

up to 60 percent. As the Nation's second largest rice exporter, California rice producers would benefit from the immediate market access of 400,000 metric tons of U.S. rice in CAFTA countries.

As the Nation's second largest cotton exporter, California cotton would benefit from immediate market access worth up to \$73.1 million.

For beef, too, CAFTA passage brings with it positive economic prospects. With cash receipts of nearly \$1.6 billion, California would see tariffs reduced from as high as 30 percent to zero. Tariffs on some cuts of meat will be eliminated immediately in Central American countries.

Mr. Speaker, as stated in a letter from the California Ag Coalition for Free and Fair Trade, California producers of beef, fruit, nuts, vegetables, cotton, poultry, dairy products, wheat and rice stand to gain in a major way under CAFTA.

I support this agreement for passage, and I urge my friends on both sides of the aisle to do likewise. CAFTA would help level the playing field for America's agriculture, increasing export opportunities for our growers and producers. It would be truly tragic for our Nation's agriculture and all of our economy if we let this opportunity escape us.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) speaking about this issue, because opponents to CAFTA say that does not matter. It would help our trade deficit if we just ignored selling all of our products to Central America. I do not understand how it helps our trade deficit to turn down 44 million new customers, in all of the ag, in technology and small business and manufacturing trade that we have and want to sell to.

I would ask the gentleman, how does that help our trade deficit to turn down a growing country and all of those new customers?

Mr. HERGER. Well, obviously, it does not help our trade deficit; it makes it worse. As the gentleman is pointing out, if we lose that, and the gentleman has pointed this out, there are other countries that are seeking to take these markets. China is working very diligently to take these markets, and we cannot allow this to happen.

So it is imperative that we move, and we look to be having a vote this week, that we win and we have a big win in this very important area of trade.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. I notice, too, the gentleman serving on Ways and Means, all we hear about is NAFTA; but what the critics do not tell you is that there is one huge difference between the two agreements, ignoring for a minute that during NAFTA years Texas grew by 1.7 million jobs. Our economy grew by 75 percent, we doubled our sales to Mexico, ignore all of that.

But the big difference is, Central America already sells most of its prod-

ucts in the United States today; they have for 20 years. If a company wanted to move away, they had 2 decades to do it. Now it is our turn to sell into Central America. Those are the ag sales and manufacturing sales and financial and insurance and telecommunications and chemicals from the Gulf Coast and forest products from east Texas, and ag from west Texas, and a number of products that we are looking for the new jobs and the new customers that this agreement provides us.

Mr. HERGER. Again I thank the gentleman. You brought up the agreement of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, with Canada and with Mexico. And again, it was so tongue-in-cheek, it was so detrimental that we more than doubled our trade to both of these countries who are our major trading partners now, and we see our unemployment rate at one of the lowest levels in our Nation's history, right at 5 percent.

So if these trade agreements are so bad for our country, why are we seeing such incredibly dramatic positive results because of them?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Well, I appreciate the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) for coming tonight and being part of this key debate.

Let me just conclude with a question. In recent years, a bipartisan Congress has extended its trade hand to the Muslim people of Morocco, the sub-Saharan nations of South Africa, our Asian allies in Singapore, and our Arab allies in Jordan. Why would Congress balk now at extending the same hand of trade to our Hispanic neighbors in Central America?

This is good for America and our workers, this is good for Central America, and this will help us defeat China in the war in textiles; and later this week I look forward to the House of Representatives joining the Senate in engagement, in jobs, rather than isolationism and turning our back on a region so close to us.

CAFTA IS BAD FOR AMERICA

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to my colleague from the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY), as much time as he shall consume.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues who have just completed their hour discussing on the House floor tonight why we should enact CAFTA.

Clearly, they were sincere, yet the arguments discussed essentially have been the same arguments advanced for why these negotiations even began now 2 years, 18 months ago, certainly being concluded well over a year ago.

It is an enormous privilege to serve on the Ways and Means Committee, the

committee of jurisdiction on trade matters. And during the period of time, the extended period of time this has been before the Congress, it has given us a chance to look at this agreement pretty closely.

I could spend my time tonight going into the whats, and the whereases and the what-fors, but I think it might be more fruitful to discuss this in the broader perspective, perspective first of all involving the track we are on relative to our trade agreements and our Nation's economy.

Then, secondly, a particular for instance in terms of where this is just more of the same, in terms of our loss of jobs, loss of economic opportunity here at home, and then finally to discuss the process, a process that I think raises serious questions about this trade agreement.

Well, let us start with the broad pattern. We have been on a track of these trade deals, part of our participation in the global economy, for some years now. A recent commentator contrasted the approach taken by the United States with that of most other nations. It would just seem natural that as you stroll to the table and negotiate on behalf of the country you represent, that you advocate the nation's interests, the nation's jobs, the nation's opportunity to sell more under these agreements. And most nations do precisely that.

But this commentator contrasted the United States, where it is not just local interests that are represented by the big multinational corporations based in this country, it may be a U.S. corporation, but may be jobs all across the world.

Whether or not the interests of the multinational corporations have been advanced, the record is clear. The interest of the American worker and American opportunities have not been advanced. Just look at the trade numbers. Could you possibly have a clearer indicator as to whether this is working or not than the trade numbers? And what do they tell us? They tell us that our trade deficit, the amount we buy more than we sell, has never been greater in the history of our country.

Now, we have been at this awhile, these trade deals. A friend of mine says there is not a trade deal ever negotiated that our silk-shirted Ivy League-educated negotiators could not lose in half an hour. You certainly seem to think there might be truth in that when you look at the job loss that has just wrecked the economies of important parts of our country and led us to a net position, again, where we are buying more than we are selling to a dimension never before seen in the history of the United States.

I represent an agriculture State, North Dakota. We had, growing up when I was a kid in school, we thought of ourselves as North Dakota, bread basket to the world. We were very proud of the role we played in feeding the world. So let us just break out this

agriculture component of our economy, take a look at that one. This year, 2005, we are on the brink of importing more food than we export.

The United States of America as a net food importer. Can you imagine something more screwed up than that? Clearly, this trade path that we are on is not working, and quite clearly CAFTA is more of the same.

You know, my friends that just took the preceding hour, they took about the 44 million new customers, the 44 million new customers. You know, we did not just learn of these places down there; heck, we have been dealing with them for years and years and years.

We have got about 94 percent of their wheat market, just to reference a commodity important in North Dakota. How much more are we going to get? They are not 44 million new customers. These are long-established trading partners of the United States. But what is at issue is what we are going to do relative to opening the flood gates to their production, to the further displacement of our workers and our opportunities.

And let me give you a for instance, because it is an industry I represent, the sugar industry. Of all of the commodities of agriculture, sugar is one of the higher value opportunities for the American farmer. And I represent people, third generation, fourth generation on the land, families that broke the prairie under the Homestead Act to begin their family's farming experience and now making a go of it because they raise sugar beets in the Red River Valley.

This is an industry that they have grown by blood, sweat and toil and risks, enormous financial risk. They had farmers not just raising the sugar beets, but when they had an opportunity, they acquired the processing neck of the business. So as a cooperative, farmers joining together, they actually bought the sugar refinery.

□ 2145

That is the place that makes the refined sugar. They put it into the market. Now they control the marketing of it as well.

This entire sugar industry from the Red River Valley sugar beet growers, from the workers in the plants today, to the sugar cane growers down in the South Central and Southeastern part of country, to the sugar beet growers out in the Northwestern United States, significant areas of the country broadly affected by the threat to sugar. Because what is at stake in CAFTA is opening up the border for yet an additional allotment for sugar to come pouring in from the CAFTA countries, countries whose labor wages have no relation to ours, whose environmental protections in their plants are no relation to ours, whose costs are often subsidized to get them down to global dump price.

And I have seen the context of the CAFTA debate argument that what the

United States needs is to resort to the global dump price at the end of domestic production of sugar in this country. When will it end? When we decide are U.S. jobs worth fighting for, and the economic hopes and dreams of our families are what we ought to be representing? If it is not good for us, why are we doing it? And when it comes to sugar, believe you me, just look right across the opinion of the United Sugar Industry in this country. They do not believe this is good for us. They believe it is the beginning of an end to domestic production of sugar in this country.

What that means in the Red River Valley, we are talking Fargo, Grand Forks, North Dakota, not large places, is a direct and indirect economic impact of up to 2- to \$3 billion, direct jobs 2,500, indirect jobs maybe 30,000 in the area I represent. Just another chapter in this global trade path we are on that has cost us so much and brought us the deepest deficit in the history of the country.

Now, you might say, well, those are interesting arguments, but these other guys say something quite different. And so who do we believe? I would just say look at how this bill CAFTA is being handled. It was negotiated in the spring of 2004 and concluded in late spring, early summer. If this was such a point of pride for our trade negotiators who brought this agreement home, why in the world did President Bush not, as an achievement of his administration, put it front and center in the election campaign and run it up to Congress for a vote?

They ran the Australia trade agreement for a vote. That was negotiated after CAFTA. Why did they keep CAFTA like a dark family secret in the back room, out of the way, out of public view after the election? I believe it is because they knew that the American people knew this was another raw deal, another trade deal that was a raw deal; and, therefore, out of sight, out of mind. Let us get the votes. Let us win the election. We will bring it up and run it through later. That is a pretty callous way, I think, to deal with something so important to the people of this country, but that is what they have done.

Now, here we are 7 months into the new year, and just now they are running up for a vote. What has delayed them now that the election is so long past? Very simple. They do not have the votes. Why do they not have the votes? Because the American people understand that we have the deepest trade deficit in the history of the country. They understand that their jobs are not safe. They understand that their friends have lost jobs. They understand that industries are being dislocated. And as a result they do not have much time or attention for this CAFTA.

The House of Representatives is a very imperfect place, but there is one thing that this place captures, and that is what the American people are think-

ing. And that is why, beginning this last week before the August recess, the majority, the majority who have dictated so much in terms of vote outcomes, did not know whether they have the votes to pass CAFTA. And I believe they do not or we would have had it up for a vote this afternoon.

The Members of this body know that CAFTA is a loser for the American people. And so what are we hearing in these final hours before the CAFTA vote? I want the American people to understand what is at stake just as I discuss it with my colleagues. They have directly linked China to CAFTA. There is no linkage to China and CAFTA. We are upset about China. We are worried about the trade imbalance with China. CAFTA gives us a deeper trade imbalance, in my view, with CAFTA countries. It has nothing to do with China. They are trying cross-linkages, anything to try and get votes. Even more insidious.

There is a highway bill in conference committee. One of the things each and every Member represents is thousands and thousands of miles of roads back in their home districts. It is very important for each of us, Republican and Democrat alike, from every corner of the country, that we get our local needs attended to in the highway bill.

Now, do you think the highway bill is being held up because there is a problem with the highway bill? Absolutely not. The highway bill is being held up to leverage votes for CAFTA. This trade deal, so important for American jobs, is being bartered for highway projects in far-flung congressional districts.

This is no way for us to look at the future of U.S. trade. We can do better than that. It is just wrong to link Federal highway appropriations to preferred votes on trade deals. It is absolutely wrong.

Now we are hearing that it is going to be brought up for a vote late at night, in the early morning hours of the last minutes before we break for August recess. I fully expect that you might see this up for a vote between 2 and 3 in the morning maybe, or 4 and 5 in the morning if they have not corralled the votes before we leave town.

Can you imagine this body acting any more disgracefully than to hold the debate, run it when people are not watching, try and break the arms required to pass the deal, and then leave town under cloak of darkness for a month to hope the heat cools down because we have passed another bad deal for the American people?

I would hope and I would urge those who really determine the outcome of this fight, those who tonight find themselves caught between standing for their constituents and what their constituents want and what their leadership tells them they have to do, I would urge them to do the thing that you could never lose by doing: Stand with your constituents. They are the ones that sent you here. They are the

ones we pledged to support. They are the ones who are counting on you tonight.

I was as a freshman in a Democrat majority. We have been in the minority for more than 10 years. And I believe we are in the minority in part because our leaders thought there were times when we had to vote for the majority instead of voting for those who sent us here.

I urge my Republican colleagues who are on the fence on this trade deal, getting tremendous pressure from the leadership, I urge you to stand your ground, stand with your constituents. They need you. They need you badly on this vote.

To the Democrat and Republican Members who have already signaled that we are opposed to this deal, we are opposed to another sell-out of our economy, we are opposed to another rolling over of the concerns about American workers, I urge you to dig down and work harder than we have ever worked before.

We are on the brink of winning this important vote. What happens if we do? It is not like relations end, for heaven's sake, with our near neighbors. We go back to the table and we get a deal we can all be proud of, one that has some fundamental protections for our country. That is all that happens if we defeat this deal. So let us stand together and win one, by golly. The American economy and the American workers deserve no less.

I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for his excellent statement.

It is now my pleasure to yield to another colleague who comes across the country from the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY), about as far east as you can get from the Dakotas, I think, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD).

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this evening we heard an hour debate of why Congress and the American people should support CAFTA. And to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) I would like to say, as Paul Harvey would say, Now the rest of the story.

I want to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means. He has been a remarkable advocate for issues affecting working families. This week the House is expected to vote on a trade agreement that only promises job losses and devastation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in strong opposition to CAFTA. I rise tonight for all Mainers who have lost their jobs. I rise for all working Americans and their families, many who are still working at this late hour to help make ends meet. And I know what it is like myself. For almost 30 years I worked at Great Northern Paper Company in East

Millinocket, Maine, where my father worked for 43 years, my grandfather before him for 40 years. And that is the way it is in a lot of mill towns in Maine and all across the country.

Two days after I was sworn in as a Member of Congress in January of 2003, I learned that the mill where I worked filed bankruptcy and was shutting its doors. The mill was closed largely due to the pressure created by unfair trade agreements, years of poorly thought-out trade deals that placed manufacturing industries at a huge disadvantage. And one would only have to look at the huge trade deficits that are continuing to grow ever since NAFTA went into effect.

I know firsthand, as many Mainers do, that with these layoffs and closures, when these businesses go under because of unfair trade deals, so does the heart and souls of these communities. In Maine alone, since 1998 and to late 2004, the Federal Government had documented 11,724 workers who lost their job due to trade. Although the real undocumented number is much higher, it has been estimated that 24,000 Mainers have lost their jobs due to NAFTA alone.

The number serves to demonstrate yet again what people in Maine already know through our own tough experience. The economy continues to struggle and our workers see fewer good prospects. Maine has lost 23 percent of our manufacturing base over the last 3 years alone.

Now, I heard my colleague who supported CAFTA earlier talk about the unemployment going down. Well, I can say my first year in Congress we had labor market areas in Maine whose unemployment rate was over 35 percent. And the reason why the number is lower today is not because they have found jobs, it is because this Congress, the previous Congress, has failed to extend the unemployment benefits, so they are no longer counted as being unemployed. They just drop off the list.

We are sick of watching our jobs get shipped overseas as our workers stand waving good-bye to them. It is time to get off the fast track of lost jobs and shattered dreams and on to the right track for fair trade agreements.

When it comes to CAFTA, the benefit is pretty hard to find. Despite having 44 million inhabitants, the CAFTA nations' total purchasing power is the same as New Haven, Connecticut. More than 40 percent of the Central American workers work for less than \$2 a day. CAFTA outsources our jobs to cheap labor markets with almost non-existing environmental or labor standards.

□ 2200

How could such a bad deal for our workers pass?

In recent days, the administration authorized House leadership to secure votes with whatever is at hand, from extra funding, as you heard earlier, for individual Members' districts in the

highway projects and energy bill, to the still incomplete appropriations bills. Members are being asked to trade away their votes for agreements that trade American jobs away. This is just unbelievable.

Tomorrow, the House is expected to vote on H.R. 3283, the so-called United States Trade Rights Enforcement Act. This bill does nothing to effectively address China's unfair trade practices and their adverse impact on U.S. workers and manufacturers and the Nation's economy. In fact, it makes it harder to stop unfair Chinese trade practices. But it has a good-sounding title.

This bill is an effort to sway votes for CAFTA, giving Members a fig leaf to hide behind so they can say they are standing up against unfair trade agreements. It is nothing but smoke and mirrors. Smoke and mirrors.

Two years ago, these tactics worked to pass the deeply flawed Medicare bill by one vote. Leadership held open a 15-minute vote for 3 hours while they twisted arms in order to ensure passage. It is expected the same will happen with the CAFTA vote. Is this the way the people of the House should be acting? Is this in the best interest of our Nation?

What message does this send the American people and our workforce and our businesses? And why must these votes always happen in the dark of night? It is because while working Americans sleep, their jobs are being traded away.

Mr. Speaker, all Americans who are watching tonight should check for themselves. They should pay close attention to what time the CAFTA vote happens. They should ask themselves why under such cover of darkness should we be voting. It is said that midnight is the witching hour. Americans should wonder what kind of witchcraft is being passed on the House floor as we consider CAFTA in the dead of night.

The administration may want this deal to pass as quickly as possible before more opposition mounts, but the people who have suffered the most under our trade policies, including many of my neighbors, my coworkers and my family, and many of the good people in Maine have earned the right to ask a simple question about what a new trade deal will mean to their families and get some real answers before we move forward.

One of the things I hear a lot of people say is that large stable companies, like Great Northern was, where I worked for over 30 years, will never move overseas because it is too costly. I can tell my colleagues firsthand that the mill I worked at had six paper machines. They uplifted four of them and shipped them overseas. The mill in Millinocket, the Great Northern Paper Company's other mill, did the same thing. It is nothing for large corporations to unbolt their machines and ship them overseas so they can get that cheap labor.

We heard earlier that in some of these CAFTA countries labor is less than \$2 a day. That is exploiting workers. It is not to benefit the CAFTA nations. It definitely will not benefit the United States of America. So I hope Members on both sides of the aisle will take a good hard look at this trade policy because we cannot sell-out the American workers. We cannot sell out the American Dream that we have.

We must reverse these trade policies to once again put the United States of America on the path of growth. The only way we are going to be a secure country, the only way we are going to be able to be respected among other nations, like we have in the past, is to make sure that we have a strong economy.

When we look at what happened during World War II, what made this country the greatest country in the world, with our Greatest Generation, was the ability for Americans back home to work in our manufacturing industry, to work hand in hand. But what are we going to do if we continue to ship these jobs overseas? It is going to weaken the United States' ability to be the number one leader as far as our national defense.

We must vote this CAFTA deal down, regardless of what time in the morning it comes up and regardless of how long the leadership holds the vote open. We must do what is right, and what is right is fair trade agreements.

So I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I will be with him voting against CAFTA.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for his eloquent statement.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity tonight to listen to an hour that was presided over by my colleague on the Committee on Ways and Means on the majority side, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), and his fellow Republicans and the statements of my colleagues on the Democratic side. It has been refreshing in this sense, that we have talked about the issues. I very much disagree with the statements of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) and others, and I will get to that; but at least we have been talking about issues.

In the last few days, when it comes to CAFTA, that is not what the administration or the Republican majority have been doing. Instead, we have learned about a number of deals that have been cut, one of them relating to dams and locks in return for a vote; or if not in return, that being taken into account if the vote was cast.

We have heard the administration make statements regarding fabrics, regarding apparel and textiles. They have made commitments that they cannot on their own keep. And if history is any judge, they are unlikely to do so. They have made a commitment, for example, regarding pockets and linings, essentially reopening the agreement, saying that they are going to secure

that change. However, the truth of the matter is it would take action by this Congress to do that, and not under Fast Track; and also there would have to be agreement by the six DR-CAFTA countries.

Regarding a provision of concern to Nicaragua, the administration has made some statement that Nicaragua will more or less back off. However, it is only for Nicaragua to make that statement.

And then there has been the same process regarding sugar in order to try to win some votes from people who object to the provisions on sugar. There have been statements about some adjustments that will be made or some further actions that will be taken. Again, they are not in the agreement. There is nothing that this administration can really say that it can be assured of producing.

Oh, and then I guess it was today I read about discussions relating to agricultural shipments to Cuba and some bargaining back and forth between some of the Members of this Congress and the administration regarding that.

So while I very much disagree with the statements in almost every case made by the majority regarding CAFTA, in a way they were talking about issues and they were not talking about bait being offered for people to cast their vote.

I want to talk about what is really, as I see it, and my colleagues in so many cases see it, as the overriding issue. Why are so many of us who have worked for expanded trade, who have helped to shape trade agreements opposed to this agreement? There are economic aspects, and one can argue them various ways. I suggest that they be kept to the economic data in perspective. One estimate is that in terms of GDP, the impact of CAFTA on the U.S. would be less than one-fifth of 1 percent. As to Central American countries, there is evidence on all sides of the issue, including dislocation, that would occur.

But, again, I want to talk about the larger issue, and that is where globalization is today and where it is going. Because here at CAFTA, globalization is at a crossroads, and that is why so many of us who have worked for expanded trade feel that we needed to take a hard look to judge whether this agreement was going to shape globalization so, as was put by President Clinton some years ago, it would level up, not level down.

I think the basic assumption of many proponents of CAFTA is, well, that does not really matter because trade is win-win; that there is no possible loss; that trade inevitably works out for everybody's benefit. But for those of us who, I say, have worked and often worked very hard and successfully to shape expanded trade the right way, we believe this does it the wrong way; that you need to shape trade agreements so it is not a race to the bottom.

And that is why the issues relating to worker rights are so important. That is

what this basic issue is really all about. This is why Central America, Dominican Republic and CAFTA, matter so much in terms of where trade is going. Regarding the CAFTA countries, we are now talking about countries in a region that has, Latin America, the worst income distribution of any region in the world. We are talking about within most of the countries immense maldistribution of income. We are talking about immense poverty. There is a weak middle class in most of the countries.

It was interesting to read a Wall Street Journal article just a week ago. The headline was: "In Latin America, Rich-Poor Chasm Stifles Growth," and I quote: "Because of an abundance of natural resources and a large indigenous population, Latin American nations group up relying on raw materials, cheap manual labor to exploit them, and low government taxation. The system concentrated land ownership and wealth in a few hands, deprived governments of money to spend on education and other incentives, and essentially ordered the incentives for the elite to invest not in human capital or technology. Latin America has also historically relied on monopolies and franchises, leaving few opportunities for entrepreneurs to advance through hard work and innovation."

If you look at the history of trade agreements, there has been an effort to begin to have them relate to workers, to take into account the capital of workers as well as financial capital. And so in recent years, we had agreements, Jordan, Cambodia, which essentially said to countries: look, take steps to make sure that workers have their basic rights.

We are not talking about the laws of the United States; we are talking about the five core internationally recognized rights: no child labor, also no forced labor, no discrimination in the workplace, and also, so importantly, the rights of workers to associate and to organize.

And what has happened is that this agreement is a step backwards from where we were going, a step backwards from Jordan, a step backwards from the Cambodia experiment, and also a step backwards from CBI and the second CBI, and what is called the "generalized system of preferences." What this agreement says to a country when it comes to these basic rights of workers is, enforce your own laws, no matter what they are, no matter how bad they are. That is the standard: enforce your own laws.

That standard is not used in any other part of the agreement, whether it is intellectual properties or investments or tariffs or subsidies. Here it is: enforce your own laws.

□ 2215

There has been an effort to obscure what the reality is on the ground in Central America, but State Department reports make it clear, the ILO reports make it also very clear. There is

a recent report of USTR itself that it was required to give to Congress. That report also makes it clear.

In reality, workers do not have the ability to exercise internationally recognized rights. When they want to associate, essentially there can be action by the employer with impunity. In some cases all they have to do, if they fire workers who want to form a union, all they have to do is pay severance pay. That is the reality on the ground, and there are so many cases that prove it. In a Special Order that I took on some weeks ago, I spelled out one example in El Salvador.

Why does this matter? Why is it important that workers in Central America have their basic internationally recognized rights? Here is why it matters.

In these countries with immense poverty, in these countries with terrible maldistribution of income, in these countries with weak middle classes, if workers cannot exercise their rights, they are going to remain poor. Their countries are going to remain without the middle classes that they so badly need. Our workers are going to have to compete with workers whose rights are suppressed, and our workers are saying, no, they do not want to do that. And our companies and their workers are not going to have middles classes in Central America that can buy their goods.

So I want to say a few more words about the implications of all this. There has been talk about security and stability. I want to say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, what undermines stability and security is when people are impoverished, when people have no opportunity to climb up the ladder to the middle class.

This was also in the Wall Street Journal, I read a letter to the editor by Rutilio Martinez, who is a professor in Colorado, and he was responding to an article about Chavez in Venezuela, and he is very much opposed to the Chavez regime. He concluded, "The rest of Latin America, from Mexico to Argentina, should take notice what is happening in Venezuela and do something to improve their horrible distribution of wealth, otherwise soon there will be very many Venezuelas in this poverty-ridden but resource-rich region."

A major threat to security in Central American countries is terrible income distribution. It is also the absence of strong middle classes and the presence of immense poverty. There was talk about certain groups in Central America opposing this agreement.

I just urge everybody to listen also to bishops who are there with their flock in Central America. I read from a recent joint statement concerning the Central American Free Trade Agreement by the Bishops' Secretariat of Central America and the chairman of the Domestic and International Policy Committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "In light of a recent visit to Washington, D.C., 23-24 June,

2004, by a delegation of six bishops representing the Church in Central America, the Bishops' Secretariat of Central America and the chairman of Domestic and International Policy Committees of the United States Conference of Bishops wish to express with one voice our observations and concerns about the U.S.-Central American Free Trade Agreement."

I quote from just one of their concerns. This is in subsection 3. "Many have claimed that CAFTA will lead to a significant increase in jobs. However, these jobs could principally be in assembly plants, maquilas, which mainly employ women, and which offer an unstable form of employment. Without proper worker protections, we know from our own experience that this type of employment will not foster authentic human development."

It is said by some defenders of this agreement that the problem is not in the laws, it is enforcement. First of all, that is not true about the laws. No matter how much you put into enforcement, if the laws are inadequate, it will not work.

But also this administration is really not candid about its claims about money for enforcement. It cut moneys for the entity within the Department of Labor that deals with capacity-building of labor departments of other countries. It proposed cuts of 87 percent, and now it is being suggested that some of that money be put back. The record of this administration in terms of trying to bolster enforcement is abysmal. They are now coming forth and saying, well, we will reform, so support CAFTA.

The laws do not measure up to international standards. As I saw a few years ago in Central America in the maquilas in three of the countries, there are no rights of workers on the ground in reality. They are working for 75 cents an hour, maybe a buck, mostly young women in the maquilas, many with children, sole supporter of their children. As soon as they tried to have a voice in the workplace, a voice at work, that voice is kicked out, is snuffed out by their discharge.

Let me make just a few comments. Someone said, well, there are 44 million people, and they cannot buy high-end goods. That is not the issue at all. Let me just read quickly from an article that is going to be published in the Sister City News, "Dos Pueblos: The New York-Tipitapa Nicaragua Sister City Project." Dos Pueblos is a non-profit organization that began way back in 1987. They went to Nicaragua just recently and reported back, "The salaries they receive, however, are covering fewer and fewer of their families' basic needs. While the minimum salary in 2003 covered 49.2 percent of the basic food basket, 53 products identified as necessary to feed a family of four for a month, the minimum pay in 2005 is only covering 26 percent of these costs." So it is not a question of buying a Cadillac, it is a question of buying food.

Mr. Speaker, it is tragic that this administration has handled trade and shattered the bipartisan foundation for trade that is so necessary, that is so vital that a number of us have wanted to help reestablish in this country. They have shattered that foundation.

Now they are going to come here on this floor in just a few days, and what they are apparently going to try to do once again, instead of getting 250 to 300 votes on a truly bipartisan basis, they are going to essentially, headstrong, I think head-in-the-sand in terms of good trade policy, see if they can squeeze out a victory by one or two votes.

That will not happen. If it did, it would be a defeat for the bipartisan foundation so essential for trade policy. It would be a defeat for the people of Central America, the workers there, for their countries that so badly need the development of a middle class, people moving up the ladder. It will be bad for our workers who refuse to compete against workers whose rights are so badly suppressed, and it will be bad for our companies who need middle classes to sell to.

In closing, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) said at the very end that people supported Morocco, people supported Jordan, I did, because in those countries the rights, the internationally recognized rights of workers were in place, so enforce your own laws, there were laws to implement. There were conditions that were worthy of international respect. That is not true in CAFTA. It is not true in Central America.

We need to renegotiate. I am in favor of a CAFTA. So are others of my colleagues who have worked with me and who are leading this effort to make sure that CAFTA is defeated and we go back to the table and address these basic issues. Globalization is here to stay. The question is whether globalization is going to have its benefits spread, or essentially they are going to be distributed only to a minority.

If that continues to happen in Latin America, we are going to see more people voting with their feet, or voting at the ballot box as they have been doing. People want a share of globalization. They want a stake in globalization. In order to have that, they have to have a voice in the workplace. So that is what this is all about. There are other issues, but there is this larger issue. There is a test here, a test presented by the CAFTA agreement. This administration flunked the test, and now they are just charging ahead hoping to capture a narrow victory. It will not happen. It will be a defeat.

I urge we defeat CAFTA as negotiated and return to the table, which we can do, and refinish this agreement in about a month. In that way we can proudly say we met the challenges of globalization in this case in the year 2005.