

Senior Prescription Insurance Coverage Equity Act. It is voluntary in nature. Nobody is required to change anything. No senior, no family, would be required to change anything in their buying practices should they choose to continue doing exactly what they are doing. But for millions of older people, the SPICE Program, the Senior Prescription Insurance Coverage Equity Act, will be a bargain. It will be a winner because it will give seniors the kind of bargaining power the big health maintenance organizations have had.

It is not right, in my view, to give those buyers significant power in the marketplace and just say seniors and families do not matter. In effect, that is what we are doing. We are telling them: You go on out and do your best, walk into a pharmacy, and even though you are subsidizing the big buyers, this Senate will not do anything about it.

I believe it is time for bipartisan action on this. I believe it is time to create an approach to cover prescription drugs under Medicare that uses the forces of the marketplace, that is bipartisan, and that helps hold costs down. I believe a lot of seniors cannot afford their prescriptions. There is a right way and a wrong way to deal with it. The bipartisan Snowe-Wyden legislation is what we think is the appropriate way to go. We are going to continue to come to this floor and talk about the need for action on it.

As this poster says, what will help is if seniors send in copies of their prescription drug bills. We urge seniors to send them to us and send them to their Senator here in the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, because that will help Members of the Senate to see how urgent is this need.

The need was great years ago, but it is getting even greater. Too many older people every week are having to make a choice between their food costs and their fuel costs and their fuel costs and their medical bills. Let us show we can deliver on this important issue. There is a bipartisan bill now before the Senate. We hope seniors, as this poster says, will be in touch with us to let us know their feelings on this important matter.

I intend to keep coming back to the floor of the Senate until we get action on this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NURSING RELIEF FOR DISADVANTAGED AREAS ACT OF 1999

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, on October 22, the Senate passed by unanimous

consent the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas Act of 1999. The Senate agreed, also by unanimous consent, to an amendment of mine added to that legislation. My amendment made a technical clarification to the L visa program. Unfortunately, an "Interpretation of Technical Amendment" at the end of my remarks on my amendment was inadvertently left out of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. I ask unanimous consent it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

INTERPRETATION OF TECHNICAL AMENDMENT

"Collective" and "collectively" refer to a relationship between the accounting and management consulting firms or the elected members (partners, shareholders, members, employees) of the various accounting and management consulting firms, inclusive of both accounting service firms and management consulting service firms or the elected members (partners, shareholders, members, employees) thereof.

An entity shall be considered to be "marketing its services under the same internationally recognized name directly or indirectly under an agreement" if it engages in a trade or business and markets its trade or business under the same internationally recognized name and one of the following direct or indirect relationships apply to the entity:

- (a) It has an agreement with the worldwide coordinating organization, or
- (b) It is a parent, branch, subsidiary or affiliate relationship to an entity which has an agreement with a qualifying worldwide coordinating organization, or
- (c) It is majority owned by members of such entity with an agreement and/or the members of its parent, subsidiary or affiliate entities, or
- (d) It is indirectly party to one or more agreements connecting it to the worldwide coordinating organization, as shown by facts and circumstances.

This provision is intended to provide the basis of continued L visa program eligibility for those worldwide coordinating organizations which may in the future divide or spin-off parallel business units which may independently plan to associate with a non-collective worldwide coordinating organization.

CLOTURE VOTE ON H.R. 434

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I regret that because of a long-standing commitment, I will not be here for tomorrow's vote on cloture on H.R. 434, The Sub-Saharan Africa Free Trade Act. If I could be here, I would vote against cloture.

I strongly oppose the majority leader's decision to fill the amendment tree to prevent us from offering amendments on some of the most important issues facing working families in this country, especially the minimum wage.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has said numerous times that increased trade has raised the standards of living and the quality of life for almost all countries involved in trade, and especially the quality of life in our own country. Chairman Greenspan believes that the number one benefit of trade is not simply jobs, but enhanced standards of living.

I can think of no more important enhancement to the standard of living of America's hardest pressed working families than to increase the minimum wage. Surely, it is appropriate to send the message on this legislation that increased trade must definitely mean a better quality of life for the working poor.

I had hoped to offer an amendment to raise the minimum wage to this bill, but the majority leader's actions prevent me from doing that. This trade bill has been offered to enhance the standards of living for workers in Africa and the Caribbean. I am certainly in favor of that, but there are honest disagreements as to whether the proposal before us effectively does so. But, while we express our concern for workers in these nations, we cannot forget about the workers in our own country.

I commend President Clinton for making trade with Africa a priority for his administration. His leadership is the driving force behind this entire debate. As the Senate debates trade with Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean region, we must ensure that we take the right approach to building these vital partnerships. Clearly, we must strengthen our economic ties with these nations, but I am not convinced the proposal before us is the best way to do so.

Unfortunately, the majority leader's actions have also prevented anyone on this side of the aisle from offering germane amendments that will help us to build lasting partnerships between African and American businesses, provide strong protections for workers rights, and preserve the environment. We clearly had an opportunity to enact a bill that would make trade with Africa and the Caribbean Basin countries a win-win for all of the nations involved, but the majority leader's actions have made that impossible.

Any bill on Africa that comes before the Senate should address both trade and the other important issues facing Africa today. It must deal with the AIDS crisis. It must offer substantial debt relief. And it must restore foreign aid. Yet the proposal currently before the Senate is silent on these fundamental issues facing Africa. I am pleased that Senator FEINGOLD, Senator DURBIN, and other Senators are prepared to offer amendments that address all of these concerns, and I strongly support them.

I am also very concerned about the impact of the pending bill on our textile and apparel industries, which are often hardest hit by imports. These industries remain a critical source of employment for many American workers. In Massachusetts, many textile and apparel employees live in the Merrimack Valley and in Southeastern Massachusetts. They work hard, and they have made a lasting impact on our state's history and culture.

I believe even the proponents of this bill will admit that the short-term effect of the legislation will be an acceleration of job loss in the apparel sector. And while this bill includes a re-authorization of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, which I strongly support, nothing in this bill will create a single job for these displaced workers to have.

While Massachusetts continues to be a leader in exports, many small companies and workers are suffering as a result of the trade deficits caused by the economic crises in Asia and South America. In response to the needs of companies hurt by imports, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program in general, and the New England Trade Adjustment Assistance Center in particular, exist as valuable resources. They offer vital assistance to firms and workers suffering from competition by imports. The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program is an effective initiative that has been shown to provide a return on investment of up to 348 percent.

The American people, I believe, will hold this Congress responsible for refusing to address so many issues which are critical to our families and our communities. The majority has once again turned a deaf ear to the pleas of the American people for action, and I regret this latest missed opportunity.

DRYLAND DEGRADATION AND ITS IMPACT ON TRADE RELATIONS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, as the Senate considers the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to an important article from the President of the Corporate Council on Africa, Dr. Mima S. Nedelcovych, concerning Africa's problem of severe dryland degradation (known as "desertification") as it affects our trade relations.

The Corporate Council on Africa, CCA, includes 180 members with substantial business interests in Africa including such industry giants as General Electric, Ford Motor Company, IBM, Citibank, ConAgra, Cargill, AGCO, 3M, Pfizer, Land O'Lakes, Chevron, Texaco, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly, Raytheon and Rhone-Poulenc USA. Recently Dr. Nedelcovych, who also serves as Vice President for International Business Development for F.C. Schaffer & Associates, published a short article entitled "Africa's Creeping Desert, A Problem for the U.S. Too," in the CCA's Perspectives on Africa (Fall 1999).

In it, Dr. Nedelcovych outlines clearly the extent to which the degradation of Africa's agricultural land is undermining one of the continent's most crucial natural resources, impeding economic growth, and slowing the hoped-for shift from aid to trade. Cocoa, coffee, cotton, cola nuts and spices grown in Africa end up in a myriad of everyday processed products on American store shelves, but land on

which they are produced is increasingly threatened by a combination of bad management practices, drought and poverty.

As a boost to U.S. trade relations with Africa, Dr. Nedelcovych makes a strong case for full U.S. participation in the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, not just because it seeks to help Africa's agricultural sector grow and achieve food self-sufficiency, but because it will also open greater opportunities for U.S. sales to Africa, including seeds, agricultural machinery, irrigation equipment as well as a wide range of automobiles, pharmaceuticals, electronic equipment and other goods to more prosperous African consumers.

Dr. Nedelcovych ends with an urgent plea for the Senate to ratify this important agreement without delay. With a world population now over 6 billion and fertile farmland shrinking at an alarming rate worldwide, I heartily support Senate action on the Convention to Combat Desertification.

I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Nedelcovych's article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[Published by The Corporate Council on Africa, Fall 1999]
PERSPECTIVES ON AFRICA
A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF DIALOGUE AND OPINION
AFRICA'S CREEPING DESERT—A PROBLEM FOR THE U.S. TOO

(By Dr. Mima S. Nedelcovych, President, Corporate Council on Africa)

We Americans are well known for our ingenuity and problem-solving abilities. All too often, however, we also are noted for our inability to see crises in advance and deal with problems when they are still easily manageable.

One such issue is the world's desertification problem. In Africa, more than two-thirds of the land is dry land, and approximately 70 percent of the population lives on that land. They also grow crops such as cocoa, coffee, cotton, cola nuts and spices on that land. Moreover, rare and endangered animals—a key to tourism in African countries—currently struggle to survive on that land. Without effective land management policies in developing nations, the need for foreign aid will rise at a time when available funds are shrinking.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has been designed to deal with this problem in a cost-effective way. The Convention does not call for the creation of a major new center of bureaucracy at the UN, nor does it create a mandated contribution by the United States. The onus is placed on developing nations needing assistance to devise a comprehensive national plan to effectively deal with desertification. However, if the United States Senate doesn't ratify this convention, the U.S. will be on the outside of this process, which will directly endanger U.S. interests.

The U.S. private sector has five concerns with how the problem of desertification is handled. First, no issue is more important than that of land use. The national plans called for in the Convention will govern all land use—not just agricultural land. Oil drilling, mining and manufacturing oper-

ations, all will be affected by this convention. If the United States fails to ratify this Convention, we will have no voice in the development and implementation of national land use plans.

Second, the United States sells hundreds of millions of dollars in irrigation and related equipment to Africa each year, as well as seeds and agricultural equipment. Companies and experts in nations that ratify the Convention will be placed on a roster of service providers. While America currently has a competitive advantage, that advantage will soon disappear if U.S. firms and experts are not on the convention-generated list. Our firms will then face the prospect of losing contracts to countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, who will provide technology based on what we have developed earlier.

Third, U.S. firms purchase millions of dollars of agricultural goods each year from developing nations. Products such as coffee, cocoa, cotton, cola nuts and spices are grown on dry or sub-humid lands facing the impact of desertification. Many consumers products we now use would cost more if the problem of desertification is not dealt with successfully. A morning cup of coffee surely would be more expensive—so would the chocolates given on Valentine's Day. The prices for items ranging from cooking oils or soft drinks also would rise.

Fourth, it is much cheaper to work with African nations to implement effective land management plans than to send millions to implement disjointed anti-desertification efforts and hundreds of millions more to provide humanitarian assistance to combat the effects of droughts and other natural catastrophes caused by desertification after they occur. Individual taxpayers and corporations certainly would appreciate a more cost-effective approach to this problem.

Finally, developing nations—particularly African nations—see this Convention as their major international initiative. The Convention was developed with the assistance of the United States Government. To date, all but Australia and the United States have ratified this Convention. U.S. failure to ratify this Convention will leave the United States Government, U.S. corporations and American experts out of the anti-desertification process. Moreover, it will poison our relations with African and other developing nations who believe non-ratification is a lack of support of their efforts to both deal with their problem and join global markets.

It is critical that the U.S. business community let the U.S. Senate know the importance we place on the ratification of the Convention to Combat Desertification. Potentially billions of dollars—and more importantly, millions of lives—depend on what the Senate does about this issue in the next few weeks.

PROPOSED DELAY IN FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today to express my serious concern that House and Senate negotiators have agreed to delay for one year almost all of the proposed increase in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget for FY 2000. I strongly disagree with this approach to balancing the budget. Fully funding biomedical research at the NIH should be one of our