

balanced trade across the Mexican and Canadian border, we did not have that opening. That is an opening we ought to have.

What I do not want to deny, and I think the Senator from Minnesota agrees, I don't want to deny our negotiators from going to the table and being able to negotiate any agreement. They ought to have the full freedom and flexibility to put anything and everything on the table and to bring anything and everything back to us. In the end, under our constitutional form of government, we are the ones who have to make the decision. They are the ones who negotiate. That is the kind of balance that I think is important.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

STEEL TRADE POLICY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I am very concerned about some actions that were taken yesterday. Guess what. On May 8, the administration issued its statement of administration policy on the trade bill. I was looking forward to that because I thought George Bush was a friend of the American steel industry. I was absolutely shocked to read that policy and find out the administration opposes the provision to provide a safety net for American steel retirees. I was shocked because just a few months ago, President Bush stood up for steel when he issued those temporary steel tariffs, and I thought we could count on him now as we were working our way through the Trade Adjustment Act.

I was taken aback to hear the opposition to the amendment that Senator ROCKEFELLER and I have, that provides a very modest temporary bridge to help steel retirees keep their health benefits until we can work out a larger compromise.

This statement is terrible. It abandons the steelworkers. It abandons steel retirees. It is just plain wrong. We do need steel and we do need steelworkers. They are suffering at the hands of unfair trade competition, and George Bush's own administration helped us document that. That is what is so breathtaking.

On one hand we have done it, and then on the other hand we said even though steel companies are in bankruptcy because of unfair trade practices, we will not help the steelworker retirees keep their health benefits.

I am fighting for American steel, those steelworkers and those retired steelworkers who, after years of hard work, believed that by working down in the mills they would have security for their families in retirement. Those widows who sent their husband off to the mills every day, like Bethlehem Steel in my own hometown, with pride and love and a lunch bucket thought that they could count on their pension and their health care.

These are the true victims of years of unfair trade practices. Year after year,

we debate trade and people say: Well, I am for fair trade. I don't know when trade gets fair. I just never know when trade is going to get fair. I have been a Member of the U.S. Congress for 25 years and I have never seen a trade deal that came out fair yet.

What are the consequences of that? People losing their pensions, people losing their health care, and people losing their jobs—this is unfair trade. People have been injured by these practices and I want to help them.

I heard the stories of my steelworkers and the retirees. I have been to the rallies. I have been to the meetings. I have been down to the union halls. I even held a hearing on this topic. I heard their stories about their fear of losing their health care and their pensions.

I met, at my hearing, Gertrude Misterka. She is a woman my own age, from my own hometown of Baltimore, who is terrified she is going to lose her health care. Her husband Charlie died 5 years ago. He worked at Bethlehem Steel for 35 years. He was loved by his wife, a friend to his fellow steelworkers. He is greatly missed.

The Misterkas thought that after 35 years of working at Bethlehem Steel, they would have a secure future. Charlie thought his wife would be taken care of even after his death. He was a good, kind guy.

Let me tell you about her. She has diabetes, high blood pressure, and asthma. She pays \$78 a month for her health care premium. Even with this coverage she pays \$100 monthly for her prescriptions.

But let me tell you, because of being a diabetic, because of having complications around diabetes, guess what her prescription drug bill is every year: \$6,716.16. You tell me what is going to happen to her if she loses her health insurance.

Oh, yes, let's give somebody a tax credit or a voucher to go into the private market. You tell me how Gertrude, at age 65, with diabetes and all the complications, is going to go shopping. Medicare Choice has already collapsed. HMOs are not of any value to her. Nobody will take her because of her preexisting condition.

Listen, we have to do something to help her and to help all others like her. I promised that I would fight to help her keep her health care. Families who worked hard for America and spent all those years at backbreaking work should be able to count on us.

These costs will only go up as prescription drug costs continue to skyrocket.

I listened to Mrs. Misterka that day, and my heart went out to her and all the women like her. I promised her that I would fight to help current and retired steelworkers and their families—families that need a safety net so they don't lose their healthcare overnight if their companies go under; families who worked hard for America, some for nearly 50 years of back-break-

ing work in the hot mills and the cold mills; and families that now need our help.

America's steel industry is in crisis. American steel companies are filing for bankruptcy protection—31 since 1997, including 17 in the last year alone.

Steel mills are shutting down. In the last year, at least 40 mills and related facilities have been shut down or idled. The closed mills represent nearly one-fifth of America's steelmaking capacity.

Steelworkers are losing their jobs. Nearly 47,000 steelworkers have lost their jobs since 1998, including about 30,000 in the last year alone. We now have less than half as many steelworkers as we did in 1980. Most of these jobs are gone for good.

The cause of this crisis is well-known. Unfair foreign competition has brought American steel to its knees. Foreign steel companies are subsidized by their governments, and they dump excess steel into America's open market at fire sale prices.

This isn't rhetoric. This is fact.

Last year, the International Trade Commission unanimously found that "a substantial part of the industry is being injured by increased imports" under section 201 of the Trade Act.

As Commerce Secretary Evans said last June:

For over 50 years, foreign governments have distorted the market through subsidies of their steel industries.

The Russian Government keeps about 1,000 unprofitable steel plants open through subsidies. South Korea has nearly doubled its production capacity since 1990 without the domestic demand to support the increase.

Millions of tons of foreign steel are sold in the United States every year below the cost of production to keep these subsidized foreign mills in business.

America's steel industry is under siege and has been under siege for decades. They've been fighting an uphill battle against competitors that don't play by the rules.

The true cost of foreign steel sold at "bargain" prices is lost American jobs, is broken promises to American workers, and threats to American security.

Why is steel important?

Steel built America, the railroads and bridges that keep our country connected, the cars and trucks and buses and trains that make our Nation move, the buildings where we live and work and shop and worship, and the ships, tanks and weapons that we need during times of war. Yet saving steel is not an exercise in nostalgia.

President Bush said:

Steel is an important jobs issue, it is also an important national security issue.

I couldn't agree more.

The distinguished ranking member of the Appropriations Committee and of its Defense subcommittee, Senator STEVENS, recently made this point eloquently here on the Senate floor:

During World War II, he said, 'we produced steel for the world. We produced the steel for

the allies. We rebuilt Europe. We built the tanks in the United States, and the planes and the ships that saved the world.' Could we do it again?

That is a serious question.

Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point plant near Baltimore recently produced the steel plate to repair the USS *Cole*. It is the only mill in America that still produces the armor plate for Navy ships.

America must never become dependent on foreign suppliers—like Russia and China—for the steel we need to defend our nation and freedom around the world. But we are headed in that direction. Already, the United States is one of the few steel-producing countries that is a net importer of steel.

America imported more than 30 million tons of steel last year.

President Bush took an important first step to help America's steel industry by imposing broad temporary tariffs on imported steel.

I was disappointed that the tariffs are 30 percent or less—phased out over the 3 years they are in effect rather than 40 percent tariffs for 4 years the steel industry and steelworkers sought. I was disappointed that the tariffs don't cover slab steel. But I appreciate the President's action under section 201.

Tariffs are an important step to give America's steel industry a chance to restructure and recover with some protection from the deluge of below-cost foreign steel, but they are not the only step needed to help American steel.

The tariffs help the industry. Now it is time to help the workers and retirees who will lose their healthcare if their companies go under.

The Daschle amendment provided a temporary 1-year extension of health benefits to qualified steel retirees.

The health care extensions for steel retirees are similar to TAA health care benefits for workers who lose their jobs as a result of trade agreements. Workers could have 2 years of health care benefits. Retirees would only have 1 year of benefits.

Just like the temporary tariffs give the companies breathing room to recover, a temporary extension of benefits give workers and retirees breathing room to find a long-term plan. It gives them time to plan—time that the workers and retirees of LTV didn't have. They lost their benefits overnight.

Supporting producers is in the national interest. The policy of our Government is to support producers when it is in the national interest. National interest means national responsibility. It is important to support farmers to make sure we have the producers to be food-independent.

I am happy to stand up for our farmers whether they are chicken producers on the Eastern Shore or corn growers in the Midwest.

We spend about \$19 billion a year on farmers—\$656 billion over the past 10 years. This does not include \$17 billion

in emergency appropriations for our farmers, and it looks like these subsidies are increasing.

Congress passed a \$100 billion farm bill. The President said he will sign it. It calls for a \$73 billion increase in farm subsidies over the next 6 years.

This farm bill includes a \$3 billion subsidy for peanuts, up to \$30,000 per farmer for livestock subsidies, and a \$3 billion subsidy for cotton.

Since 1996, we have provided over \$5 billion for cotton producers—three-quarters of those funds went to just 18,000 farmers. I love cotton. It is the fabric of our lives. But cotton is not more important than steel.

I have supported aid to farmers. So have most of the opponents of steel. I would ask them why. Why do farmers get bail-out after bail-out, yet our steel workers can't get this modest help?

Farmers work hard, but no harder than steelworkers. Farmers provide vital commodities. So do steelworkers. Our Nation must never be dependent on foreign food, and it must never be dependent on foreign steel.

It is not just farmers. Congress gave the airlines \$15 billion after September 11 because of a national emergency. That was the right thing to do. Now, we need to stand up for steel.

Make no mistake, this is a national emergency for steel. Standing up for steel is in the national interest just like farmers, just like airlines.

I was moved by the stories of Mrs. Misterka and others at the hearing a few weeks ago as was everyone in the hearing room. I feel very close to these workers and retirees. I grew up down the road from the Beth Steel mill in Baltimore. My dad had a grocery store that he opened extra early so the steelworkers on the morning shift could come in and buy their lunch. The workers at Beth Steel weren't units of production, they were our neighbors. They are our neighbors.

And what did we know about the Bethlehem Steel Plant? It was a union job with good wages and good benefits so our neighbors could go to work, put in an honest day, and get fair pay back to raise their families and pursue the American dream.

We were all proud of our workers at Bethlehem Steel. In World War II and Vietnam they rolled gun barrels, made steel for grenades, provided steel for the shipyards that turned out Liberty ships very 3 weeks. Today, Beth Steel made the steel plates to repair the USS *Cole* after the terrorist bombing damaged the ship.

Most of Beth Steel workers are Beth Steel workers for their entire careers—30, 40, 50 years on the job, every day despite the aches and pains, the bad back, the varicose veins that age steelworkers beyond their years. Their commitment to Beth Steel is a commitment to America doing the work that needs to get done for fair pay and a secure future. The futures that once looked secure are now at risk through no fault of their own. It is time we

stand up for steelworkers and help them in their time of need just like they helped America every step of the way.

This is not the end of the story. I will continue to fight for America's steel workers.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Maryland for accommodating both Senator LOTT and me as we talk about the current circumstances involving the pending legislation.

Let me also say how much I share her point of view. Maybe I am not able to demonstrate the same passion as Senator MIKULSKI has indicated, the strength of feeling that she has about the issue involving her steelworker retirees—but I certainly share her conviction.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, as we have been noting throughout the last several hours, a number of our colleagues have been in discussion and negotiation involving the trade adjustment assistance part of the package that is pending before us. I am very pleased to announce that an agreement has been reached. The agreement is one that involved the administration, Republicans, and Democrats who have been involved in this issue for some time now.

I might just briefly outline it. I will leave to the manager of the bill and the ranking member to discuss the matter in greater detail tomorrow morning.

As I understand it, they intend to lay down the amendment tomorrow. It will be, then, the pending business.

I also encourage Senators to offer amendments tomorrow and Monday. Senator LOTT and I have discussed the schedule. I am prepared to say as a result of this agreement that there will be no votes tomorrow, but I encourage Senators to avail themselves of the opportunity they now have, tonight or tomorrow or Monday, to offer amendments.

We will consider votes for those amendments on Monday night. We have already announced there will be a vote on a judge at 6 o'clock on Monday. We can accommodate additional votes immediately following that vote, should amendments be offered and should we be in a position, then, to dispose of them by Monday afternoon.

But the agreement has a number of components. The trade adjustment assistance for more workers—that will provide at least 65,500 new workers with trade adjustment assistance, according to the reports that I have just been given, unprecedented health care coverage for harmed workers, a 70-percent COBRA subsidy for tax credit for employers and other institutions, and benefits that match the 2-year training period. Workers would receive income assistance for at least 18 months while they were retraining for up to 2 years.