

Mr. Speaker, the Army and Marine Corps have been involved in prolonged combat under the harshest of conditions. The combat has taken an enormous toll on troops and their equipment. Yes, we have strategic interests in Iraq, but we also have strategic interests around the world that we must be prepared to defend. We cannot allow the war in Iraq to destroy our ability to fight and win in other contingencies. Our Army and Marine Corps must have what they need to fight and win.

HONORING MEGAN JESSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to honor the memory of an exceptional young woman. Less than 2 months ago, the community of Michigan City, Indiana, celebrated when they heard the good news. Megan Jesse, one of their own, was selected as the Second District's first place winner in the Congressional Art Competition. Today, unfortunately, the same northern Indiana community mourns her sudden and tragic passing.

Megan had just completed her junior year at Michigan City High School where she was a member of the Wolves ladies' soccer team. She was on her way to soccer camp with fellow teammate Katherine Stoll on Friday when they were involved in an automobile accident. Katherine was seriously injured, and Megan tragically lost her life.

Just hours before, Megan and her parents were busy planning their visit to Washington, D.C. They were coming to Capitol Hill today to attend the Congressional Art Competition's dedication ceremonies. Photography was one of Megan's favorite hobbies, and it was her artistic photo project, "Highlights," that was chosen from Indiana's Second District to hang here in the Capitol building.

When I attended the awards ceremony at Indiana University South Bend, Megan talked about her love of art and her inspiration for her winning piece. At first she was going to portray a towering lighthouse on the shores of Lake Michigan. But when she got to the beach, something else caught her eye, a simple picturesque lifeguard tower looking out over the water. Megan photographed this scene instead, and she was able to capture it with striking effect.

She said she chose the scene because of her love of the beach, and she wanted to express her feelings and emotions in a way that could be shared with others. I think it is truly fitting that her artwork will now hang in the United States Capitol where it can be enjoyed by thousands of visitors and passersby.

Sadly, Megan and her family will not be here for the Congressional Art Competition's ribbon-cutting ceremony this week, but we will still celebrate the ac-

complishments of a gifted young woman whose life was cut short by tragedy. To thousands of visitors to our Nation's Capitol and to my colleagues in Congress, the next time you walk through the tunnel in the Capitol, stop to consider the picture from the Second District of Indiana, Megan Jesse's picture, and remember this part of her life that she so graciously shared with us.

Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that we honor her life and her work and that our thoughts and prayers are with Megan's family at this very difficult time.

STOP SWEATSHOP PROFITEERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I see them all over Ohio, Toledo, Hamilton, Lima, Youngstown, Mansfield and Dayton. In every community, there are signs that the Federal Government's trade policies are undermining American manufacturers, especially small machine shops, tool and die makers, other manufacturers, and encouraging the spread internationally of abusive sweatshop practices.

China is the sweatshop of the world, with oppressive labor policies resulting in wage suppression of as much as 85 percent. We all know that American workers can compete with workers anywhere in the world on a level playing field, but no one can stand, no one can compete with child labor, with sweatshop labor, with prison labor.

The year I first ran for Congress in 1992, the United States had a trade deficit of \$38 billion. Today, just last year, in 2005, that trade deficit had jumped from \$38 billion in only 13 years to a \$720 billion trade deficit.

The result of the sweatshop labor of this trade policy with China alone is trade deficit records being broken year after year and ever-increasing losses of manufacturing jobs to China. In my State alone, 200,000 manufacturing jobs had been lost since the year 2000, yet America's trade agreements are actually encouraging the development of new sweatshops. All of us in this body supported the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement because Jordan's labor protections were seen as meeting international standards.

The New York Times, though, recently reported that in the few years since the Jordan Free Trade Agreement took effect, lax enforcement and an abusive guest worker system have made Jordan the new haven for some of the world's most brutal sweatshops.

Senator BYRON DORGAN and I have introduced the Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act to end sweatshop profiteering.

The bill is simple. It bars the importation or the sale of goods made with sweatshop labor. In other words, if a

product is made in a Chinese sweatshop, if a product is made by child labor or slave labor or prison labor, you can't import it into the United States, you can't sell it into the United States.

The Federal Trade Commission would enforce it, but the bill also gives retailers and shareholders the right to hold violators accountable, and it prohibits Federal government agencies from buying sweatshop goods. We can't afford to continue to tolerate these abuses. We certainly cannot afford, cannot continue to encourage them.

We don't have a \$200 billion trade deficit with China because China's companies are better than ours and certainly not because their people are smarter or more dedicated or hard working. We know how China is able to do so well in the game of international trade. They break the rules.

When China breaks the rules, and we lose in places like Marion and Cleveland, when we lose in places like Chillicothe and Zanesville and Toledo, when they lose thousands of manufacturing jobs, it not only hurts those people that lose those jobs, it hurts those families. It causes police and fire to be laid off in those abandoned communities. It means fewer schoolteachers teaching our young people.

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It devastates people's families. It devastates people's communities. It is our job here in Congress to provide a level playing field for U.S. workers, to help those small manufacturers, to help those workers, to help those families, to help those communities and provide decent working conditions for workers here and abroad.

I ask my fellow Members of the House to support the Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act.

AMERICA ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, a couple of my colleagues and I tonight are going to spend a little bit of time talking about our Constitution, the founding principles on which this country is based, and a document that I am concerned that many of our colleagues in this Chamber are not as intimately familiar with as they should be.

I have introduced H. Res. 883 to try to address this issue. The acronym for the act is called the AMERICA Act, A Modest Effort to Read and Instill the Constitution Again, which is a bit tortured, but at least it gets us going in the right direction.

This resolution would require, or would encourage, each Member of the House and each staffer that works for a Member of the House to read the Constitution once a year. We hope to be voting on this in September during Constitution Week. But I want to talk about it tonight.

Our Constitution sets forth the written set of fundamental principles about which this U.S. Government, the United States, is to be governed. It establishes the three branches of the government that function here at the Federal level. And it is considered the supreme law of the land.

It is also the world's oldest written national constitution, and it confers upon Members of this body and the other body certain honors and certain great responsibilities.

We in Congress write laws constantly to implement those fundamental principles, and every once in a while we propose amendments to change those fundamental principles. I, therefore, think it is important that each one of us be intimately familiar with what is in the Constitution. It is a relatively short document, about 2,500 words, and I would not consider it an onerous task for my colleagues and I to at least once a year read that Constitution.

Before I came to Congress, I practiced as a CPA, Certified Public Accountant, and I still maintain that license. I am required as part of the licensing process of the State to participate in 40 hours of continuing professional education each year. I just finished that up this week for my license renewal. And I think that most professions have that.

I think that it is a modest step toward a continuing education process or program for Members of Congress, that being required or being encouraged, excuse me, to read the Constitution once a year would be a good thing to do. So this resolution, which I am hoping to gather support for, because I am curious as to who would push back or what the arguments would be from our colleagues as to why we shouldn't know what is in the Constitution, why we shouldn't be familiar with what is in the Constitution, why that is in the best interest of the 651,000 people that they represent here in this body.

So I would encourage other Members to sign on to this legislation that would encourage each one of us and our staffers, the senior staffers and others, to read the Constitution once a year and help us understand the differences between the way this government looks today versus what that Constitution requires.

OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President transmitted legislation to implement the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement. The Senate Finance Committee will mark up this legislation tomorrow, and the word is the Senate is going to try to rush this through on the floor of the Senate in the afternoon. And the House Ways and Means Committee will take up this bill on Thursday.

This agreement is a test of globalization. Globalization is under major pressure today, in part because as it has spread, the benefits of increased trade between nations too often have not been widely shared among people within the nation. Workers rights matter, especially the ability of workers to represent themselves in the workplace because they are an important economic tool to spread more widely the benefits of expanded trade.

To help make globalization work, a view widely held by House Democrats is that trade agreements should include squarely within the text of the agreement a requirement that there be adherence to basic ILO standards within a reasonable transition period.

We have strongly opposed the standard that USTR has tabled for worker rights, and the environment, in FTAs, which requires that a nation must only enforce its own laws. It is a standard that USTR does not propose for any other provision of an FTA and would never dream of using for other economic issues, whether intellectual property or investment rules or any other.

Where an FTA has been negotiated with a nation using that standard, but at the time of the FTA vote the basic ILO rights were in operation in practice and in law, many of us have voted for the agreement despite opposition to the standard. That was the case in Chile, Singapore and Morocco.

With the Bahrain FTA, there was clear evidence that the ILO standards were there in practice so that there was a foundation for assurances that the laws would be swiftly brought into conformity with existing ILO-compliant practices. In accordance with law, unions in Bahrain enjoyed autonomous status, independent of the employer, beyond interference. In addition, as long as the union existed under law in an enterprise, the law provided that an employer must recognize it and engage with it in collective bargaining. So many of us voted to approve the U.S.-Bahrain FTA.

The conditions in Oman are very different than those prevailing in Bahrain and in those other countries where we have supported FTAs.

As one approaches consideration of the U.S.-Oman FTA, there are some clear truths. Oman is a nation in the volatile Middle East with good relations with the U.S.

Secondly, the amount of trade is small. It would likely grow under an FTA, but remain small, and thus any economic negative dislocations for either side would be small.

In practice and law, thirdly, realities in Oman today do not remotely meet the five basic ILO standards, including the right of workers to associate and bargain collectively.

Workers cannot be represented in the workplace unless they have their own representatives and their own organizations. This basic condition is not close to being true in Oman today.

Where there is an organization in an establishment, a representative committee, representatives of the employer belong as well as employees. There is an umbrella committee of representatives committees called the Main Representative Committee. From available information, of the 13 members currently on the MRC, the vast majority are high-echelon officials of companies.

For 8 months our staffs have been in touch with Omani and U.S. Government officials simply to get the facts on the table. We have put together two documents trying to obtain basic information. When the response to the first detailed inquiry came back incomplete, we took the time to send a second document, still without a response in detail. I ask that the second document be entered into the RECORD.

Any fair reading of these documents leads to one conclusion.

From all available information, there are no organizations of workers in Oman today. There are no organizations representing workers and bargaining on their behalf, so it is not surprising that there is not a single collective bargaining agreement today.

In reality, there are organizations made up of management and workers who operate mainly like joint committees to discuss labor management relations and problems.

The recent communication from the U.S. ambassador glosses over this basic fact.

It says: "Although the MOM recognizes the potentially problematic participation of senior officers in some of the committees, a move away from this tendency will take some time, given deeply ingrained cultural traditions that still place importance on tribal affiliations and highly value an individual's personal influence with decision-makers (termed "wasta"). Historically speaking, workers with issues have generally approached human resource representatives or committee members with problems because of these individuals known connections and ability to get things done. The MOM, as well as the committees, believes that it is more important to now raise awareness about the MRC and the RC's roles and promote membership rather than focus on technical limitations of the law."

There are two serious problems with this approach. First, no matter how it is spun, the organizations today representing workers are not organizations of and led by workers. They do not begin to meet the basic worker rights of association and bargaining.

Second, according to the Ambassador's own document, today 70 percent of the workers in Oman are foreign nationals. Of these 80 percent are from the Indian subcontinent (60 percent from India).

Present Omani laws say that members of an RC must be persons who have been there for a year and speak Arabic to be a leader. The Omani government says that the law is not enforced. It is difficult to tell what this means since people do not apply for membership in an RC or pay dues and since there have not been full responses to our questions. But in any event, if foreign workers are active participants in RCs, the vast majority comes