

INTRODUCTION OF THE TRADE FAIRNESS ACT OF 1999

HON. RALPH REGULA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 19, 1999

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, steel imports continues to pour into the United States at very low prices and are threatening steel worker jobs and the health of the U.S. steel industry.

As was acknowledged in the President's recent steel report, this is a severe crisis that has resulted in a 30 percent surge in steel imports during the first 10 months of 1998 and has resulted in the loss of 10,000 steel worker jobs.

Surprisingly, the President's steel report does not contain any significant measures that will provide immediate relief to the industry and protect steel worker jobs.

The report only rehashes discussions he and administration officials have had with offending country officials asking them to cut back on their steel exports to the U.S., and revises measures that have been taken to expedite recent trade cases.

The only new proposals in the President's report are \$300 million in tax relief for steel companies allowing them to carry back losses for 5 years, and a high level administration coordinator to assist communities once they have already suffered job losses.

Since the administration does not appear ready to take decisive and immediate action to solve the steel import crisis, it is up to the Congress to look at various options.

I am introducing today the Trade Fairness Act of 1999 which is but one option in trying to solve the steel import crisis. It may not be the most expeditious option, but the bill contains two provisions that would significantly improve current law to better respond to import surges.

The bill lowers the threshold for establishing injury in safeguard actions under section 201 of the 1974 Trade Act to bring the standard in line with World Trade Organization rules. Section 201 allows the President to provide appropriate relief, including duties and quotas, when an industry is injured by import surges. The injury standard in this type of action should not remain unjustifiably high, thereby precluding the use of section 201 to respond to import surges.

Second, the bill establishes a steel import permit and monitoring program, similar to programs in Canada and Mexico. This monitoring program will provide the Administration and industry with timely import data to determine more quickly if the marketplace is being disrupted by unfair imports.

This bill represents only one option. You will see other bills introduced in the near future responding to the steel import crisis, including a bill I am drafting to require the President to negotiate Voluntary Restraint Agreements with offending nations. This program was extremely effective in the 1980's in allowing the industry to restructure and become world competitive.

But, even the most competitive industry cannot compete against unfair imports. We must look for an effective solution to stop these unfair steel imports. Below is a more detailed explanation of the Trade Fairness Act of 1999.

EXPLANATION OF THE TRADE FAIRNESS ACT OF 1999

(INTRODUCED BY CONGRESSMAN RALPH REGULA)

The Emergency Steel Relief Act of 1999 is one option to enhance U.S. law to better respond to surges of foreign imports that injure U.S. industries and their workers. This legislation makes prospective changes in U.S. trade laws to bring these laws in line with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and establishes an import monitoring program for steel.

The Trade Fairness Act of 1999 consists of the following two sections: first, the legislation lowers the threshold for establishing injury in safeguard actions under Section 201 of the 1974 Trade Act; and second, it establishes an import monitoring program to monitor the amount of foreign steel coming into the U.S. on a more timely basis.

1. Safeguard Actions: The legislation amends Section 201 of the 1974 Trade Act, which allows the President to provide appropriate relief to a U.S. industry if the International Trade Commission (ITC) finds that the industry has been seriously injured and that injury has been substantially caused by imports.

Current law requires that imports are a substantial cause of injury to U.S. industry. Our WTO obligation requires only that imports be a cause of injury (i.e. it need not be a 'substantial' cause). The bill deletes the term 'substantial' from the causation standard.

Current law requires that imports are "not less than any other cause" of injury. This is an unnecessarily high standard. The bill clarifies that in order to gain relief there only needs to be a causal link between imports and the injury.

The bill also includes in U.S. law the factors to be considered by the ITC, as established by the WTO, to determine whether the U.S. industry has suffered serious injury. These factors include: the rate and amount of the increase in imports of the product concerned in absolute and relative terms; the share of the domestic market taken by increased imports; changes in the levels of sales; production; productivity; capacity utilization; profits and losses; and, employment.

2. Steel Import Monitoring Program: The bill establishes a steel import permit and monitoring program. In order to gain relief under U.S. trade laws, domestic industries must demonstrate that unfairly traded imports have caused injury. This requires complex factual and economic analysis of import data. Currently, such data has not been available on a timely basis. This data has become public several months after the imports have arrived in the U.S., thus allowing unfairly traded imports to cause significant damage in many cases before the data is available for even a preliminary analysis.

The steel import permit and monitoring system, which is modeled on similar systems currently in use in Canada and Mexico, would allow the U.S. government to receive and analyze critical import data in a more timely manner and allow industry to determine more quickly whether unfair imports are disrupting the market.

MIAMI BEACH REMEMBERS COMMISSIONER ABE RISNICK

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 19, 1999

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, a special tribute was held at the Holocaust Memo-

rial in Miami Beach in memory of former Miami Beach Commissioner Abe Resnick who passed away late last year after decades of great contributions to the South Florida community.

Commissioner Resnick's life exemplifies the achievement of the American dream through hard work, perseverance and dedication. Born in Lithuania in 1924, Commissioner Resnick was a survivor of the Holocaust after successfully escaping from a Nazi concentration camp in Lithuania. Not forgetting those who continue suffering under Nazi repression, he joined the Resistance and bravely fought to defeat the Nazi regime. Commissioner Resnick later left Europe with his family to settle in Cuba where years later he had to flee repression again, this time from the Communist regime of Fidel Castro.

Arriving in the United States, he soon began a prominent and successful career as a leading real estate developer in South Florida, while remaining an active participant of the Jewish and Cuban-American communities of South Florida. One of his achievements was the realization of the construction of a Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach that will forever serve as a shrine to all those who perished in that tragic period of human history.

In 1985, Mr. Resnick was elected as commissioner of the city of Miami Beach and later also served as vice-mayor of the city where he continued his good works for the progress of our community.

South Florida will forever remember the positive and lasting contributions of Commissioner Abe Resnick.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER CALIFORNIA STATE SENATOR QUENTIN L. KOPP

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 19, 1999

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to one of the most remarkable legislators in the history of the great golden State of California—the Honorable Quentin L. Kopp.

An independent by political affiliation and by personal nature, Quentin Kopp is a San Francisco institution. His 27 years in public office began with his service as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He has served on virtually every local government policy-making body in the Bay Area, in addition to his accomplished career as a practicing trial lawyer. Quentin's record includes a herculean effort to bring the 1985 Superbowl and the summer Olympic Games to our area. He continued his distinguished public service as a member of the California State Senate, where his prodigious 12-year tenure was only curtailed this past year by voter-mandated term limits.

A fiscal conservative, Quentin guards the public purse as zealously as he guards his own. He is a public reformer who has insisted upon open government, campaigns that fully disclose contributions, and the elimination of conflicts of interest. Furthermore, he possesses a vocabulary that dwarfs Noah Webster's and a rhetorical style that rival Daniel Webster's. He is rightly renowned for his ability to simultaneously please, baffle, inspire, and incite his loyal constituency.

Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the State Senate Committee on Transportation, Quentin Kopp has amassed an enviable legislative record: creation of the California High Speed Rail Authority, development of the 1989 Transportation Blueprint for the 21st Century, coordination of public transit agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area, and securing funding for the seismic retrofitting of the Bay Area's bridges. Senator Kopp's longtime and articulate advocacy of the extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit system to San Francisco International Airport—a critical issue which has involved many of our colleagues in this House—has been vital in assuring Bay Area residents their desire to have Bart to the Airport!

Quentin Kopp's imposing height, unforgettable visage, and booming voice, infused with tones of his native Syracuse, New York, heralds his legendary tardy public appearances. But all of us have found that it is worth the wait to hear Quentin's views on public issues. He has an innate understanding of Abraham Lincoln's caution that "you cannot please all of the people all of the time," and this has produced in him the predilection for honest and unedited dialogue which is so appreciated by his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the legislative branch's loss is the judicial branch's gain. Senator Quentin Kopp is now addressed as the Honorable Quentin Kopp, Judge of the Superior Court of San Mateo County, a position to which he was appointed on January 2 of this year. Quentin does not need the judicial robe to augment his commanding, magisterial presence, but all of us in San Mateo County will benefit from his willingness to exercise wit and wisdom in his new post.

It is my sincere wish, Mr. Speaker, that Judge Kopp will find intellectual satisfaction, professional fulfillment and personal happiness in this new opportunity to continue his public service.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HOUSING
PRESERVATION MATCHING
GRANT OF 1999

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 19, 1999

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Housing Preservation Matching Grant of 1999, which would authorize the Secretary of HUD to make grants to States to supplement State assistance for the preservation of affordable housing for low-income families. The bill would allocate resources to match the efforts of States in preserving affordable housing units across this Nation. With this kind of commitment, the Federal Government would be able to help States and more importantly, communities to achieve the long-term preservation of those housing units as affordable housing.

We are facing a dire situation with regard to affordable housing needs in this country. Low-to-moderate-income residents receiving housing assistance are on the cusp of a crisis and Congress must act to attempt to avert the breakdown and loss of the national public and assisted housing stock. Without preservation, the best of the worst case scenarios is a

"vouchering out" of what little affordable housing remains.

Some States are allocating resources to save federally subsidized housing for the future. In Minnesota, where 10 percent of the roughly 50,000 units of assisted housing are at risk, \$10 million was appropriated for 1999 for an Affordable Rental Investment Fund to finance the acquisition, rehabilitation and debt restructuring of federally assisted rental property and for making equity take-out loans. This laudable effort, however, is only one State and even there, the resources allocated cannot match the great need for affordable housing, especially for seniors and those with special needs.

This Vento bill recognizes these kinds of commitments and matches them with two Federal dollars for every State dollar. While I support funding for the Federal Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act (LIHPRA), if there is not to be funding, perhaps this new Housing Preservation Matching Grant can encourage a forestallment of prepayment, which places low-income families at risk of losing their homes. With enactment of this bill this year, we could provide a benchmark for States and local communities to work from and with as they produce their own initiatives to avert this pending national crisis in affordable housing.

A section-by-section of the bill follows:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.—The short title of the Act is the "Housing Preservation Matching Grant Act of 1999."

SECTION 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE—(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—(1) more than 55,300 affordable housing dwelling units in the United States have been lost through termination of low income affordability requirements, which usually involves the prepayment of the outstanding principal balance under the mortgage on the project in which such units are located;

(2) more than 265,000 affordable housing dwelling units in the United States are currently at risk of prepayment;

(3) the loss of the privately owned, federally assisted affordable housing, which is occurring during a period when rents for unassisted housing are increasing and few units of additional affordable housing are being developed, will cause unacceptable harm on current tenants of affordable housing and will precipitate a national crisis in the supply of housing for low-income households;

(4) the demand for affordable housing far exceeds the supply of such housing, as evidenced by studies in 1998 that found that (A) 5,300,000 households (one-seventh of all renters in the Nation) have worst-case housing needs; and (B) the number of families with at least one full-time worker and having worst-case housing needs increased from 1991 to 1995 by 265,000 (24 percent) to almost 1,400,000;

(5) the shortage of affordable housing in the United States reached a record high in 1995, when the number of low-income households exceeded the number of low-cost rental dwelling units by 4,400,000;

(6) between 1990 and 1995, the shortage of affordable housing in the United States increased by 1,000,000 dwelling units, as the supply of low-cost units decreased by 100,000 and the number of low-income renter households increased by 900,000;

(7) there are nearly 2 low-income renters in the United States for every low-cost rental dwelling unit;

(8) 2 of every 3 low-income renters receive no housing assistance and about 2,000,000 low-income households remain on waiting lists for affordable housing;

(9) the shortage of affordable housing dwelling units results in low-income households that are not able to acquire low-cost rental units paying large proportions of their income for rent; and

(10) in 1995, 82 percent of low-income renter households were paying more than 30 percent of their incomes for rent and utilities.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act—

(1) to promote the preservation of affordable housing units by providing matching grants to States that have developed and funded programs for the preservation of privately owned housing that is affordable to low-income families and persons and was produced for such purpose with Federal assistance;

(2) to minimize the involuntary displacement of tenants who are currently residing in such housing, many of whom are elderly or disabled persons; and

(3) to continue the partnerships among the Federal Government, State and local governments, and the private sector in operating and assisting housing that is affordable to low-income Americans.

SECTION 3. AUTHORITY. Provides the Secretary of HUD with the authority to make grants to the States for low-income housing preservation.

SECTION 4. USE OF GRANTS. (a) IN GENERAL.—Grants can only be used for assistance for acquisition, preservation incentives, operating cost, and capital expenditures for the housing projects that meet the requirements in (b), (c) or (d) below.

(b) PROJECTS WITH HUD-INSURED MORTGAGES.

(1) The project is financed by a loan or mortgage that is—(A) insured or held by the Secretary under 221(d)(3) of National Housing Act and receiving loan management assistance under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 due to a conversions for section 101 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965; (B) insured or held by the Secretary and bears interest at a rate determined under 221(d)(5) of the National Housing Act; (C) insured, assisted, or held by the Secretary or a State or State Agency under Section 236 of the National Housing Act; or (D) held by the Secretary and formerly insured under a program referred to in (A), (B) or (C);

(2) the project is subject to an unconditional waiver of, with respect to the mortgage referred to in paragraph (1)—

(A) all rights to any prepayment of the mortgage; and (B) all rights to any voluntary termination of the mortgage insurance contract for the mortgage; and

(3) the owner of the project has entered into binding commitments (applicable to any subsequent owner) to extend all low-income affordability restrictions imposed because of any contract for project-based assistance for the project.

(c) PROJECTS WITH SECTION 8 PROJECT-BASED ASSISTANCE. A project meets the requirements under this subsection only if—

(1) the project is subject to a contract for project-based assistance; and

(2) the owner has entered into binding commitments (applicable to any subsequent owner) to extend such assistance for a maximum period under law and to extend any low-income affordability restrictions applicable to the project.

(d) PROJECTS PURCHASED BY RESIDENTS.—A project meets the requirements under this subsection only if the project—

(1) is or was eligible housing under LIHPRA of 1990; and

(2) has been purchased by a resident council for the housing or is approved by HUD for such purchase, for conversion to homeownerhip housing as under LIHPRA of 1990.

(e) COMBINATION OF ASSISTANCE.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), any project that is