you, Governor Pataki, to show respect for law and order. You are an important role model in the lives of the youth of New York State. The spectre of public officials refusing to obey a court order baffles and discourages law-abiding citizens. We have been taught to believe that in America the courts have the power to render justice when all other avenues have closed. New York City students have been denied their fair share of funds for decades and now the courts have ordered that this injustice be corrected.

It's been 262 days since the CFE court deadline!

Governor Pataki, you have further deprived our kids by defying/appealing a court order to fairly fund our schools. The law clearly states the responsibility for giving a sound basic education to our children lies with New York State. As a public servant who has served for twenty-three years on the House of Representatives Education Committee, and prior to that, eight years on the Education Committee of the New York State Senate I want to stress the importance of this vital law and order moment in the history of New York State. After years of legislative deals, which resulted in great inequalities, the court has proclaimed justice. Along with other elected officials we urge you to OBEY THE LAW.

Please OBEY THE LAW. Set an example for our students, for our communities. Show them everyone must OBEY THE LAW.

Yours For Improved Education,

MAJOR R. OWENS,
Member of Congress.

CAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for a period not to exceed 60 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, nearly a year ago, President Bush signed the Central America Free Trade Agreement, a one-sided plan to benefit multinational corporations at the expense of American workers, U.S. workers, and Central American workers, businesses, small farmers, a whole bunch of us in all those countries, both in Central America and here.

Every trade agreement negotiated by the Bush administration, every trade agreement passed by this Congress since George Bush took office, Singapore, Chile, Morocco and Australia, every one of those trade agreements was voted upon in Congress within a couple of months of the time President Bush signed the agreement. CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, some call it the Central American Free Labor Agreement, and you will understand that in a moment, has languished in Congress for nearly 1 year without a vote because this wrong-headed trade agreement offends both Republicans and Democrats.

Just look at what has happened with our trade policy in the last decade. In 1992, the first year I was elected to Congress, we had a trade deficit in this country of only $38 billion. That was in 1992. Last year our trade deficit was $618 billion. It went from $38 billion, and a dozen years later $618 billion. It is hard to argue that our trade policy is working with that kind of gargantuan swelling budget deficit.

Opponents to the Central American Free Trade Agreement know in fact it is simply an extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which clearly did not work for our country. It is the same old story. Every time there is a trade agreement, the President says it will mean more jobs for our Nation. The President says it will mean more manufacturing in the United States. The President says it will mean better wages for workers in the developing world, and as their standard of living goes up they buy more things from the United States.

Yet, with every trade agreement, from NAFTA through China, through every other trade agreement, those promises from the President fall by the wayside in favor of big business interests that simply send U.S. jobs overseas and export cheap labor abroad. According to President Bush, Senior, every billion dollars in trade, surplus or deficit, translates into 12,000 jobs.

□ 2130

So if you have a $2 billion trade surplus, you have a net increase in your country of $2 billion, times 12,000 jobs. You have a 24,000 job surplus increase if you have a $2 billion trade surplus.

But instead, we had a $38 billion trade deficit 12 years ago. Today we have a $618 billion trade deficit. So according to the way that President Bush Sr. figured out what these trade agreements mean, that means a job loss of 7.3 million jobs to our Nation.

You can see pretty much what that meant because many of those jobs, a large number of those jobs, are manufacturing jobs. Look at the red. The red here means greater than 20 percent manufacturing job loss in our Nation in only the last 6-or-so years. You can look at almost all the Northeast, much of the Midwest, all the textile manufacturing from the South, steel and auto manufacturing here, and steel in these areas, textiles in these areas, in State after State after State. You see this kind of manufacturing job loss.

So we are going to do more of these trade agreements so we see more manufacturing job loss? That is what the Central American Free Trade Agreement is all about. In the face of growing bipartisan opposition, and make no mistake about it, the Central America free labor agreement, Central American Free Trade Agreement, call it what you want, that agreement is dead on arrival when it comes to this Congress because large numbers of Democrats and Republicans oppose this agreement.

That is why the President, unlike all of the other trade agreements which were voted on almost immediately upon the President's signature, that is why this trade agreement has been languishing for 1 year. For 11 months and 20-some days, it has not been voted on. But this year the administration is trying every trick in the book to pass the Central American Free Labor Agreement.

For instance, the administration is linking CAFTA to helping democracy in the developing world. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick, both said the Central American Free Trade Agreement will help in the war on terror. Figure that out.

Ten years of NAFTA, 10 years of the North American Free Trade Agreement, has done nothing to improve border security between the United States and Mexico. That argument simply does not sell. The North American Free Trade Agreement did nothing for border security. We saw this kind of job loss since NAFTA, this kind of trade deficit since NAFTA, from $38 billion 12 years ago to a $618 billion trade deficit last year.

So the President's people tried to argue, tried to link the passage of CAFTA to making the world safe against terrorism. That did not work, so now just last week the United States Chamber of Commerce flew on a junket the six presidents from Central America and the Dominican Republic around our Nation hoping they might be able to sell the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Again they failed.

But they sent these six presidents to Cincinnati, to Los Angeles, to Albuquerque, back to Washington where they had a Chamber of Commerce reception at their very fancy headquarters, but that did not work because those six Central American presidents are not strong believers in CAFTA themselves.

The Costa Rican president, for instance, announced his country would not ratify CAFTA unless an independent commission determines that the agreement will not hurt the working poor of his country.

Understand what CAFTA is all about. The average income for an American is about $38,000. The average income for a Honduran or a Nicaraguan is less than one-tenth that. So think about that. A $38,000 average income for an American. And on that income many Americans can buy a washer and a dryer, and can begin to purchase a home, perhaps. Many Americans can buy a car and begin to put away in some cases a little money for a child for college or at least borrow some money and get them to college.

But on $2,000 or $3,000 an average wage in Honduras or Nicaragua, they are not going to buy cars made in Ohio and washing machines made in the U.S. or steel from West Virginia or software from Seattle. They are not going to be able to buy prime beef from Nebraska. They are not going to be able to buy textiles or apparel from Georgia. The fact is that this trade agreement is not about the U.S. selling products to Central America. It is about U.S. companies looking for cheap labor and outsourcing those jobs to Latin America. That is why we have this kind of

manufacturing job crisis. That is why we have this trade deficit that went from $38 billion 12 years ago to $618 billion today.

Get a look at these manufacturing job losses: 210,000 jobs lost in Michigan; 216,000 jobs lost in Ohio; 228,000 jobs lost, and these are just manufacturing jobs, not to mention what happens when a manufacturing job is lost. If a manufacturing job is lost in Lorain, Ohio, that means not just that man or woman loses a job. It means that family can no longer send their kids to college. It means that family can barely get along. They might lose their house. It means that town has lost a factory, which means higher school taxes; it means a layoff of police and fire. It means that education suffers. This kind of job loss, 200,000-plus in Ohio; 200,000-plus in Michigan; 200,000-plus in Illinois; 228,000-plus in North Carolina; 50,000 in Mississippi; 75,000 in Alabama; 100,000 in Georgia, that in most cases is about one in five manufacturing jobs in the State.

These numbers may not mean anything to Members of Congress; they are just numbers. But think about the families that lose these jobs. Think about the breadwinner coming home and saying to his wife, we lost this job, how do we clothe our kids? How do we pay for medical care, and what are we doing about the police and fire in our neighborhoods because this plant is shutting down? That is what this trade agreement is about. They are about workers in our country, and they are about workers in the developing world in Latin America.

About 5 years ago at my own expense, I flew to McAllen, Texas. I wanted to see the face of NAFTA. I knew all of the statistics about NAFTA. I knew the lost manufacturing jobs and what it did to my community in O'Leary, Ohio; but I wanted to see what it did in Mexico. So I rented a car in McAllen, Texas, and went across the border to Reynosa, Mexico, just to look at the face of free trade and what NAFTA had done along the U.S.-Mexican border.

I went to a home, and this was a shack maybe 30 feet by 20 feet, dirt floors, no electricity, no running water. This dirt floor turned to mud when it rained. The husband and wife both worked at General Electric Mexico 3 miles from the United States. If you walked back behind their home in this colonia, you would see other shacks that looked a lot like theirs. But as you walked through the neighborhood, as the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) knows, and he lives on a border State, you can tell where these workers work because their homes are constructed out of packing material, wooden crates and packing materials from the companies at which they worked, or from boxes to the suppliers for which they work.

I saw a ditch with two by fours running across it. Who knows what was running through the ditch, human waste, industrial waste. Children were playing in this ditch because children will play wherever children play. The American Medical Association said this area along the U.S.-Mexican border is the most toxic place in the western hemisphere, and yet these workers are working at General Electric Mexico 3 miles from the United States each making 90 cents an hour.

Nearby their home, I visited a General Motors plant. General Motors Mexico looks not much different from a General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio, or a Ford plant in Avon Lake, or a Chrysler plant in Twinsburg, Ohio. The workers are working hard, the plant is clean, the plant is modern. This plant in Mexico is more modern than many in the United States, but there is one difference between the plant in Mexico and the plant in the United States, and that is the plant in the Mexico does not have a parking lot because the workers cannot afford to buy the cars they make.

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

Mr. Speaker, that is what makes our country great is because of trade unions. Because of a free democracy in this country, Americans share in the wealth. If you work for General Motors, a local hardware store, if you are a teacher, a nurse, you are creating value and creating wealth for your employer. If you are a private sector employee, you are creating wealth for the company. You share some of that wealth. You get health benefits and a decent wage. You can buy a house and a car.

If you work in a service job, you are creating value for those people whom you serve, and you get some wealth. You share in some of the wealth of the value that you create. That is why our system works. That is why these trade agreements do not work, because when we move these manufacturing jobs, the 216,000 in Ohio, a heck of a lot of those ended up in Mexico, and darn near all of them ended up as part of our trade deficit to China or Mexico or to somewhere else across the world.

Whenever those jobs are lost, they are typically jobs that are transferred; but those jobs do not create wealth for the people that get them in the developing world because they simply are not paid enough. If they are Ford workers in Mexico, they are not paid enough to buy the cars that they made. That is why these trade agreements do not work.

The most powerful Republican Member of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority leader, joined by the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), said there would be a vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement by Memorial Day. That marks the 1-year anniversary.

Remember at the beginning of my remarks I said all four trade agreements that this Congress has voted on since President Bush has been President, the trade agreements for Australia, Chile, Morocco and Singapore, all four were voted on within 60 days after the President signed them.

This trade agreement, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, has not been voted on for 11½ months. Members can see the CAFTA countdown, and in only a week and a half the Central American Free Trade Agreement will celebrate its 1-year anniversary. That tells me they simply do not have the votes to pass the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

So at the same time the self-imposed deadline from the majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), means they may call a vote before the end of the month. We are hearing they are going to delay it.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, as we can see by this calendar, a week away from the deadline with no vote in sight, what this should tell my fellow Members of Congress is that come May 27, we should scrap the Central American Free Trade Agreement, not that we should never do a trade agreement, not that we are against any kind of trade. We should scrap this trade agreement and renegotiate another trade agreement that will work for the American people.

Last month two dozen Republicans and Democrats in Congress joined more than 150 business groups and labor organizations in this city saying vote ''no'' on the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Last week more than 400 union workers and Members of Congress gathered in front of the Capitol saying vote ''no'' on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Why, because Republicans and Democrats, business and labor groups, know what the administration refuses to admit, and that is CAFTA is not about selling products abroad or exporting American goods because that simply has not worked. CAFTA is about one thing: it is about access to cheap labor and the outsourcing that goes with it.

Congress must throw out this dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA on this deadline this month, must throw out this dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA and negotiate a trade agreement that will lift workers up in Central America while promoting prosperity here in our country.

□ 2145

Instead of a loss for American workers and the kind of job loss we have seen in State after State after State, instead of a continuing to increase trade deficit, from $38 billion to over $100 billion to over $200 billion, to over

$300 billion, to over $400 billion, last year in 2003 over $500 billion, now a $600 billion trade deficit in this country, instead of these continued trade deficits, continued manufacturing job loss, Congress should throw out this dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA and negotiate a trade agreement that will lift up workers in Central America while promoting prosperity here at home.

Come May 28, we should bury the Central American Free Trade Agreement. We should renegotiate a new CAFTA so that we can negotiate and trade more with our neighbors on terms that will help lift up workers in all six of the NAFTA countries and in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for his ever-present vigilance on issues that affect American workers and the American economy. I rise tonight to join him in objecting to CAFTA and in pointing out to the people why it is so important that CAFTA be defeated. All of these trade agreements have been about one thing and one thing only—cheap labor. Corporations create conditions where they help to pass these agreements so that they can move jobs out of this country and create jobs in other countries but the jobs in the other countries are not benefiting people because they are working, in some cases, far below the poverty level. CAFTA, as it was with NAFTA, creates conditions where workers have no rights. As a matter of fact, the trade agreements are written specifically to preclude workers having the right to collective bargaining, the right to organize, the right to strike, the right to decent wages and benefits, the right to a safe workplace, the right to be compensated if you are injured on the job, the right to a secure retirement, the right to participate in the political process. All of those are swept aside under CAFTA as they were under NAFTA.

What happens when jobs are created under these trade agreements? First of all, workers are working for a pittance. Secondly, they have no protections whatsoever. They are just basically human chattel. Third, there is no job security. They can be moved around. Beyond that, these trade agreements have no protections against child labor, prison labor, slave labor. They have no protections for the water or the air.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. As the gentleman was talking, I am thinking about what he said a few nights ago. There is no protection for the environment, for workers, but there is very good protection in this bill for a group that is very powerful in this body and that is the prescription drug industry. My colleague spoke last week about what the drug industry did in Central America, what the United States Trade Rep did on behalf of the drug industry that gave them a whole lot more rights than workers get, a whole lot more protections than the environment get.

Would my colleague talk a little bit about that?

Mr. KUCINICH. Yes. The agreements are written so that corporations have protections and their patents have protections and people who need drugs in certain countries for their own health often cannot afford them because the patent protections are supplied to corporations under these trade agreements but countries cannot go ahead and make generic equivalents because it would challenge the way the trade laws are structured. So these trade agreements are never written to benefit people. They are written to benefit corporations. We have to remember that even in our own country, corporations often have greater powers than individuals. There was an 1895, I believe it was, Santa Clara County decision by the Supreme Court which basically ceded to corporations a whole range of rights that put them on equal status with people. Yet corporations do not want to recognize the fundamental human rights that workers have, the fundamental responsibility that we all have to protecting the environment, and so they are given privileges in this country to avoid responsibility for protecting our air and water, to avoid responsibility for protecting workers' pensions, to avoid responsibility for providing for a safe workplace. They often can get off on some of their violations. Yet these trade agreements basically create a race to the bottom on standards, on rights, on principles, on the environment. That is why it is absolutely critical that my colleague has been leading the way on this and I am glad to join him in challenging what this does to people.

There are moral principles here. These principles go beyond politics. Pope Leo XIII when he wrote Rerum Novarum talked about the rights of workers. Pope Paul VI when he wrote his encyclical Progressive Populorum spoke about how corporations have responsibilities. There are fundamental principles that are engrained in a Judeo-Christian ethic, in a body where we celebrate, we are told, these kind of principles which are a bedrock of our society, yet they are just swept aside in favor of profit. It is not supposed to be that way.

That is why so many of us stood with young people in the streets of Seattle to challenge the WTO. That is why people are gathering all over this country challenging the Central American Free Trade Agreement. That is why our brothers and sisters in Central America need us to stand up.

Yo creo que es muy importante pelear por los derechos de los trabajadores. It is very important to take a stand for the rights of workers.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Taking back my time for a moment, as we talked about a week or so ago, while the six presidents were flying around the United States on a junket paid for by the Chamber of Commerce and then met with President Bush and all, they mentioned a lot of things about CAFTA but they never mentioned the kind of opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement, not just from American workers but from workers in every one of those countries. There were demonstrations and protests of thousands of people in virtually every capital city in the six countries. To the point that the president of Costa Rica, as I said in my earlier remarks, the president of Costa Rica now is saying he does not want to see this ratified until he sees some real guarantees in this agreement that the poor in his country, and in his country there are a large number of very poor people, and the workers in his country will not be left out of the agreement. So far, they are left out and he is dissatisfied by that.

But I think when those presidents have come home, both when they left, they saw these kinds of demonstrations, huge opposition among the people of those countries, and that huge opposition has continued. This Congress should simply not believe when these six presidents are walking around after their Chamber of Commerce tour, when they came to our offices and argued for this Central American free labor agreement, my colleagues need to understand that just because those six presidents were for it does not mean their countrymen and countrywomen were.

Mr. KUCINICH. A member of congress from one of these Central American countries who will be meeting with a group of Congressmen soon so I do not want to release his name just yet, told me that when a bill that would help facilitate CAFTA came before the House in his country, that it was brought in at about 3 in the morning, that members did not have a chance to read it, that they did not know that it would facilitate the privatization of public services, for example, and that they were basically encouraged to vote for it sight unseen.

These are the kind of fundamental violations of democratic principles and democratic rights which we see people in Central America already suffering even before this agreement is passed. What happens is these corporations have so much power in these other countries that legislatures are steamrolled. Here in the Congress of the United States, people not only in Central America but in this country are depending on Members to stand up, depending on us to stand up for the basic rights of workers but also depending on us to stand up to stop the continued erosion of manufacturing jobs in this country.

As my colleague points out in his chart there on the trade deficit, it is obvious that NAFTA has not resulted in creating jobs in this country. It has resulted in taking good-paying manufacturing jobs out of this country. Those are jobs that supported middle-

class existence for many families. Those are jobs that helped sustain communities. Those are jobs that helped protect small business. Those are jobs that had health care benefits. Those are jobs that let people buy homes. Those are jobs that let people send their children to college. And now we are seeing our whole way of life adversely affected by these trade agreements. That is why CAFTA presents us with an opportunity to say, stop, stop, let's start to go back through the whole structure of trade agreements and demand that no agreement can ever exist unless it has fundamental protections for workers' rights, human rights and the environment, because frankly when corporations sweep those aside, that is how they make their profit.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Taking back my time, it is no surprise, or no coincidence, that as this trade deficit has increased from $38 billion the year I first ran for Congress 12½ years ago to last year's deficit of $618 billion, that is the same trajectory where we have seen health benefits cut, where we have seen workers in our country losing their pensions. When we lose these manufacturing jobs, every time a Ford worker loses his job or her job in Avon Lake or in Cleveland, that is often one fewer person in Ohio with health benefits, one less person that has a pension. These trade agreements clearly have pulled down the standard of living for way too many of my colleague's constituents and way too many of mine, way too many people in North Carolina where textiles and the apparel job loss have devastated their part of the country.

I want to make a prediction. My colleague made a statement a minute ago that in one of the Central American countries with whom we have negotiated this deal that legislation was passed in the middle of the night. I will make a prediction. Based on a lot of facts, the facts that every major piece of legislation, or virtually every major piece of legislation this Congress has considered the last 2 years, the debate started about this time of night, maybe even a little later, started about midnight, started around 1 o'clock, the debates on these very important issues, Head Start, money for veterans' benefits, money for education, $87 billion for Iraq, the major tax cuts, Medicare and the trade promotion authority. The last big trade agreement this Congress voted for, we voted in the middle of the night. The roll call was left open. It is normally only 15 minutes. The roll call was left open for well over an hour as the majority leader, TOM DELAY, strong-armed, cajoled, offered with a carrot, threatened with a stick, until he got two North Carolina Congressmen to change their votes. We have seen that over and over. My prediction is that when the Central American Free Trade Agreement, if it comes to this Congress in the next 6 weeks, even though it is already past this deadline, this self-imposed deadline, this 1-year anniversary of the signing of CAFTA, whenever it comes, either by the end of this month or the end of next month, you can bet that that is going to be a middle-of-the-night vote where there is incredible political pressure, where there are threats, where there are transfers in some cases, promises on one bill, on the Medicare bill, promises of campaign cash on the House floor as claimed by one of my colleagues, a Republican from Michigan, where there are all kinds of goodies offered to this Member of Congress or that Member of Congress to get a vote. I am just terrified that even though the American people clearly do not like the Central American Free Trade Agreement, even though the American people recognize the kind of job loss that our State of Ohio and so many other States, especially the States in red, have been hit the hardest, with all this job loss, with all this opposition from the American people and from Members of Congress that the administration will do what it did with trade promotion authority and offer all kinds of things to these Members of Congress to get them to change their vote and vote the opposite of what they have promised and vote the opposite of what their constituents asked them to.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, when I was traveling the country, I had the opportunity to visit many areas around America. I would stand in front of plant gates that were padlocked. I saw grass growing in parking lots which were once filled with cars, where workers would go into a plant and they would make steel, cars, washing machines, sewing machines, truck bodies. And now their plant gates are padlocked and there is grass growing in the parking lots. All of America is littered with the rusting hulks of huge manufacturing plants. Yet there are many people who remain in those communities who have the ability to do the work. It is not that there is no work to be done. It is not that we are not consuming the very products which were made once in America. But they are being made now elsewhere at a fraction of the price, where workers are underpaid, where they have no rights.

□ 2200

When we started years ago challenging these trade agreements, some of us were told, well, you are being an isolationist; we have to have trade. Well, it is true, we do have to have trade; but we have to have fair trade. We have to have trade which respects the undeniable fact that all people are interdependent and interconnected. These trade agreements create a divide, a chasm, between the very wealthy and the increasingly poor. These trade agreements have helped to bring about the destructive undermining of America's middle class.

So when you look at that map, I say to the gentleman, and you can see not only various colors of States, depending on how many jobs they have lost, but behind those statistics are individual stories of dreams that were shattered, of families that were broken, of opportunities that were denied, of futures that were totally changed, of the American Dream being dashed, of the American Dream being dashed. That is why we are standing here tonight, challenging CAFTA and, by reference, all of the other trade agreements that have passed.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I will close as I just listen to my friend talk about seeing this country as he has seen it up close, and we all have seen it. Again, these are all numbers, 200,000, 200,000, 57,000, trade deficits of billions and tens of billions, hundreds of billions of dollars; they are all numbers. But I think almost every Member of Congress, those of us that really get out in our communities, and that is most of us on both sides of the aisle, really have seen the kind of pain that people suffer when someone loses a job after being in a plant for 30 years and loses their pension or loses their health benefits, and they are 58 years old and they cannot get Medicare yet. Or they are 35 years old and they cannot send their kid to school, they had been saving a little bit of money: all that that means for those children, for those families, for those school districts that have lost that revenue when a plant closes, for those communities that can no longer protect their citizens with adequate police and fire protection. These are real people, these are real jobs, real communities, real people, real dreams, real lives.

When I think about our trade policy and what we have done, and our trade policy has always been for years to outsource jobs, to lose our manufacturing jobs, shut these plants down, encourage these companies to hire cheap labor in the developing world, do not really give those people any chance, because they are not paying them enough money. My definition of successful trade policy is that when the workers in poor countries cannot just make American products, make products that they export back into the United States, but that those workers can actually buy products made in the United States, then we will see a trade policy which lifts those workers up so they have a decent standard of living in Guatemala or in India or in Mexico, and, at the same time, lifts our workers up so we can continue our strong food safety standards, environmental standards, worker rights, and wages in our country.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, before we conclude, it appears to me that there is an opening here for this Congress, that at a time when we are challenging these trade agreements, we have an opportunity to present an alternative. That alternative should not just be creating a new architecture for trade with workers' rights, human rights, and environmental quality principles; but that alternative should also

include an American manufacturing policy, a new one, a new American manufacturing policy which declares that the maintenance of steel, automotive, and aerospace is vital to our national security; that for that reason, we should be thinking in terms of rebuilding automotive, with cars that are more fuel economical. We should be thinking of rebuilding steel, because we consume so much steel in this country; there are so many mills that we could actually bring back to life. We should be thinking about rebuilding aerospace, not shipping jobs overseas. Right now, our trade deficit with China is approaching about $160 billion, is it not?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Slightly over that.

Mr. KUCINICH. Right. China at this moment is organizing its economy to be able to excel in steel, automotive, and aerospace because Chinese leaders recognize that it is those very industries that enabled America 50 years ago to achieve preeminence in all the world. So we need a new American manufacturing policy, and we need a new policy which rebuilds our infrastructure. Just as FDR understood that the New Deal was an opportunity to put millions of people back to work, we should create a deal where we rebuild our infrastructure, where we rebuild our bridges, our water systems, our sewer systems; where we rebuild parks and hospitals and schools; where we rebuild America's infrastructure and create millions of new jobs, and then that would be an investment that would enable people to go back and start factories again.

Mr. Speaker, we need a new direction in this country. We need a new approach with our economy. We have to do something about this trade deficit, but we have to make sure that our basic infrastructure is strong to help create productivity; and we also have to do something about our tax system, which is incentivizing the movement of jobs out of this country, our tax system where 34 percent of the tax cuts go to the top one percent.

Also, we have to recognize, as some of our major industries are recognizing, that if we are going to protect industry in this country, then we have to have a universal, single-payer health care system. Because we know right now that the automotive business is in trouble in part because of the health care costs. We need a system where everyone is covered; that would help American manufacturing as well.

And we need to protect people's retirement security. It is absolutely a disgrace that the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation right now has over $26 billion in the hole, and that they have over $100 billion in unfunded pension liabilities they are facing, and all the corporations in America are looking right now to dump their pension obligations on the government. Right now people over 55 years old have the lowest level of savings; for seven consecutive quarters, it is at $10,400. It is the lowest consecutive quarter since 1934. So people's savings are being undermined, their pensions are being lost, and now there is an attack on Social Security.

All of this fits together. We have to have an holistic view and vision of what our country needs. We need to have health care and retirement security. We need to have retirement security. We need to rebuild our infrastructure and have a new manufacturing policy. But we need to first take care of business, which means standing up here, challenging CAFTA and saying we are going to use the defeat of CAFTA as an opportunity for a new beginning in the American economy.

I want to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), for the leadership that he has shown on this; and I want to tell him what an honor it has been to be on the floor with him this evening.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for his leadership on this whole array of issues. I would summarize by echoing what he said, that as the CAFTA countdown, as CAFTA is buried at the end of this month, the 1-year anniversary of CAFTA, it is important as we defeat CAFTA that we look at all of those issues that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) talked about, and especially that we think about a new trade agreement with Central American countries that lifts workers in both, in all seven of our countries, lifts workers' standards, lifts environmental standards, helps workers and families and communities in all of the Central American Free Trade Agreement countries, and in our country. It can be a win-win for all of us, instead of the kind of downward slide that we have seen in our trade policy.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, this evening, as American families settle in, and many workers have turned in, the American people will go to bed hoping that this Congress has the intention and the fortitude to stand up and to protect the people's right to a secure retirement. There is a great skepticism across this land about the plans to privatize Social Security.

Social Security, when it was created in 1934, was created as an insurance program. It was not an investment program; it was an insurance program which would ensure against people being too old to work, an insurance program which would ensure against being injured on the job and not being able to work again, an insurance program which would ensure that if a family lost a bread winner to a tragedy, that the family would still have an ability to survive and that the children would have benefits covered until their late teens.

Social Security has been the most successful social program that this country has ever seen.

Now, why was it created? We have to go back to the time of the Depression, a time when this country saw the New York Stock Exchange lose over 80 percent of its value in a period of about 4 years. That people lost their homes, they lost their farms, factories were closed, people lost their jobs, they lost their pensions. People were basically stripped bear with the curse of nothingness. One out of four Americans was without a job. There were hundreds of thousands of children who did not have a place.

From the ashes of the Great Depression arose a leader who recognized that the function and purpose of a democratic society is to make sure that people have economic security, the security of a job, the security of a home, and the security of a solid retirement. When Franklin Roosevelt brought forward this proposal to create Social Security, it was brought forward not to give to people some kind of a welfare program, and I do not object to welfare, but it was not created as a welfare program. It was always based on what people paid in. And so Social Security became a new hope. It helped lift generations of elderly out of poverty. Do my colleagues know that today, 50 percent of the elderly would be living below the poverty line if it were not for Social Security. Social Security was created as a means to make sure that when people got into their later ages that they would have the ability to support themselves.

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Mr. Speaker, we heard the mythology when we were growing up of old folks homes, of poor houses, of people who when they became elderly were destitute and had no opportunities. Well, Social Security was what transformed the American economic landscape, helped lift people up out of poverty, helped guarantee that the sense of interdependencies, which is essential to the creation of the United States, was reflected in this social program that had a powerful economic component, retirement security.

The very words, the United States, which we celebrate here in this Chamber were not simply about the unity of 13 geographical territories nor are they today simply about the unity of 50 geographical territories, they are about human unity.

They are about our responsibility for each other. They are about each of us being our brother and our sister's keeper. Social Security brought that philosophy right into the government of the United States. And in doing that, that elevated the purpose of government of the people. That is the power and the beauty of what Social Security has represented.