages of the Mexican citizens go up or that the environmental standards or cleanup is improved in Mexico, then we might say, OK.

But here it actually makes it worse on both sides. The way I understand it, and I have it from my own district, I can give some examples, plants that have closed in my district, what is happening is our plants are closing, our workers are losing their jobs, or in order to make sure that the plant does

not move to Mexico, they have to give up benefits or lower their wages. Then at the same time, when we look at the situation in Mexico, my understanding is that wages have actually gone down there.

The same thing with the environment. The effort is to reduce our environmental laws and make them less stringent, because we are told that if we do not, the plant is going to move to Mexico. Similarly, in Mexico, nothing has been done to clean up any of the problems in the border areas, and the amount of pollution that is being spewed is even greater than before. So in reality, what is happening is things are being ratcheted down. The environmental standards and the air quality and the water quality in general between the two countries is getting worse, and the labor situation is getting worse. No one benefits.

The thing that is amazing to me is that even though we have this experience that shows that no one benefits from either the environmental or labor or wage point of view, other than the corporations and those who have invested in the corporations, even though we have that experience that shows that no one has benefited, in the case of NAFTA, nonetheless, we are now being told to move on, let us get the fast track authority, let us enter into similar agreements with other countries, and do not worry about what happened with NAFTA. That is not a good example. Somehow, the situation in Mexico is an aberration, and that will not happen with the other countries.

It is really hard for me to believe that we are being told to do this, based on the experience of NAFTA.

Mr. STUPAK. Right. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, when they say do not look back, do not look back at NAFTA, I think we do have to take a look at it. Remember, we had side agreements on tomatoes, and we had side agreements on lettuce, we had side agreements on citrus fruits, to try to protect the U.S. interests here.

Yet, if we take a look at it and take a look at NAFTA, and I think we have to, because it is the only agreement we can make a comparison to, but again we are expanding it to South America and Chile, and Mexico is right there in Central America, it is all part of that region, we have an increase. Fruit imports in the United States has increased 45 percent. Vegetable imports have risen 31 percent. So those are going up, the imports in the country, from Mexico.

But then yet, as the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] pointed out, the inspections, and take a look at chapter 7 and chapter 9 of the NAFTA food requirements or food trade requirements, we have limited inspections. In fact, they will inspect a limited number of Mexican trucks, and there is a limited infrastructure to even carry it out, where 1 percent of 12,000 trucks per day are being inspected.

Actually, it is 3.3 million trucks entering this country, and we are inspecting 1 percent. And we say, how can there be an increase in drugs coming into this country? The truck may say "bananas," but we do not know what is really in there because we are not inspecting it. They all know that.

Then we have a NAFTA Agreement which limits our ability to make the inspection at the border and to limit the number of trucks that will be inspected. So the more trucks you bring up, the less are going to be inspected, the greater chance of getting through whatever you want, be it contraband, be it fruits or vegetables laced with DDT.

Again, this is not just us who oppose NAFTA saying this. This is found in the Government Accounting Office May 1997 report. It is all documented. And their recommendations that we have been talking about here tonight are certainly contained in here.

Again, I think the issue here is not necessarily a trade agreement, but really a safety agreement: What standards are we going to apply? Do we lower our standards to allow more goods to come in this country? Is that not what this is really about? What are the standards, and should we not all go by the same standards?

We have to have standards. We have them for, as I said earlier, for patent law, intellectual property, compact disks. Remember the big fight with China on that? We have these standards and enforce them, but somehow when it comes to food safety, the environment, labor, we are not going to enforce it? I think there are some very good arguments here that must be made. What is the rush? Let us slow this thing down.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. That is exactly the point, Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield. We in this country for a long time, for a lot of years, have raised our living standards with pure food laws, with strong clean air laws, with good, solid safe drinking water laws, on fights that were conducted in this Chamber, where often groups of very conservative Members that had major backing from the largest corporations in the country would oppose clean water laws, would oppose safe drinking laws, would oppose pure food laws.

Over a period of decades after decades after decades, beginning in the early part of this century when books were written about contaminated food and all the problems with our food supply, over those many, many years, we have built probably the best standards to protect all people in this country; not just the rich, not just the poor, not just white, not just black, not just men, not just women, everyone.

We have protected people because they know when they go to the grocery store that meat is inspected. They know that there are clean air and clean water requirements. We know when we go shopping that the food we buy is

generally, almost 100 percent of the time, good, clean, safe food. What we are doing is we are having our standards pulled down by a country that has not had those kinds of protections built into their laws, and has not had that kind of history.

Rather than allow them to pull our standards down, we can negotiate trade agreements that would pull their standards up. And we are going in the exact opposite direction. That is why we need to pursue the kinds of efforts the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] is pursuing with his work.

Mr. PALLONE. I just wanted to say, I know earlier today the gentleman had spoken up at a meeting about the need for more enforcement, and I think the response was that, well, we need more money. Congress should appropriate more money for enforcement. I sort of laughed and said to myself, well, if we do not have the ability, if this body, if this House of Representatives and the other body are not going to appropriate the money to do the enforcement, to make sure the inspections take place, then we should not be supporting NAFTA and fast track.

□ 2345

I want to say that if this same group of elected officials are going to say that we are not going to provide the funding to make sure these enforcement measures take place, then they should not be supporting NAFTA and should not be supporting fast track.

I think my colleague from Ohio comes right to the point, because he is saying what are we going to put first here? We are going to put the mechanisms to make sure the laws are properly enforced; that the environmental laws are enforced; that there is not going to be the ratcheting down or the weakening of standards, whether it is labor standards or it is environmental standards. And once we have those guarantees in place, both here and in the country we are entering into this trade agreement with, then, sure, we can move toward free trade, but not have the cart before the horse, or whatever the term is, and that is what we are getting now.

We are being told the most important thing is to have the agreement, because the flag of free trade is the most important flag and we have to wave that wherever we are in the world. And in the meantime we will try to use our good devices to try to convince some of these other governments that they should have better environmental standards or better labor standards. But that is secondary and we cannot really talk to them about that now because they might be offended by it and we have to enter these agreements and wave that free trade flag.

I do not buy it, and I am glad the gentlemen with me here tonight do not buy it and, hopefully, we will not have a lot of other people buy it when this comes up a couple of weeks from now.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, it is amazing that the

President indicated at the caucus today that the way to get around this and to make sure there is inspection and food safety at the border is to increase the inspections. And if Congress will not appropriate the money, the heck with it, let us just move forward with this trade agreement anyway as the fast track trade agreement.

But, remember, it was 2 or 3 weeks ago the administration was up here pushing for more regulation, more regulation for more inspection in this country for meats, poultry, and they continued to raise concerns about pesticides being used in this country. If we cannot control and inspect adequately, and the Secretary of Agriculture wants more regulations and more authority to invoke emergency powers to take food off our tables and the grocery store shelves, if we cannot do it within our own country, because we do not have enough people and they need more authority, how will we do it on items coming into this country where we inspect 1 percent of everything that comes in? It defies their argument. It defies their logic.

So I certainly hope our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and I am glad to see the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is here helping us out on this issue tonight and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE]. I hope they will all join us in sending a letter to the President urging him to include specific food safety provisions in his fast track proposal.

And we welcome all Members, Democrats, Republicans, Independents to sign this letter because, as we said earlier, what we want to know is what are the rules of the game? What are the rules of the trade game? We should not lower our standards as a country. We should not lower the health and safety requirements of this country. We have rules that affect intellectual property rights, compact disks, patent law. Why can those same standards, those same rules not be afforded to labor, the environment but especially food safety? Let us not fast track our standards, our safety and our families' health and security.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize to you and the staff, I said I would be brief, but I was joined by all my friends here tonight, that I could not anticipate, so we went a little longer.

CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is recognized for the remainder of time until midnight, or 11 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. I think I can do it all in 11 minutes, Mr. Speaker.

I thought I would just come to the floor tonight and talk about several issues. I was late to the special order of the gentleman from California [Mr.