Though we have made some progress, such as passing the Family and Medical Leave Act, it is obvious we still have challenges to overcome. So, let's applaud the companies, organizations, and municipalities on the Labor Department's honor roll for working women. And let's continue to struggle toward solutions to make every workplace a family-friendly workplace.●

AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to cosponsor the African Growth and Opportunity Act, introduced by my colleague, Senator LUGAR. I do this because I believe greater trade and economic development is in the interest of sub-Saharan Africa, and in the interest of the United States.

For too long, Mr. President, our policy toward the nations of sub-Saharan Africa has been based largely on a series of bilateral donor-recipient aid relationships. While this policy has produced some notable successes in terms of staving off starvation, it also has spawned an inappropriate vision of the United States as patron to literally dozens of independent nations, while fostering a debilitating dependence on foreign assistance. As a consequence, this policy has in fact stood in the way of economic growth, self-reliance and political stability for the vast majority of people in this region.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act will establish a new relationship between the United States and the nations of sub-Saharan Africa. It will promote economic growth through private sector activity and trade incentives, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship and encouraging economic and political reforms in the interests of the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa.

The bill directs the President to develop a plan to establish a United States-Sub-Saharan Africa Free-Trade Area to stimulate trade. It also eliminates quotas on textiles and apparel from Kenya and Mauritius, contingent on these countries' adopting a visa system to guard against transshipment.

In addition, this legislation would establish an economic forum to facilitate trade discussions and work with the private sector to develop an investment agenda. USAID moneys would not be effected in any way. However, OPIC would be instructed to create a privately funded, $150 million equity fund and a $500 million infrastructure fund for Africa. Finally, the bill mandates that one member of the board of directors of the Export-Import Bank and OPIC have extensive private investment sector experience in Africa.

Benefits from these initiatives would be available to any nation in the sub-Saharan region instituting serious economic and political reforms.

Mr. President, the provisions of this legislation in effect would create a free-trade zone in sub-Saharan Africa. They would promote increased trade, increased privatization, increased democracy, and increased prosperity for the people of the region. By ending the current patron-client relationship, and substituting for it an equal partnership among independent nations, we can benefit everyone involved.

I urge my colleagues to support this important, forward-looking legislation.●

TRIBUTE TO KATHY LACEY

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Kathy Lacey, my deputy legislative director, who I regret will retire at the end of December after serving California for 27 years as a staff member in the U.S. Senate.

Kathy came to Washington, DC 27 years ago having studied at Vassar College and after graduate work at the University of Southern California. Her graduate work at USC was in Asian studies and Chinese language. She knew other friends who had used their studies by going to work for the Federal Government and she thought she would find similar opportunities. Instead, former Senator Alan Cranston hired Kathy and she went to work using her love and knowledge of California.

When Kathy describes her service in the U.S. Senate to younger staff just starting their careers, she says that her effort was always on behalf of the people of California. Her work ranged from trying to assist farmers with export of their crops, to helping cities get their funds to build sewage treatment plants, to fixing levees or to analyzing the science of radioactive waste, pests, and pesticides, or endangered species.

But what gives Kathy the most satisfaction is the work which she has done, both with me and with Alan Cranston, to protect California's special places. Legislation she has worked on over her 27-year career has protected almost 12 million acres of wilderness in California. More than half of that acreage was part of the Desert Protection Act. I could not have successfully gotten that bill passed without Kathy's knowledge and continuous work.

But Kathy was also involved in the creation of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, establishment of Channel Island National Park, expansion of Redwood National Park, protection of Mineral King through its addition to Sequoia National Park, establishment of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, preservation of the Tuolumne River, enactment of the Smith River bill which protected watersheds and old growth in the Six Rivers National Forest, and designation of almost all of the wilderness in California including the 1.8-million-acre California wilderness bill.

Kathy grew up in Pasadena. Her parents had come to California as teenagers. Her mother and brother still live there. Because Kathy chose to come to Washington, DC, and work for California, she has made a lasting contribution to her State.

Kathy plans to leave the Congress and have new adventures with her husband, Cal, who has also recently retired. On behalf of everyone in California, I thank Kathy for her professional spirit which was important to me from my first days in the U.S. Senate and I thank her for her dedicated example which has proved so significant to California.●

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS BILL

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes today in order to lay out my reasons for voting against the Fiscal Year 1998 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

Mr. President, when I was running for the Senate last year, there were two campaign promises that I made to the people of the great State of Alabama. First, I promised that I would work to reign in wasteful Washington spending and secondly, that I would work to bring Alabama values into the Washington public-policy debate. It was for these two simple reasons that I felt compelled to cast my vote against the Labor, HHS appropriations bill.

The fiscal year 1998 Labor, HHS appropriations bill contained roughly $80 billion in spending for Washington social programs. This is an increase of roughly $6.2 billion from fiscal year 1997's bill. Now Mr. President, the average Alabamian, if they're lucky, sees a cost-of-living increase in their paycheck each year of around 2.8 percent. That's it, 2.8 percent. However, this bill increases Washington social spending by over 8 percent. That's an increase of almost three times the average Alabamian's yearly cost-of-living increase. That to me is unacceptable.

I have spent many long hours looking through the merits of many of these programs. We have many good programs, with a proven track record, that need to be funded and supported. But Mr. President, the Labor, HHS appropriations bill we voted on also contained many social programs that are unproven or just too costly. The taxpayers of America deserve to know that their hard earned tax dollars are spent wisely. If we continue to raise spending faster than our economic growth—faster than the cost of living—then we are in danger of returning to the old tax and spend mentality that has nearly bankrupted this country. With great reluctance, I must vote "no."

There were several other provisions missing from this bill which also compelled me to vote against it. First, my tobacco amendment, added to the bill by the Senate on September 10, which would have limited any tobacco attorney's fees and required that all such fees be made public for inspection prior to the passage of any global settlement, was stripped during negotiations between the Senate and House of Representatives conference committee. These fees, in many cases, will be the largest fees in history and will be windfalls for these attorneys. These moneys would be better spent on health care for children.

Second, an education provision, which I strongly supported, authored by my good friend from Washington, Senator SLADE GORTON, was also stripped during the House-Senate conference negotiations. This amendment would have required the Secretary of Education to award certain funds appropriated for the Department of Education for kindergarten through grade 12 programs and activities directly to the local education agencies. This will allow them to use the funds for their greatest needs and reduce paperwork. I supported this amendment because I believe it is time to take control of our schools out of the hands of the well-intentioned individuals in Washington and instead put the control into the hands of the real experts—the teachers, principals, parents and the students of Alabama. Mr. President, this is another example of Government putting Washington values ahead of Alabama's values. The fundamental question is this: Will our children benefit more if Washington is in charge of their education or if their elected representatives are? Alabama values would support the local control of our schools while Washington values support the bureaucratic heavy handed federal control of our education system.

Mr. President, in closing, let me say plainly I support many of the programs and services found in this bill. It was my sincere hope to have been counted among its supporters on the Senate floor. However in this era when families are struggling to get by, we simply must begin the process of controlling the growth of Washington spending. That is why I have decided to vote ''no.''•

FAST-TRACK AUTHORITY

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on a matter of utmost importance to our Nation—granting the President fast-track authority for global trade agreements for the next 5 years.

I have long opposed extending fast-track authority to the executive branch on the grounds that it removes all possibility of perfecting trade agreements which have wide-ranging impacts on many sectors of our economy. And nothing I have seen in recent history has changed my mind.

We are being asked to rubber stamp not just one agreement, but any trade agreement that may come along, whether in South America, Asia, or anywhere else in the world. We are contemplating letting bureaucrats and other unelected interests negotiate America's future in the new global economy. And if history is any indication, we would be making a grievous mistake.

Experience is a wonderful teacher—just look at NAFTA. What I have learned is that NAFTA has not been the job boon it was advertised to be; that the trade deficit has continued to explode under NAFTA, that too many good paying jobs have already been sacrificed on the altar of so-called fair trade, and that we have serious difficulties in enforcing the agreements we've already made.

That is not a particularly encouraging track record—certainly not one that should inspire us to hand over the trade agreement keys to the White House. To the contrary, it raises grave concerns as to where the administration wants to take the country in the new world of globalization.

That is why I believe the President is obliged to do more than just say that he needs fast-track authority. The gap between what he said would happen under NAFTA and what has actually happened makes it even more essential that he explain to us precisely how he would address the problems that already exist, and what his vision is for the future should he be granted such sweeping authority. Because frankly, the administration has not spelled out why it needs this authority, nor what it will mean for the Nation.

Unfortunately, I can venture a fairly good guess as to what it will mean, based on history. The chart behind me represents the U.S. international merchandise trade from 1947 until last year. For 25 out of the 27 years preceding fast-track authority in 1974, the United States ran a trade surplus. Then, after 1975, the bottom started falling out.

This sea of red ink behind me not only represents millions of dollars in deficit—over $190 billion last year ($191.2 billion)—but lost jobs and shattered lives. For each billion dollars in trade deficit, another 20,000 people are displaced from their jobs—according to the Foreign Trade Division of the Census Bureau, that number is approaching 3.8 million. Every $50,000 in trade deficit is one lost job.

We hear time and time again that enormous opportunities will be created for the American people through trade agreements the President can negotiate if he has fast-track authority. But if the agreements already negotiated are any indication, it's time to put the brakes on, not hit the accelerator. Because working Americans can't afford any more ''opportunities'' like this.

Right now, each week, the United States borrows from abroad or sells assets worth $3 billion to pay for our trade losses. All across the country, workers are taking cuts in pay—or worse, taking home pink slips. And we are left to wonder how trade agreements that had promised so much have delivered so little. Just look at the lessons of NAFTA.

NAFTA, we were told, would improve our trade deficit with Canada and Mexico. So what's the reality? Before NAFTA in 1993, we had a $1.7 billion surplus with Mexico. As of last year, it's now a $16.2 billion deficit. Before NAFTA we had a $10 billion trade deficit with Canada. After only 3 years of NAFTA, we had a $23 billion deficit. And during those 3 years under NAFTA, our combined merchandise trade deficits with Canada and Mexico have grown 433 percent, as indicated by this chart showing the tremendous downward turn taken after NAFTA.

We all know that, with trade agreements, there are winners and there are losers. But a quick review of the current NAFTA standings shows that, in sports terms, we are well below .500. The White House has claimed credit for 90,000 to 160,000 American jobs from NAFTA. Yet the Economic Policy Institute has issued a report that there are jobs losses in all 50 States because of NAFTA, more than 390,000 jobs eliminated since NAFTA took effect in 1994.

Considering our experience prior to 1994, we can ill afford these kind of results. An October EPI briefing paper states that in the 15 years preceding NAFTA the U.S. goods and services trade deficit eliminated a total of 2.4 million job opportunities, 2.2 million in the manufacturing sector alone. That means 83 percent of the total job decline was in the manufacturing sector.

For example, in my home State of Maine, between 1980 and the inception of NAFTA the Maine footwear industry—the largest in the Nation—lost over 9,000 jobs to countries like Mexico because our Government sat on its hands in spite of recommended action by the International Trade Commission. And in the past three years alone, there have been significant losses in the textile and shoe industries—over 8,000 people have lost their jobs. I have already witnessed too many hard-working people lose their livelihood for me to risk more American jobs.

I am unwilling to trade well-paying jobs with benefits for lower paying ones—but that's precisely what's happened under our ill-conceived trade agreements. As the trade deficit and globalization of U.S. industries have grown, more quality jobs have been lost to imports than have been gained in the lower paying sectors that are experiencing rapid export growth. Increased import shares have displaced almost twice as many high-paying, high-skill jobs than increased exports have created.

Of course, NAFTA has created some good jobs. But the fact that increased imports have caused a large trade deficit tell us that more high-paying jobs were lost than gained in the push for more trade.

Those deficits—and the path the United States is going down—are well illustrated by this chart which shows three roads that have diverged under the previous reign of fast-track authority, first instituted in 1974. Up to that point, Japanese, German, and United States merchandise trade was humming along essentially in balance.