

we knew that you were going to work a certain number of years and then you were going to be able to have a life expectancy that would go on for a number of years, you might have dreams of traveling, of going to visit your grandchildren, of staying in your home and being able to maintain it, all of those dreams would depend on an entirely different savings and retirement system than the system that was designed in 1945. You certainly would not design Social Security today like they designed it back in 1945.

So to just steadfastly refuse to concede that opportunities are better for Americans, there is a new paradigm in retirement that exists, there are new opportunities, and there is a new way of deriving benefits that grow the economy, that do not overencumber the workers that are still in the workforce, we would do that in a minute.

It is disappointing that we have not been able to move further in this discussion than we have. But as we all know, it takes a lot of discussion.

I am eager to hear from my seniors. I know the gentleman is. Even though things will not change for them, I think it is important that we continue to invite our seniors to the table because seniors have always not only protected Social Security for their current benefits, but been very eager to make sure that it was going to be there for their children and grandchildren.

I thank them for their continued investment in time and interest for that.

Mr. KINGSTON. If the gentlewoman will yield, I again want to say that we often get bogged down in the politics of the moment, the politics of the next election, the politics of the current 5 years or whatever; and we should be thinking in terms of the next generation rather than the next election.

But the other thing that I keep coming back to is because there are two issues, a solvency issue and a generational fairness issue, what my job assignment, my homework assignment is, when I have a town meeting I say to everybody, what I really want to ask you, sit down at the kitchen table with the parents, with the grandkids and the grandparents, and figure it out. Just see if you can find that balance.

I had one guy in a town meeting say, This is all about greed. All you have to do is increase the taxes 1 percent. He was 70 years old. He would not be paying taxes. The guy behind him was 30 years old and said, Sir, respectfully, I have to tell you that is not acceptable for me, because I am going to be the one paying.

Similarly, a lot of people think the golden arrow here is taking the cap off it. But if you take the cap off it, people get more benefits.

One thing to keep in mind, anytime you make it more expensive to hire an employee, then our folks are going to be going offshore with the jobs. We are already losing too many jobs offshore. Furthermore, there will be a lot of illegal aliens in America not paying into

the system. I think part of Social Security should be tied into illegal immigration. It is actually not immigration if it is illegal; you are here as an illegal alien.

All of this stuff, we should get the best ideas of the Democrats and Republicans, throw them on the table, get the folks back home to say this is the direction we want, and that is what we are trying to accomplish here.

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for joining me tonight. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is a leader in our conference and a leader on Social Security, and, of course, has long been appreciated for the ability to take very complicated issues and talk about them in ways that we all understand, and we can share and benefit from his insights.

I want to end tonight by saying that we are all more concerned about the next generation than the next election, and how much we appreciate our President, who from the day the last election was over did not forget that through that campaign he talked about the importance of taking on this tough issue, and did it so well and has been out talking to the American people. It is very refreshing to see somebody take on such a tough challenge and talk to the American people about it.

VOTE “NO” ON THE CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this evening I am joined by fellow House Members, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN), a freshman, and other House Members who will join us shortly as we talk a little bit about the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Some call it the Central American Free Labor Agreement, as we will soon see.

As you can see by this calendar, we are barely 2 weeks away from the deadline set by the House majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the most powerful Republican in the House of Representatives, for a vote. They plan a vote in this Chamber on the Central American Free Trade Agreement. This deadline coincides with the 1-year anniversary of when President Bush signed the agreement.

That does not seem like news, except for this: every trade agreement signed by the Bush administration in his 4½ years in office, every single trade agreement signed by the Bush administration has been voted on within 60 days of its signing. The President signs the agreement with Australia, with Singapore, with Chile, with Morocco; and this Congress votes on it right

away, in large part because there is not huge opposition to the trade agreements.

This time, we are now at 347 days since Congress, since the President signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement. That is how long CAFTA has languished in Congress without a vote. Why? Because Democrats and Republicans alike, people on this side of the aisle, people on that side of the aisle, understand that the Central American Free Trade Agreement is dead on arrival in the House of Representatives.

Last month, two dozen Democrats and Republicans in Congress joined more than 150 business groups and labor organizations echoing a united message: vote “no” on the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Yesterday, just outside this building across the street, more than 400 union workers and Members of Congress again gathered in front of the U.S. Capitol to deliver a united message; vote “no” on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

So Republican leaders in this House and the Bush administration understood they had a problem. On this day it will be 12 months, 1 year, since the President sent CAFTA to Congress. There is not the support in this country or this Congress for this trade agreement because people understand what it does to our Nation, what it does to our workers, what it does to our food safety, what it does to the environment.

So what did the Republican leaders and President Bush do? They brought the six presidents of these five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, they brought these six presidents to the United States. In fact, the six presidents are touring our Nation on a United States Chamber of Commerce junket going around the country trying to convince the American people, the press, and the American Congress to vote for the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

They traveled to Miami. They went to Los Angeles, they went to Albuquerque, they came to my State of Ohio attempting to convince Americans this is a good idea.

The Bush administration has not been able to sell it. Business in this country has not been able to sell it. The free trade ideologues in this Congress who need your vote for every trade agreement, they have not been able to sell it.

So what is next? They bring the six presidents from Central America to come in. Unfortunately, these presidents are not telling the whole story. Like our own President, they tried to convince us that CAFTA will lift up low-income workers and that CAFTA will create jobs here at home.

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First of all, there is no truth to that. We have heard that on every trade agreement. But what they do not say

about CAFTA, what they have not said is that the combined purchasing power of the CAFTA nations, the combined purchasing power is equal to that of Columbus, Ohio, or equal to that of Orlando, Florida, or equal to that of Memphis, Tennessee. They do not discuss the fact that people in Central America, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, these six countries, they do not discuss the fact that they are not making enough money to buy cars made in Ohio; they are not making enough money to buy software made in Washington State or steel made in Pennsylvania, or textiles or apparel made in North Carolina or South Carolina or Georgia, or planes made in Washington State. Why? Because look at the average wage in these countries.

The average wage in the United States is \$38,000. People who are making \$38,000, the average wage, can usually own a car, oftentimes own a small home, at least rent an apartment, sometimes own a home. People making \$38,000 a year are buying shoes. They are paying into Medicare. They are buying clothes. They are consumers. They are buying products. But look at the rest of the countries in the Central American Free Trade Agreement: Costa Rica, \$9,000; Dominican Republic, average salary \$6,000 a year; El Salvador, \$4,800; Guatemala, \$4,100; Honduras, \$2,600; Nicaragua \$2,300. They are not going to buy cars made in Ohio. They are not going to buy steel made in West Virginia. They are not going to buy software from Seattle. They are not going to buy textiles from North Carolina. What is this all about?

What this is about is for U.S. companies to offsource, outsource offshore, send offshore jobs to these low-income countries. They will set up factories in Nicaragua, so they will pay Nicaraguan pennies on the dollar to manufacture products to sell back into the United States. It will not raise their standard of living in Nicaragua; it will certainly hurt our standard of living in this country.

But let me for a moment share again, when these six presidents toured the United States, what they said and what they did not say. What they did not say, with all due respect to these Central American leaders, they did not tell us that NAFTA—CAFTA does nothing to ensure enforcement of labor provisions in their own country. They have not told reporters or the Congress or the public that more than 8,000 Guatemalan workers protested against CAFTA last month; two of them were killed by the police in Guatemala. They did not mention that tens of thousands of El Salvadorans who protested the Central American Free Trade Agreement a year-and-a-half ago. They do not mention the 18,000 letters sent last year by Honduran workers to the Honduran Congress protesting, decrying this dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA. They did not tell us about the 10,000 people who protested

CAFTA in Nicaragua in 2003. They did not tell us about the 30,000 CAFTA protestors in Costa Rica just this past fall. Hundreds of thousands of workers in these six countries have protested in 50 demonstrations in the last 3 years saying that CAFTA is not good for those countries.

Before yielding to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), I want to sort of finish this story of the six presidents. The six presidents last night assembled in Washington in the midst of their travels around the United States to sell the American people on a bad trade agreement between us and them. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted a reception for these visiting dignitaries rewarding them for their lobbying efforts. You can walk around the Capitol today and the last couple of days and you would see these presidents going from office to office to office trying to convince American Members of Congress that they should pass this trade agreement. But they were rewarded for their efforts at a very lavish reception at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce last night.

You can see these presidents raise their glasses, toasting these U.S., these large corporations in the country, thanking them for this tour; you can see these corporate CEOs raising their glasses, toasting these presidents of the six countries, thanking them for fighting for this trade agreement which will, more than anything, help these large businesses. I wondered if these CEOs and I wondered if these six presidents reflected on what happens to small businesses in Ohio and Michigan, those that do not want another failed trade agreement. I wondered if they thought about the family farms in North Carolina and Louisiana holding on for dear life. I wondered if they thought about those workers in Nicaragua and Costa Rica and Guatemala and El Salvador and Honduras and the Dominican Republic. I wondered if they thought about that when they were toasting, the CEOs were toasting the six presidents and the six presidents were toasting the CEOs. My guess is they did not.

Tonight, we are here in this Special Order to talk about CAFTA facts and the fact that CAFTA is dead on arrival and the fact, as I mentioned earlier, that we are now down to 16 days. It will be 1 year, and this deadline is approaching, 16 days until CAFTA is absolutely buried.

I yield to my friend from my neighboring district in Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I want to say that the people of Ohio are proud of the gentleman and the work that he has done in challenging these unfair trade agreements. For me to have a chance to join the gentleman in this important challenge to CAFTA is a privilege, and I again want to commend the gentleman for the service that he has given to the people.

I want to focus for a moment on one particular impact of CAFTA, and that

is the impact on the availability of generic drugs, something that is another issue that the gentleman has worked on.

While the Bush administration says that they understand the need for lower-cost medicines in developing countries, their actions demonstrate greater concern for protecting the extremely high profitability of leading pharmaceutical companies. In the trade talks that resulted in the Central American Free Trade Agreement, CAFTA, our government pressed for tighter restrictions on generic drugs in the Central American countries. The result will be higher prices for medicines and higher profits for the pharmaceutical industry paid for by some of the poorest people on earth.

CAFTA has been one of the Bush administration's highest priorities in international trade. As we know, it extends the NAFTA agreement to all of the Central American countries that happen to be small and poor. The CAFTA countries include Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic. It was formally signed by the administration, and it awaits congressional votes, which is why we are here to appeal to the Members of Congress to think long and hard before they would even consider supporting CAFTA.

The Central American countries that would be affected by CAFTA have significant health problems. AIDS, for instance, is more prevalent in the CAFTA countries taken as a whole than in the United States. According to Dr. Manuel Munoz, the director of Medecins Sans Frontiere's AIDS treatment program in Honduras, "HIV/AIDS kills one person in Honduras every 2 hours, because the vast majority of people with HIV/AIDS cannot afford lifesaving AIDS medicines." Malaria and tuberculosis are also prevalent. As a result, the people of these countries need greater access to essential medicines. Yet, CAFTA will make access more difficult for most residents and impossible for too many of them.

CAFTA accomplishes this by imposing new restrictions on the use of pharmaceutical regulatory data that will have the effect of limiting the availability of generic drugs.

Pharmaceutical regulatory data is the result of studies of patent medicine's efficacy and safety. These studies are performed by the companies seeking approval and are often expensive to undertake. The data are submitted to the drug regulatory agency in the company's application for approval.

When a company seeks to manufacture a generic version of a patent medicine, it must typically show that its product is the chemical equivalent of the patent medicine and that it works in the body in the same way. The generic producer relies upon the drug regulatory agency's prior approval of the patent medicine to make its case of approval of the generic version.

What CAFTA does is it gives extra patent protections to the drug regulatory data, thereby excluding any other user from relying upon them. In other words, not only might a particular medicine be protected by a patent, but, additionally, the drug regulatory data for that medicine is protected by a patent. Even if the medicine's patent expires, generic manufacture could be restricted due to the additional patent on the use of regulatory data. According to Robert Weissman, an attorney specializing in international trade and pharmaceuticals, "if the generics cannot rely on approvals granted based on the brand-name data, in most cases, they simply will not enter the market. This is especially true in small size markets, as in Central America, where prospective revenues are limited."

Now, CAFTA was formally signed on May 28, 2004. It will only become law if Congress passes it. In 2002, the pharmaceutical industry gave over \$29 million in political contributions; three-quarters of that was donated to the Republicans.

Recently, I am sure the gentleman is aware, the pharmaceutical companies have been expatriating their profits to avoid paying income taxes here in the United States. They really do not want to pay income taxes there, but they want to control the political process here and, by reference, in Central America with the help of these trade agreements. I am glad to join the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) in urging the Members of Congress to oppose CAFTA. Not only is it bad for workers, not only is it bad for human rights, not only is it bad for the environment, but it is bad for people's health.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio. Think about what he just said. This agreement has made it even harder for the poorest people in this hemisphere; again, look at the income here. The United States average income, \$38,000. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) mentioned Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras especially; their income is less than 10 percent of ours, literally, and they are forcing, because U.S. drug companies have convinced the United States Trade Representative's Office, appointed by the Bush administration, convinced them to squeeze the poorest people in the world even harder on paying for prescription drugs. I mean, it is just, when we talk about values, when we talk about morality, to do that to the poorest of the poor that need HIV drugs, that need malaria drugs, that need tuberculosis drugs, that need antibiotics, and they are going to end up paying more money because, in fact, the United States Trade Representative said to the government of one country, If you do not change your laws, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) talked about this and has talked about it before, if you do not change your laws, we are not going to allow you into the Central America Free Trade Agreement.

It is not like the drug industry does not have way too much power with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and with Republican leadership and in the White House here in this country, where people are paying two and three and four times what they ought to be paying for prescription drugs; now we are seeing that drug industry exert its power, helped by the U.S. Government, in the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, when you carry this along to its conclusion, what we have is a condition where the people in the poorest countries cannot protect their health. So we are looking at their life expectancy beginning to decline, and one of the reasons is because they cannot afford the cost of the prescription drugs. And just as people here are held hostage by the pharmaceutical companies with the high cost of prescription drugs, imagine what it is like for these poor people in Central America, who are making a tenth, if that, of what we make in this country, and they are paying a high cost for prescription drugs because the pharmaceutical companies want these trade agreements which protect their patents and will not permit generics to get the help to people that need it the most.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Exactly right. I thank the gentleman.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN) has joined us. We are also joined by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), who has worked on trade agreements for years; and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), my colleague on the other side of the State bordering my district to the west, who has been involved in trade agreements probably longer and more aggressively and more assertively than I think any Member of this body; the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN), a freshman who has taken this issue and run with it. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, it is great to be with the gentleman from Ohio on behalf of the great people of the State of Missouri that I am fortunate to represent. I want to rise tonight to add my voice in opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

I have several concerns with the agreement in its current form, not the least of which are the effects it will have on American workers and the middle class. Trade agreements like CAFTA enable American companies employing American workers to send multiple aspects of their business overseas. This in turn allows these companies to exploit cheap labor in developing countries and import their products back into the United States. The resulting problem is really twofold.

First, there are no real protections for the workers in the Central American countries, and second, it is yet another means to put American workers out of work. CAFTA's answer to pro-

tecting low-wage workers in Central America is a self-enforcement provision.

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This really is translated into a non-enforcement provision because it will not help these workers in any way. The countries involved in this agreement do not have the necessary legal framework in place to protect the basic and fundamental rights of working people. If we are going to enter into trade agreements with other countries, it is our responsibility to ensure we protect the basic rights of working people in those countries and here at home.

Mr. Speaker, the other glaring deficiency with CAFTA is it will essentially fire American workers. Approving this agreement will be a guarantee that more jobs will leave our country at the expense of our U.S. workforce. Because there are no labor protections in place in the Central American countries to ensure adequate wages, domestic companies can simply outsource their work to these countries at a low rate and leave our workers out.

I will not support any agreement that displaces American workers and does not support basic human rights. I want to urge my colleagues to oppose CAFTA in its current form.

I want to also mention the differences between these two markets, the U.S. market and the Central American market. The U.S. economy had a \$10.5 trillion GDP in 2002. It is about 170 times the size of the economies in the Central American nations. It does not take a trade expert to see the economic mismatch between the U.S. and CAFTA nations.

The viability of Central American nations as trading partners is an important part of the administration's CAFTA sales pitch. That is why U.S. trade representatives said Central America offers "expanded markets for American producers and new opportunities for U.S. workers and manufacturers."

But take a look at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Metro Economies report released in 2003. It confirms the administration's CAFTA numbers do not add up. The combined economic output of CAFTA signatories, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala is about equal to that of Orlando, Florida, as the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) mentioned earlier. This falls far short of what the projections are by the Bush administration.

These raw numbers are bad enough. Consider the fact that a typical Central American consumer earns only a small fraction of a typical American worker's wage, about \$191 a month. It is clear that CAFTA's true objective is not to increase U.S. exports. Central American consumers cannot afford to buy American-made goods today. And CAFTA's inadequate labor provisions ensure they will be unable to afford American-made goods tomorrow. This

agreement offers little or no economic opportunity for American workers and producers. The CAFTA model is really a recipe for disaster. Congress must devise a trade agreement to promote business development and jobs in the U.S.

CAFTA should help Central American workers earn enough to buy American-made products. It is time to rethink U.S. trade policy, to do what is right, not just for the big corporations, but what is right for workers, small business, communities, and the environment.

The President is on the wrong track. Congress must demand a smarter trade deal than the current CAFTA negotiation.

I thank the gentleman for leading this tonight, and it is good to be here with you and the other Members to speak out on this.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN), for his good work and his interest, both in protecting American jobs and his interest in fair play in Central America so workers there have their living standards raised rather than continue to stagnate, which is what these trade agreements have done.

We are also joined by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

I yield next to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) who, as I said, has been working on trade issues for her entire 23 years in this Congress.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, that is the way it has turned out to be, and I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for his great leadership and vision and taking this CAFTA fight to the American people. It is a great privilege also to join with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), our esteemed colleague from south and southeastern Ohio, who I know will be adding remarks and great insight as the evening proceeds; the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY); the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN); and we had the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) from the Cleveland area here a little bit earlier.

It is really amazing to me when you have a trade agreement like NAFTA, that is so absolutely a failure, that now there is a new trade scheme, and they have got a name that rhymes with NAFTA. I just, I cannot believe it. I cannot believe they are over there. They have got a cookie-cutter system, and they are not paying attention to results.

If we look at the recent history of our country, going back to the mid-1970s, when the first so-called free trade agreement was signed, every single year the United States has begun to develop trade deficits. That means we ship out more jobs abroad than we create jobs here at home. And we end up taking our income and paying somebody else to do the work that we used to do, and we accumulate these grow-

ing trade deficits. And they get worse with every decade.

When NAFTA passed in the early 1990s, we actually had a trade surplus with Mexico, which immediately turned into a trade deficit; and with Canada we have doubled the deficit that we already had. When we signed the agreement with China, which those of us who were here voted against, we did not get any more jobs. We did not get any more income. All we got was more trade deficit. It is so deep America has never been in this kind of deep water before. In fact, this year the trade deficit will accumulate at over half a trillion dollars. America has never faced this kind of loss. So it is amazing to me that they name an agreement to rhyme with one of the biggest failures.

And here are some charts, I think, that tell a fuller story about what has happened with the NAFTA agreement. When NAFTA was signed in 1994, we had accumulated trade deficits with Canada; but then every succeeding year, they got deeper and deeper and deeper. So, with Canada, we have not really benefited.

And with Mexico, the surplus we had turned into a gigantic and growing deficit. And now what is happening with Mexico, of course, some of those jobs are being shifted to Latin America and to China. So NAFTA has been a negative.

And what has been going on in terms of the United States, just take the auto industry which is the primary category of deficit with Mexico. We were already getting imports from Mexico prior to NAFTA's signing. Now it is just an avalanche coming the other way. And what we predicted has come true. Mexico has turned into an export platform to the United States. And what we are doing is actually creating a world system where people work for poverty wages or starvation wages. We have high-productivity poverty rather than high-productivity prosperity.

And, finally, if one looks at the China agreement which has a relationship here because this is the same cookie-cutter approach that they are giving us with China, the deficits were growing, but then when permanent normal trade relations, if you can call an abnormal trade deficit normal, I have never understood the words they use. We are just hemorrhaging with China. And just one company alone, Wal-Mart, takes 10 percent of the exports that China sends around the world.

So my basic point here this evening is, why should we have more of the same? Why should we believe them when they say it is going to be all right?

And, indeed, I would like to place in the RECORD an article that was in the New York Times this week where the President of Costa Rica actually said he wants to postpone legislative review on this so-called CAFTA, which is an expansion of NAFTA, until an inde-

pendent committee finds that it will not harm the poor. Well, it surely will harm the poor. And that is why, in nations like Mexico, we have historic demonstrations in Mexico City for example, of farmers, of peasants, of people just demonstrating and saying we cannot take it anymore; particularly in the countryside, the people are saying we cannot take it anymore.

So I want to thank my colleague for bringing this issue to light. I think we have to be careful of the administration and their efforts to try to come in here and try to buy votes and say, what kinds of transportation project do you like? Oh, how much do you want? Do you need a bridge? Which way do you want it to go, east west, up, down, you know, below the ocean floor? I mean, we will do it for you. What else do you need? Do you need a base? We are moving a few bases around. That is what happened during NAFTA at the very end. The American people would have won that debate, but it was bought. It was bought and sold. And now look at the negative yield that it has produced for the American people.

So I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for highlighting this this evening. And it has been a pleasure to join my colleagues tonight.

[From the New York Times, May 10, 2005]

FREE TRADE PACT FACES TROUBLE IN CONGRESS

(By Elizabeth Becker)

WASHINGTON.—Social Security is not the administration's only economic initiative that is in trouble in Congress.

The current centerpiece of President Bush's trade agenda, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, is facing unusually united Democratic opposition as well as serious problems in overcoming well-entrenched special interest groups like sugar producers and much of the textile industry.

With record trade deficits, concerns about lost jobs and an overarching fear that the United States is losing out in the accelerated pace of global changes, the sentiment in Congress is shifting away from approving new free trade agreements.

"I don't like Cafta; I am not going to vote for it; and I will do whatever I can to kill it," said Senator HARRY REID of Nevada, the minority leader. "We are approaching a trillion-dollar trade deficit. We can't survive as a viable, strong country doing that."

Even more troubling to the administration, which says free trade agreements are critical components of any effort to enhance American global competitiveness, is the stance of Republicans like Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS of Georgia, who wants to hold off on new bilateral trade agreements.

In a speech on the Senate floor and in a later opinion-page article in the newspaper The Hill, Senator CHAMBLISS said that even though his state is home to global companies like Coca-Cola, United Parcel Service and Georgia Pacific, he could no longer support bilateral trade agreements without being assured that "American industries and workers are truly benefiting from these agreements."

The trade deal, which was signed one year ago, involves a handful of tiny countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. But its prospects for moving forward have been soured by larger questions about China's enormous economic power and whether it is playing by the rules

of trade in protecting intellectual property rights, valuing its currency and calibrating the tide of its textile exports. Also playing into the situation are unmet expectations from the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The administration accuses the Democrats and other opponents of putting too much on the back of this trade deal, which would reduce tariffs for many American goods and, the White House says, improve the chances for democracy and free market economics in Latin America.

"Cafta can't be held captive to China or any other trade problem," said Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, who has been crisscrossing the country trying to sell the agreement since he took office in January.

The administration admits that even in this off-election year, when trade deals have the best chance of passage, it does not have the votes to pass this one.

With little sign of progress, both sides notched up the battle last week. President Bush announced that he would play host this week at a high-profile White House meeting. Since his first term, the Bush administration has promoted free trade agreements with Central America and throughout the Western Hemisphere as important components of its foreign policy.

"For too many decades," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a speech before the Council of the Americas, "U.S. policy toward Central America and the Dominican Republic has oscillated from engagement to disregard. With Cafta, with the permanent engagement that free trade brings, we can break this trend once and for all and we can demonstrate that the United States is committed to the success of all Latin American countries that embrace the challenge of democracy."

On the other side, centrist Democrats who normally vote for every new trade deal said they opposed Cafta. They said the administration had yet to outline a clear policy aimed at narrowing the \$617 billion trade deficit. And they challenged the White House to write trade deals that reflected what they saw as the pressing challenges of globalization in the 21st century.

The administration characterizes most of these complaints as protectionism and hopes that Rob Portman, the new United States trade representative and a popular former member of Congress, will be able to smooth the debate and win votes to its side.

But Representative Benjamin L. Cardin of Maryland, the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Trade of the House Ways and Means Committee, said in an interview that Cafta was too small a treaty to warrant such attention.

"Cafta will have a minor impact on our economy; we should be spending time on the big issues like China, agricultural subsidies," Mr. Cardin said. "If I were the administration, I would not like my trade agenda to be judged on Cafta."

Despite its small weight, many interest groups are deeply divided over Cafta. The Latino groups and politicians who oppose Cafta say that Nafta, the decade-old agreement with Mexico and Canada, failed to fulfill its promise.

Representative Hilda Solis, Democrat of California, who describes herself as the only member of Congress of Central American descent, said she opposed Cafta because of Nafta's record, which she said included 750,000 jobs lost in the United States and little progress in improving workers' rights in Mexico.

By contrast, Mr. Gutierrez, the commerce secretary, said Nafta was a strong selling point for Cafta.

"I've been associated with Mexico for almost four decades and Mexico is better than

it has ever been," said Mr. Gutierrez, who started his career in that country after fleeing Cuba as a child. "It now has its lowest inflation rate, and its growth last year was 4.5 percent."

But questions about labor rights and lost jobs are staying at the forefront of the trade debate, not retreating. American labor unions say the accord demands better enforcement of existing labor laws in Central America without imposing real sanctions. The administration defends the labor provisions as groundbreaking.

Even the countries within Cafta have some noticeable divisions. The ambassadors to the United States from Cafta countries are traveling around the nation to try to persuade members of Congress to vote for the accord.

But Beatrice de Carrillo, El Salvador's human rights ombudswoman, said in an interview here that she opposed Cafta because it was not strong enough to stop the destruction of unions. And Costa Rica's president, Abel Pacheco, has said he wants to postpone legislative review until an independent committee finds that it will not harm the poor.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I thank my friend from Toledo, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR). And the gentlewoman is exactly right. I have a chart just with the Mexico trade deficit. The gentlewoman talked about Canada, the U.S., all of this. And you can see, we went from a trade surplus when NAFTA was signed to this, over \$40 billion.

And I look at the year that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) and I were elected to Congress in 1992. The United States, and I do not want to bore people with numbers, but in 1992, the year we first ran, the United States had a \$38 billion trade deficit with the world. That meant we bought \$38 billion more than we exported. Last year we had a trade deficit of \$620 billion.

Every trade agreement, as the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) says, they promise the same thing. They say more growth in the United States, more jobs, more manufacturing, more exports to the United States if you pass this trade agreement. Every time Congress passes one, it gets worse. The trade deficit keeps growing. The job loss keeps increasing.

The definition of insanity is when you do the same thing over and over and over again and you expect a different outcome. They are asking us to do the same thing. So we can see these same numbers come with Central America by increasing, increasing, increasing, increasing deficits every year.

I would yield to my friend, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY). I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership, especially on trade issues and jobs issues and health issues.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), one of our best experts on trade. And in fact, the gentleman actually wrote the book, or at least a book on trade called "Myths of Free Trade," a book I am happy to have and learn a lot from. And I am pleased to join all my col-

leagues. It is interesting that, so far anyway, those of us who are here tonight are from the Midwest where we have seen so many of our manufacturing jobs lost since the passage of NAFTA over 10 years ago.

But, you know, I think as a people, as a Congress, certainly, we have to say why do we want free trade agreements? What is the purpose of trade agreements?

I think all of us here think that we know that there now is a global marketplace, that the goal of economic integration, when done in the right way, is not only inevitable but can actually be desirable. The question is who benefits from it? What are, who are the winners and who are the losers? And what is CAFTA for?

And, unfortunately, what we find is that the ordinary people of this country, and the ordinary people of the Central American countries now, the Dominican Republic and the Central American countries that are supposed to be part of CAFTA, it is the ordinary people, the everyday citizens, the hard-working people that are the losers, and the only ones who are the winners are corporations that really have no particular loyalty. They can pick up their capital, they can move their plants, as they did from Illinois. We lost about 100,000 jobs because of NAFTA. We saw a plant, a profitable plant, a Maytag plant, a nice manufacturing plant in Galesburg, Illinois, pick up and take with it over a thousand jobs. This was a plant that was actually making money. Why did it move? Because it could actually make more money by exploiting workers when they moved to Mexico.

In a trip that was in part organized by my colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), I had the privilege of going to Ciudad Juarez last year, a town that is really in the metropolitan area of El Paso, Texas, separated by the Rio Grande River. And on one side of the river you have got workers who are looking for good jobs to support their families; and on the other side of the river, we see people who are working in the plants for American companies. And what we saw were workers who were actually, some of them, actually living in the packing crates of the products that they were manufacturing for the companies, the American companies that took those good-paying jobs and went to Mexico.

□ 2030

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being there with the gentlewoman, and I think we both really felt deeply in our hearts the pain as we talked with workers.

I remember one woman that we talked with who had children, and she told us she worked 9.5 hours a day, 5 days a week. She had 30 minutes during the day as a break, and her total take-home pay was \$38 a week. And I just will never forget that woman and the fact that we have a government that

has participated in that kind of what I would consider immoral situation where a working mother would work that hard and be compensated at that level. It is just pathetic.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. As the gentleman remembers, that woman had children who she could not afford to send to school. It costs money to send them to school, a modest amount of money by our standards but out of reach for her because she does not make the kind of income that even would allow her children to go to school or have adequate health care.

Is that the point of a free trade agreement?

The United States should and could lead the world by example through a trade policy that improves the lives of individuals and not just adds to the profits of the major corporations. We could and should benefit workers here in the United States and create and sustain jobs that help small- and middle-sized and family-owned businesses grow. And D.R. CAFTA, Dominican Republic CAFTA, is not going to accomplish those goals for us here, for our small companies, for our workers and is simply going to increase this race to the bottom so that, how cheap can we get labor?

I wanted to make a point about, are we really looking for markets in these Central American countries? Do we really believe that we are going to find people who are going to be buying our products? The combined purchasing power of the Central American nations in CAFTA is the same as Columbus, Ohio, or New Haven, Connecticut. The average salary of a Nicaraguan worker is \$2,300 a year, \$191 a month. Are they going to buy that car that is made in Ohio or in Michigan?

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, very briefly, we had visitors from two nations, El Salvador and Honduras in our community. Some of our church groups brought them in. These were young women workers in some of those textile plants down there. They held up t-shirts that they made for which they received 12 cents, and then we took them to stores in our community. They found the very same t-shirts on the rack, and they were priced at \$20. And I remember the expressions on their faces. They could not believe it. And yet those that are brokering in their poverty wages and exacting high prices here, \$20 for a t-shirt, are making enormous amounts of money off of this kind of bonded labor and control of our marketplace without proper government intervention.

So I also remember the gentlewoman from Chicago, Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) when we were down in Ciudad Juarez, I can remember the tear coming down her cheek when she saw that family living in those packing crates. I can remember that. When it pierces your heart, you never forget it.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to monopolize this conversation. I do feel so strongly that, as

the greatest country on the face of the Earth, the wealthiest country, the country that has the capacity to create jobs, to help people, to lift our own people and people around the world, to help lift them out of poverty, to set a standard that would at least work towards that goal. What a shame that we have before us a trade agreement that, as the gentlewoman said, my sister, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), just a repeat of NAFTA, and we know the devastating results both here in the United States and in Mexico and in Canada, that it did not do anything for us.

So I just am encouraged actually that we are seeing growing bipartisan opposition to this. Let us go back to the drawing board and come up with a real trade agreement that is going to achieve the goals that we want, that is going to be helpful to us and to our neighbors around the globe and certainly our closest neighbors here in Central America in the Dominican Republic.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, if I could interject here, the company that the gentlewoman mentioned from Illinois, Galesburg, Maytag. I actually own Maytags. What happened to the workers from the Galesburg plant? Were they transferred? Did they get other jobs? Were they just without work?

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, you can imagine a fairly mid-sized, kind of small-town community, when a major employer like that leaves town, it does not just impact that business or those workers. It resonates throughout the community in a very negative way, and it is really hard to recover from that.

I want to say, just bringing a Wal-Mart to a community like that so you can buy really cheap products, is that our future in this country? That we will be able to buy imported goods? Flags made in China? T-shirts that are made for 12 cents? And that is not our future if we are going to continue to be a great country. So it hurt Galesburg. It is hurting communities all over our country.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR). As we continue this conversation, when I listen to the gentlewomen talk about this, we all talked about the trade deficit, that it went from \$38 billion to \$620 billion, the trade deficit with Mexico going from a trade surplus to a trade deficit. Those are just numbers, and they make sense but they are just numbers.

When you hear the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) ask about those families in Galesburg, these are not numbers. These are families that lose their job in Lorraine, Ohio, or in Portsmouth, Ohio, or in Chicago or Toledo. They lose their jobs. What it does to their families, often they lose their pensions with some of these companies. The schools have significantly fewer

dollars to run. The police and fire departments are understaffed. All the kinds of things that are more likely, alcoholism, all that happens with the families in our country.

Then you talk about those families in, I have seen them in Mexico; I have seen them in Nicaragua; I have seen them several other places; these families that are working, often 8 to 10 hours a day, often 6 days a week making clothes for us.

I was with a family in Nicaragua. They get paid 23 cents for every pair of jeans they sew. The mother gets paid 23 cents for every jeans she sews that end up at Wal-Mart getting sold for between \$25 and \$30. I was at her home in Tipitapa, a little sprawling bedroom community as you would say in this country, but it is a series of shacks made out of packing materials from the plants they work for.

She was standing in this community home one day. I was talking to her, and she was holding her 3-year-old daughter who had hair down to about her shoulders, jet black hair, except that the bottom inch or two of her hair was sort of discolored. I asked somebody what that was about, and they said, probably this girl does not get enough protein because the parents cannot afford milk. The parents do not buy meat except for very special occasions because she is getting paid 23 cents for every pair of jeans.

So this trading system that these trade agreements bring us bring horrific poverty to the developing world where these people are working harder than maybe any of us, working 60 hours a week, not to mention how hard they have to work at home to do everything, getting to and from work on a bus that takes an hour and a half each way, and all the other things that happen to them.

Then you think of the pain it inflicts on our communities, our schools, our health care system, our police, our fire departments, the safety in our communities, on our families, on our self-respect. All of that.

We can talk numbers, and we can prove our case with these numbers, but all you have to do is look at people at both ends of the trade agreement and where they sit and how their lives go and what we are doing to them. And that is the story in so many ways.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding to me. It is terrific to have the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and my good friend and mentor, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) here.

I am glad this conversation is headed in the direction here this evening in which I think it is heading because we are moving away from the numbers. We are moving away from the charts, and we are starting to talk about the people. The people whose lives are affected by the decisions that are made by this administration and by those of us who serve in this body. And we hear a lot of

talk today, and I am glad we do, about the need for morality in our government.

I think it is immoral for our government to support policies which benefit the richest people on the face of this Earth, many of them Americans, many of them from other countries that own or operate, manage those large multinational companies. I think there is a moral dimension here.

The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) mentioned some church people who were engaged and involved in this. I think the churches in the United States of America should be concerned about CAFTA. I think they should be concerned about NAFTA. They should be concerned about human exploitation.

Now, many of us in this Chamber belong to different faiths. I happen to be a part of the Christian faith. And Jesus Christ said, As oft as ye have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.

I think we have an obligation, those of us who do embrace faith, to let that faith express itself in the policies that we endorse as individual Members of Congress and also have that impact, the policies that are pursued by this country.

I think it is immoral, quite frankly, for us to enter into an agreement that results in the exploitation of poor Mexicans or poor people from Costa Rica or elsewhere. I think it is immoral for a working mother to be paid 12 cents for a garment that is ultimately sold for \$20 or \$25. And I ask myself, who is benefiting from such a policy? There is money involved. Someone is getting very rich. And yet it is a form of human exploitation.

So I wish our President and I wish leaders in this House would understand that there is a moral dimension to United States trade policies.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell the gentleman that I was visited by a group of religious leaders from CAFTA countries who said exactly what the gentleman said. They said, we know that in many cases our governments are supporting this policy, but we represent the interests of the people in our countries, our parishioners, the people who come to us every Sunday and during the week. And we know they are really suffering, and we know that this trade agreement is just going to be license to further exploit those people and their poverty, not lift them out of the poverty.

And they were asking Members of Congress like myself to consider the people; and that is, the gentleman is right, we have to think about the faces. We have to think about the mothers and the fathers and the little children that suffer because of that and in our country, too, when those jobs are lost in our community.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, well, I represent a part of the Appalachians region of Ohio. Every time I go home and I think my colleagues here

have similar experiences. I talk to people who have lost their jobs. They have in many cases lost their health insurance. They have families. They may be 55, 57, 59 years of age. They have chronic health conditions.

What is happening to us as a country that we would be willing to just tolerate such conditions? It troubles me. It really troubles me. And I do believe, as I said to a reporter yesterday, he said, Congressman, tell me what is wrong with these trade agreements that you seem to be so against? And I said, They leave out the human dimension. They leave out concern for people.

Now, quite frankly, I do not believe Americans are willing to give up our middle class, to lose our standard of living, to participate in the exploitation of poor people around this world simply to get a pair of blue jeans at Wal-Mart for a couple of dollars cheaper than they may be able to get them than if they were made right here in the good old U.S. of A.

I believe the American people have different values than that. I think it is our leaders who need to question their values. I think it is the people who are benefiting, richly benefiting from these agreements, that ought to be called into question and their motives ought to be questioned.

And there is, I think, one word that pretty much summarizes what is the driving force behind NAFTA, behind the WTO, behind permanent trade relations with China and now this so-called CAFTA agreement. And it is greed. It is greed.

□ 2045

How are we going to increase our own wealth or the wealth of our investors? If that is going to result in poor Mexicans or poor Americans being exploited, then I think our government has an obligation to stand up and speak out, change course. We are on the wrong course. I would say if I could talk with him, Mr. President, we are on the wrong course. We are on the wrong track. We need to reverse. We need to go back. We need to reevaluate the results of NAFTA.

As the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) had said earlier, why in the world, given the results of NAFTA, would we pursue CAFTA? It is almost irrational.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as I hear you talk and I think about what has happened with workers around the world, one of the great things about our economy, one of the great things about our country is if you work somewhere, if you work for General Motors or if you work for the local hardware store, if you are a teacher or if you are a nurse, you create value. You create either a profit for your company, wealth for your company. You create value if you are not working for a for-profit company.

Under our system, in part because of labor unions, in part because we have a

democratic system, and in part because of our history and our traditions, you share in the wealth you create.

The lesson of these trade agreements you can go anywhere that we have these trade agreements. You can go to Mexico, Nicaragua and China, and you will notice that workers do not share in the wealth they create.

I heard the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) talk about this years ago. The best example was you go to a General Motors plant in Mexico, and it looks just like a General Motors plant in Ohio except it is often newer. The technology is up to date. It is modern. The floors are clean. The workers are working hard. The difference between a Mexican auto plant and the American auto plant, the Mexican auto plant does not have a parking lot because the workers cannot afford to buy the cars they make.

You can go halfway around the world to Malaysia and go to a Motorola plant, and the workers cannot afford to buy the cell phones that they make. You can go back to this hemisphere, to Costa Rica, and go to a Disney plant. The workers cannot afford to buy the Disney toys for their children that they make. You can go back halfway around the world to China and go to a Nike plant, and the workers cannot afford to buy the shoes that they make.

That is what these trade agreements have failed to do. So when a Nike worker in Oregon loses her job and a Nike job in China is created, that means that Nike worker in Oregon is no longer paying into Medicare, no longer paying into Social Security, no longer able to buy Nike, no longer able to buy a car, no longer able to do whatever. So the world has one fewer consumer. The world really is poorer. Nike is a little bit richer, but the world overall is poorer.

In China there is no real wealth created because they are not able to buy anything other than subsistence living and the community in Oregon, in Medford or whatever town, has less wealth.

My definition of successful trade is when the world's poorest workers can buy American products rather than just make products for Americans. Then we will know that our trade policies finally are working.

Once this deadline has expired, the President normally takes 2 months to pass a trade agreement. This one has taken 11.5 months. Republican leadership, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the most powerful Republican in the House, has said that we will vote on it by May 27. That will be roughly 1 year.

We need to go back, as the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) said, and start again. I want a great trade agreement with Central America because I think we can write one that will lift their workers up so they will want to buy our products as we buy their products. We can do that. We need to start again.

So once the CAFTA countdown, we are at 16 days, something like that

now, once that is past the end of this month, let us just go back to the drawing board and write a CAFTA that, number one, we can be proud of; number two, that will lift up workers in those countries and will help invigorate the middle class in this country. It is very possible to do that. It is just we do not have the will to do it.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, if I could, it is bad enough I suppose that usually these workers are paid such low wages, but should those workers try to organize themselves into a union to try and stand up for better working conditions and better wages, we know that in those countries that human rights violations for people who want to form a union are rampant; and the problem with CAFTA is that it really does virtually nothing to protect those workers who want to organize.

We hear in CAFTA, ostensibly it requires enforcement of the local labor laws, both that may exist in the country. Of course, those could change, but even then the penalties are very, very weak. Violations of core labor standards cannot be taken to dispute resolution, and the commitment to enforce domestic labor laws is subject to remedies weaker than those available for commercial dispute.

So every time we put the rights of capital, the rights of intellectual property, the rights of the corporations up here and the rights of workers even to stand up for themselves to try and collectively bargain for better conditions or wages, and it is often at peril of their lives that they do that, not just job loss, but we find in many of those countries that it is very dangerous to be a labor organizer. You can find those people dead.

The other thing is we spend a lot of time around here talking about illegal immigration; and, again, if you think about it in human terms, people do not generally want to leave their homeland. They would prefer to stay there, the place where they are born, where their families live, where their ancestors are, where they have roots. Why do they leave those countries to come to the United States, to risk crossing that river, risk crossing that border? It is because they cannot make a living. They cannot provide any kind of a decent life for their family, and they are willing to do anything to do that and so they come here.

If we want to be able to protect our borders and to have good trade policies, then we have to look at things that will help to lift those workers in other countries so that they can prosper in their homelands.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I want to follow on that point because if one looks just at NAFTA and Mexico, and the inability when we were debating that to include provisions for those that were going to be displaced from their farms in Mexico, what is propelling U.S. immigration is NAFTA because every year now we have over 450,000 individ-

uals from Mexico coming over our border, the vast majority illegal.

You say, well, why would they do that? Because they are in desperate circumstances. Desperation propels them, just as the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) says. Imagine being willing to die going across the desert in Arizona to get here, a place you do not even know, and what is at the root of it?

The root of it is that their land is no longer productive. The big corporate interests down there buy imported corn, and these people were given no way of transitioning. They had a heartless government, and I think because they did, we might see the first massive historic change in Mexico's elections next year. I hope so, and I want to say to the gentleman from Portsmith, Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), when he talked about the churches and the synagogues and the temples and the mosques, they are doing some of the most important work in these trade agreements. They are trying to reach out to people, just like you said, and whether it is fair trade coffee or whether it is quilts or whatever they are buying, they are trying to bring it in and pay people a decent price for whatever that product is and to cut out these middle extortionists, I call them, people in the middle that are trading on that squalor and that exploitation.

Also to say that one of the greatest religious leaders I ever met said ultimately God's judgment would demand not just individual morality for us as persons, but in a rich and powerful Nation like America, justice of us as a Nation. So we are judged not just as persons within our own family, but the kind of society and country we create. We will be judged on many levels; and I think these trade agreements are, as you said, immoral because those who are the least among us are hurt the most.

I think of Norma McFadden from Dixon Ticonderoga in Sandusky, Ohio, who worked there her whole life and was about my age and then was told you get a pink slip, even though the company was profitable, and moved to Mexico. What happened to Norma? What happened to Norma was she could not afford health benefits because under the Federal program, COBRA, it costs about \$800 a month. Well, she lost her job. She could not afford the \$800 for COBRA. So at 55, 58 years of age, she went back to school to become a phlebotomist to learn how to take blood, and she had to drive to work in her old ramshackle car to try to go to school and ultimately tried to get a job at a hospital as a receptionist and just trying to tread water there in the years when really she should have some peace of mind because she has been a working woman her whole life, she has raised her family.

So, to me, these trade agreements are some of the most anti-life measures that I have ever seen. They hurt people all over our world, surely those in our

country who just do not have another leg to stand on; and I think God will judge America very harshly for what we have done because we are in the power position in negotiating these agreements.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CARNAHAN), and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) earlier. I appreciate that human spiritual component.

I would close in an optimistic tone. The gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) talked about what happens with labor unions and human rights in Central America and in South America and in Mexico. Just hold up for a model what happened in Central and Eastern Europe in the last 20 years. The thrust of their equal rights movement came out of the labor movement, and flowing out of that labor movement came a much better way of life, came freedom, better economic security, more wealth for workers, all that we should be striving for. That is why labor standards for these workers in these trade agreements is so important.

As the CAFTA countdown comes, we are down to the last 16 days, it is pretty clear NAFTA will be dead on arrival. It is time at the end of May when we come back in June to start with a new trade agreement that will lift workers up and make us both spiritually and intellectually and in every other way proud of what we do.

ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JINDAL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight with several of my colleagues to discuss an issue of great importance to our Nation, and I know that everyone that gets up here starts the same way, but this is a particularly important issue, one that the three of us wish to discuss as scientists, or those who have a great interest in science.

Tonight's topic is going to be energy. You have heard a lot about energy recently, worried about the gas prices, worried about the energy policy bill that we have worked on in the House and the Senate is now studying. Energy is extremely important, but what is most important to me when we are talking about energy or any other issue is to talk about the long-term effects because that is what the people hire us for. They elect us to come here and discuss and debate the future of this Nation, and it is very easy to forget that because we are always caught up in the instantaneous things we do, the stuff we have to get done today; but the people of this land, struggling