

Canada rather than in the United States. They have kept very scrupulous records. So far the records she gave us in testimony, which was sworn testimony before a subcommittee here in the House, was that her patients had been saving 62 percent, and she had seen no adverse reactions to the drugs.

Later this week Members will get a chance to vote on this important matter, and they are going to have to ask themselves, is it really about safety? Is it really about research? Or is it really about putting profit over people?

Ultimately, we are going to have to ask ourselves those questions and we are going to have to defend the answer. Because if a year from now we are still paying \$360 for that Tamoxifen and the Germans are paying \$60, it is not shame on them, it is shame on us.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE EVIDENCE OF IRAQ'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I appreciate it very much, Madam Speaker.

I once again this evening continue reading constituent mail that has come to the State of Illinois, 3,621 comments, that were actually made available to people by MoveOn.org, which had on the Web site a petition that said, "We believe that Congress should support an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration's distortion of evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs."

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A number of times, the Speaker has cautioned Members who get up to be careful that we say proper things and do not impugn anybody's integrity on this floor. I agree that we ought to have a level of decorum. But I want to also read a quote from Theodore Roosevelt, because these are coming from constituents who only want to know the truth and want a process, an independent commission to make sure that we get the truth about why it is that the United States thought it was an imminent threat that we had to go to war. This quote, I think, is important for us to look at. This is from the former President, Theodore Roosevelt:

"To announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that we are to stand by the President right or wrong is not only unpatriotic and ser-

vile but is morally treasonable to the American public."

So it is really in that spirit that many, many people, in fact, about 320,000 people who are also calling for an independent commission to investigate the truth about the rationale for going to war in Iraq who have sent letters. Here is one, from Darryl of Watseka, Illinois:

"As a father of one of our Nation's finest, I respectfully request that you demand an independent review of our government's actions leading up to the war in Iraq. The U.S., once a greatly respected Nation around the world, has now made a large part of the world not trust us. If we as a Nation do not question questionable acts of our own government, how can we go around the world telling other nations to create democracies when the one we have seems more like a dictatorship than a democracy?"

"The current leadership of this great Nation and the media manipulated the general public into believing Iraq was a threat to us. If we don't question these actions, how can we question the actions of other nations? For years, the world has stated that the U.S. has a double set of standards, one for us and one for the rest of the world. Will we set a precedent of attacking other nations with false justification for the rest of the world? What are we teaching our children? It's okay if you don't like someone to attack them first because our government says it's okay."

"Before the war, President Bush and Colin Powell claimed that Iraq was a threat to our security with weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons. Since the war, they have changed their tune and say that Iraq had a weapons program. That alone should make one want to question their actions. Don't let politics dictate your actions, let the facts. When I hear that other nations think President Bush is more of a threat to the world peace than Iraq was, it disturbs me. I love my country and believe that we can make a difference in the world, but if we don't question these actions, I highly doubt that the rest of the world will trust us again."

Rodney from Sauk Village says:

"My youngest brother is in Baghdad in a rank heavy unit which is costing taxpayers millions of dollars per month in salary alone. Our men and women are still over there being killed but the President claims the war is over. I can't tell. I've always been of the belief that if you get tired of being treated a certain way, eventually you'll stand up and do something to change it. We need to be focusing on the wars at home like gang violence, AIDS and the homeless."

Ronald from Malden says:

"I am a 'never miss an election' independent who has never voted a straight party ticket. I seriously would like to know who misled us or the President or if our intelligence community is this poor. It appears there are no weapons

of mass destruction or our great intelligence that told us all about them before the war certainly could have located at least a few of them by now. Billions of our tax dollars have been spent on this war and billions more will continue to go out every month for years now because of this while we cut domestic programs, spend billions on interest alone for the deficit to cut taxes, most to people who do not need it, and mortgage our children's future. Because of lies? Because of incompetency? I want to know what happened."

Beth from Plano, Illinois:

"The public, especially the families of the women and men who have bravely entered into military service, worry, and justifiably so, that the war in Iraq is turning out to be a second Vietnam. We want to know whether this war was truly justified, or if President Bush and his administration merely embarked upon a reckless revenge match with disregard for the very citizens they have sworn to protect."

Mary from Westmont, Illinois:

"I have a nephew in the military and a niece soon to follow. Why were our young men and women's lives threatened, lost?"

This must be stopped.

HEAD START

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HARRIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Madam Speaker, I would like to point out that appropriate committees in the House and the other body are investigating those issues of concern to the previous speaker. If those committees do not appropriately handle the issue, then I am certain that an independent investigative commission would be in order.

Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about Head Start. This week it is scheduled to be reauthorized on the House floor. Currently, there is much confusion about Head Start and its reauthorization. The facts are these: number one, Head Start serves approximately 1 million children. Secondly, state-run early learning programs serve another 1 million eligible preschool children. That is 2 million out of 3 million, so that means 1 million essentially are falling through the cracks. Of course, this is of great concern because where you start out in the learning curve usually signifies where you are going to end up. So we are serving only two-thirds of those children who are eligible.

Head Start is effective in social development, language proficiency, and some early learning skills and is very worthwhile. I think most people that know anything about Head Start certainly advocate the program and feel it is something that we really need to continue to reauthorize. But I think it is important also to realize that Head

Start children enter the program at the 21st percentile of school readiness. They leave the program at the 24th percentile of school readiness. So after 2 years, \$6,500-per-year education, they are improving roughly 3 percent. Certainly that can be improved. That is essentially one thing that will be addressed in this reauthorization.

Reauthorization does this: it certainly strengthens the present Head Start programs and increases funding by \$202 million to \$6.9 billion. So there is a funding increase. It improves teacher qualification requirements. It does not weaken the teacher qualification in any way. It keeps Head Start under Health and Human Services. There has been a misperception that it is being moved to another Department. That is not true. It preserves the current health and nutrition programs. It does not change them at all. And provides extra funding for underachieving programs. These are all things that have been similar in the past.

There are three significant changes that I think are worthy of note: number one, the reauthorization strengthens the academic components of curriculum and improves school readiness, so such things as vocabulary, early reading, learning letters, learning numbers will be ramped up; and we hope that instead of ending up at the 24th percentile of school readiness, they might end up at the 35th or the 40th or the 45th percentile. This definitely needs to be improved and it will be.

Secondly, this reauthorization provides an optional eight-State pilot program, so 42 States will remain the same and only eight States who choose to do so will enter into this pilot program. What this does, it provides a seamless program that coordinates State standards for early childhood education with Head Start so we do not have two programs on the same track existing side by side which is very expensive and furthermore causes a lot of children to fall through the cracks. We will serve more kids.

Then lastly, it encourages parental involvement to transition from Head Start to elementary school. One of the great things about Head Start right now is that parents are involved with children in Head Start. Traditionally and typically when kids go on to elementary school, the parents drop out of the picture. And so in the reauthorization, we are trying to make sure that parents stay involved with their children from Head Start on into elementary school, and this certainly is one of the things that can tremendously benefit children in this program.

We encourage our colleagues to vote "yes" on this reauthorization. This is an important program. I believe that the reauthorization strengthens the Head Start program. We urge a "yes" vote.

REGARDING THE U.S.-CHILE AND U.S.-SINGAPORE FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to urge my colleagues to oppose the U.S.-negotiated free trade agreements between our country, Chile. And Singapore. Both of these agreements in my opinion represent a substantial backwards step from existing trade policies in terms of labor and environmental protections and set, to me, a dangerous precedent for future free trade agreements, especially as we look to the future and what we are going to be doing with Central American countries.

Do not get me wrong. I am not opposed to trade. But I would like to see fair and equitable trade. Trade between countries can yield enormous benefits for businesses and economies and working families of all countries if it is done fairly. Two years ago, I voted on this floor to support the Jordan Free Trade Agreement, an agreement passed unanimously by this Congress. That agreement included fundamental labor and environmental standards that made it an exceptional model for future trade policy.

Unfortunately, the U.S.-Chile and U.S.-Singapore free trade agreements negotiated by this administration fail to include many of the provisions that were included in the Jordan agreement that could have been used as a model. In fact, the agreements' enforcement standards are, in many respects, weaker than those in NAFTA, an agreement that has resulted, as Members know, in the loss of thousands of jobs and a larger trade deficit. Rather than backtrack on trade policy, we should be building upon trade policy established in the Jordan Free Trade Agreement.

The Jordan Free Trade Agreement required that Jordan not only meet internationally recognized labor standards on child labor and the right to unionize but to enforce them as well. The agreements with Chile and Singapore fail to do this, allowing even the most rampant violations of core labor standards to go undisputed. The one commitment that can be enforced under the agreements, the commitment to abide by the country's own domestic labor laws, is merely subject to limited fines, a lot of good that is going to do, a much weaker penalty than the trade sanctions available for commercial disputes.

The agreements are also troubling because they create an entirely new visa category which would allow employers to bring thousands of temporary workers into the U.S. at the expense of American jobs. The result would be a vast influx of foreign professionals from many low-wage nations competing with American citizens for higher paying jobs. They would fill virtually any service sector job in indus-

tries such as finance, engineering, medicine, and law. Though the administration made improvements upon its original draft implementing legislation of these new visa programs, the implementing legislation for the new visa programs still falls short of existing H1-B programs. It omits important safeguards for ensuring that employers do not abuse temporary workers to undermine the domestic labor market.

Whether you support free trade or not, we can all agree that we should not be allowing for the entry of thousands of temporary workers at the expense of jobs that can be filled by American workers, especially in a time of unemployment when we are at a 9-year high. In my own district, I repeatedly let people know that our unemployment rate is above 7 to 10 percent in some of the cities that I represent.

I also urge my colleagues to oppose these agreements because they will not promote a cleaner and healthier global environment. While the Chile and Singapore free trade agreements include environmental provisions, so they say, the language used in many cases is ambiguous and provides little assurance that the environmental promises of the agreements will be fulfilled. The agreements fail, in my opinion, to include a process that would allow citizens of the countries involved to even file complaints about possible environmental violations. Such a process, as you know, is even included in the NAFTA agreements.

Further, I am concerned that the ambiguous definition of environmental laws in the Chile free trade agreement leaves open the strong possibility that natural resources representing over 40 percent of Chile's exports will not be covered by the agreement's environmental rules. At a time when the Bush administration is negotiating trade agreements with countries in regions with abysmal labor and environmental records, we should not be approving trade agreements that fail to ensure protections for workers.

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The administration has clearly stated that the Chile and Singapore free trade agreements will serve as a model for the Central American Free Trade Agreement known as CAFTA.

The weak workers' rights provisions in the Chile and Singapore agreements will be disastrous if applied to future trade agreements with countries and regions where abuse of workers' rights has been egregious. A vote for them would send a signal that the weak labor and environmental standards in them are not acceptable. Strong labor provisions must be included if workers are to become real partners in economic progress and help develop the expanded middle class.

This year brings the 10th anniversary of the NAFTA agreement. The result: Our combined trade deficit with Mexico and Canada has grown from \$9 billion to \$87 billion, and more than half