

public and the private sectors. I prefer to think of the bonus payment as being an inducement and enticement for physicians offices to participate in this program. But on the face of it, it's just good medicine, it's just good patient care.

Now, we all heard about the troubles at Walter Reed Hospital a few months ago. I went out to Walter Reed shortly after the story broke in the Washington Post, and here is Master Sergeant Blades. And he took me around building 18, and yeah, it was a crummy building. We could certainly have done a lot better than we were doing for our soldiers on medical hold in building 18.

But the real thing that bothered Master Sergeant Blades was the fact that they had to wait so long to get in to see someone. And when they did, oftentimes their records that they had worked on and they had prepared and they had organized, sometimes those records, after they delivered them to the appropriate clinic, their records would get lost. His specific complaint to me was, I can spend 20 man-hours putting together my medical record and highlighting the areas that are of significance and importance to me. This goes over to one of the clinics. It sits on someone's desk until it is no longer retrievable, and I have to start all over again.

Now, the VA has been very forward thinking in its embrace of electronic medical records and its investment in medical technology. The problem is the Department of Defense medical records do not interface with the VistA system at the Department of Veterans Affairs. So if delivering value to the patient is of paramount importance, it is critical that we make this type of service generally available to our patients.

Mr. Speaker, I was also going to address some of the issues on health care transparency; I probably don't have time to do that. I will simply mention that I have introduced a bill dealing with health care transparency that provides for keying off what is happening in the States, and making certain that every State would have at least some level of transparency in health care pricing.

In Texas, up on the Web right now, and I realize it is going to go through several different iterations and it will evolve considerably over time, but TXpricepoint.org, available on the Internet, allows patients to compare prices on hospitals in their area.

Again, a lot of things we have to consider when we work on the transformation of the health care system in this country. There are good things as far as the public system, there are good things as far as the private system. We have got to be certain that we build on the good things present in both systems, and that we stop doing the things that no longer deliver value to our patients.

U.S. TRADE AGREEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank the Speaker for affording me this opportunity. And to the new Democratic coalition, to have an opportunity to speak a few moments on the new template that has been created as we move forward on trade here in the House of Representatives.

I want to take this opportunity again to applaud the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, my chairman, Mr. RANGEL, as well as chair of the Subcommittee on Trade, Mr. LEVIN, as well as the Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI, and the entire Democratic leadership for what I believe was forcing the Bush administration to agree to a framework that will encompass all future trade agreements, a framework that will ensure that our trade pacts with other nations respect labor, both here in the United States and abroad; that respect the environment both here and abroad; and respect our Nation's future economic success. And specifically, the new Democratic majority achieved a long sought-after goal that our trade agreements will include enforceable labor and environmental standards.

I think it is incredible that our caucus, that charged our leadership and Mr. RANGEL with the authority to negotiate on behalf of our caucus with the administration, with the USTR, the principles that we laid out for him and for our leadership. And what is remarkable is the success that Mr. RANGEL and our other leaders met in those negotiations.

This new framework, this new template, as I said before, illustrates how Democrats, in response to public demands to work in a bipartisan way, how we were able to achieve our goals by working cooperatively with Republicans without compromising what we stand for as Democrats—and that, in large contrast to the stalemates that we saw in recent past Congresses.

I think it is a new day in many respects for the Ways and Means Committee and for the House of Representatives. I hope it goes beyond this new template for fair and free trade agreements: that this can be used as an example in other areas; that we can hopefully work in a more bipartisan spirit, not always agreeing, not always getting along, but working in the spirit of cooperation on behalf of all our constituents, be that Democrat, Republican or Independent.

This new trade policy achieves the core Democratic principles and goes far beyond the provisions in any previous free trade agreement. All pending free trade agreements will be amended to incorporate key Democratic priorities and will be fully enforceable. Key demands that were met are fundamental labor and environmental protections

included in trade agreements that are fully enforceable.

I think it is important to note here, after years of opposition, this administration and the former Republican-controlled Congress agreed to include in the text of the agreement the five ILO worker rights: first, the right to association. Secondly, the right to collectively bargain. It also prohibits child labor. It prohibits slave labor. It prohibits discrimination. For the first time, environmental standards cannot be lowered, and will be fully enforceable in free trade agreements going forward.

The agreement upon framework expands access to life-saving medicines in developing countries as well. Trade agreements with South Korea and Colombia present additional and distinct obstacles that need to be addressed. This is a framework; it is not *carte blanche* for every free trade agreement moving forward.

The framework is about leveling the playing field for America's workers, for our farmers and businesses, and promoting a trade policy that advances U.S. economic interests around the world, but also advances what we stand for as Americans.

Democrats will continue to work across the aisle to make sure our country stays in the forefront of this globalizing economy and this globalizing world. Working across the aisle, Democrats will educate our youth and upgrade worker skills on the job, and stimulate science, education and research as we move forward.

Democrats are committed to moving beyond the current trade adjustment assistance, TAA system, to provide meaningful support, training and revitalization programs for entire communities which have been hurt by the effects of trade and technology. This bipartisan framework will keep America as a global economic leader and a champion for the principles Americans all believe in.

I am so happy to be joined this evening by a fellow member of the New Democratic Coalition, ALLYSON SCHWARTZ from Philadelphia, who would also like to share her thoughts about this new template that we have been able to create here in the House of Representatives.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. I thank Congressman JOE CROWLEY from New York, who has been a leader in the New Democratic Coalition. He has really been, as a member of both the coalition and of the Ways and Means Committee, as I am, really out front and really working to make sure that we are as economically competitive as we need to be in this country. And that means all American workers being given new opportunities. And that really does involve making sure that we get these trade agreements right.

So I want to thank the Congressman, and thank him for asking me to join him this evening.

What I want to do is to add my words, some of them will be similar, I

share some of the same feelings you do, about how important it is for us as new Democrats to participate and to push to make sure that we get trade policies in this country that, in fact, are committed to advancing sustainable and responsible trade between ourselves and the rest of the world.

We recognize that this is a new day in the way we work. It is a global marketplace. We need to recognize that, we need to recognize these new marketplaces.

I, too, want to recognize our leadership on the Democratic side, Speaker PELOSI and Chairman RANGEL and SANDER LEVIN, who really are absolutely committed to doing these trade agreements differently and bringing a Democratic perspective to some of the goals and ambitions that we have for our constituents and for the American people to really try and do things differently.

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But let me also say that I understand very clearly, as I think all of us do here in Congress, that the new global economy has created real challenges for American businesses, for American workers, for American consumers and for American families, and that we need to do things differently in the 21st century. We need to recognize the competition that we are in, and we need to do a number of different things. Trade agreements are one piece of what we have to do, and do them in a way that recognizes how difficult this issue is for so many Americans. But it is not all we are going to do.

So we are going to talk specifically about trade this evening, but I think as you started to speak to towards the ends of our remarks, the fact is as New Democrats, and I hope for all of us in Congress, we need to work together to make sure that Americans are well prepared for the jobs of the 21st century, and that means investing in education, demanding more from our educational systems, demanding access to higher education and job training. It means making sure that people displaced by globalization, by the changing marketplace, have access to continuing education and job training, and that they are trained for jobs that are family-sustaining, that help them be able to do all they want to do for their families, and that we help American businesses be as innovative and as technologically advanced as they possibly can.

Our support as New Democrats for research and development, for ways and means, for tax credits that help advance the use of technology in our businesses and to make sure that we are competitive are all things that we need to do, in addition to making sure that our trade policies are really going to work for American businesses and American workers.

You went into some detail, and I think that was important, but let me certainly say that what we have done

and what has been put forward by Chairman RANGEL and by Congressman SANDY LEVIN really is an enormous change over the agreements that we have seen in the last 6 years in particular. I want to say I am very proud of the fact that they held really firmly on putting forward, making sure that we and other nations really meet international labor standards. They were missing in our trade agreements.

If we are going to bring up the standards of workers in other countries, if we are going to be able to compete with workers and businesses in other countries, we need to have them make a commitment to those ILO standards, to the international labor standards.

We also stood firmly on making sure we were going to demand that other nations work on environmental protections. That means when we are dealing with Peru, we are talking about logging and making sure that they meet commitments.

Of course, we will need to make sure on an ongoing basis that language that is written in these trade agreements is enforced. It does not help us to write good language, although that is the first step; we must make sure there is an enforcement. I think many Democrats, and I hope that it is true for all of us, are concerned about the lack of enforcement that has gone on in the last 6 years. I myself have raised some of those questions in the Ways and Means Committee hearings.

So we are not finished by any means, even by speaking tonight. This is a broad template. We are referring to it as a new trade policy for America. But we feel very strongly, I certainly do, that we have made an enormous step forward here in making sure of the trade agreements, and we expect the template to be first used in our pending agreements with Panama and Peru.

There are obstacles and other issues that have to be dealt with in our trade agreements. This is just part of the special ones that often have to be dealt with. They certainly will be with Colombia, with South Korea, that are not spoken to in this template that will be very specific.

But the fact that this framework requires and demands that we will see higher labor standards in other countries, that we will see higher environmental standards, that we will see a commitment to really meeting these international standards, is a commitment that I think we have made to American workers. As I say, it is a piece of helping to make sure that American businesses and American workers can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We will continue to, I certainly will, make sure that we do everything we can to make sure our workers are well-trained and prepared for the jobs of the next century, that those jobs are here in America, that we can compete in an international global marketplace.

This is really our responsibility in Congress is to be able to say what we

expect of these trade agreements, to put language in those trade agreements. But the fact that we can work with this administration; you know, it has been hard to work with this administration on a lot of issues. The fact is this has been a breakthrough on trade.

The administration wants to see these trade agreements, but we weren't willing to relent without these high standards on labor and on the environment, and, again, I am going to add on enforcement.

I will say also that we fully expect that the work that we are going to do on education and on research and development and on innovation really is going to, I hope, put ourselves forward in making sure that we are going to be as competitive; that we add the work we are going to do on energy, bringing down the cost of energy; that we can add what we hope to do on health care and bringing down the cost of health care for our businesses and creating more access to health care.

We are really looking long term, because this is long term, in making sure that America continues to be the leading industrialized Nation in the world, that our people live at the highest standards, and that they can compete in a global marketplace in a way that we have always been proud of American products, and we will always be, and that we will, in fact, be able to make sure that our workers have the access to jobs, and that around the world we see all of the economies grow and expand and create new markets for us as well.

So I yield back. I will be happy to go into, as I know Mr. CROWLEY will be, into some of the specifics about some of these standards. But, really, I think what we want to do tonight is say as Democrats, we believe in the American worker. We believe in American business. We know we can compete. We need fair trade agreements that are enforced by this administration, and I know we will stay right on it to make sure that happens.

Mr. CROWLEY. One of the things that I think is remarkable about the template is that this is the base. This is not the ceiling. This is where we start from. And it is also precedent-setting. We have been asking, I wouldn't say begging, but we have been pleading with the other side to include these ILO declarations for many, many, many years now.

Unless you have served in the House for the past few years, you may not have the same appreciation for the dysfunctionality of the Ways and Means Committee and how it was or was not working in the past. It was either you take the agreement and you vote for it, or you don't. That is not a way, I think, to build bipartisanship. That is not a way to build consensus on any issue, let alone an issue that is as contentious as trade is for both Democrats and Republicans.

I think the American people, Allison, I think you will agree, want to see us

working together. It doesn't mean we always have to agree on everything, but they want to see us working together and crafting a template like this, that there is a give and take on all sides. I think when anyone enters into negotiation on behalf of any party, the understanding is there will be some give and take.

There will be some who are not entirely happy with every aspect of an agreement, but I think on the whole, we have to look at what Mr. RANGEL and Mr. LEVIN have been able to craft here and understand that just about everything we wanted as Democrats is in this template.

It doesn't mean that we will all, either Democrat or Republican, support all of the free trade agreements moving forward, but it is the floor and not the ceiling, and it gives us a great place, I think, to start.

One thing to also recount is that many of the nations that we have talked to, whether it was Peru or Panama or even Colombia, have said they have no problem with us including these provisions. They had no problem if the former Congresses would have included them, but they didn't include them.

Under this new Congress, this new Democratically controlled House and Senate, we said, no more. It will no longer be the way it used to be. It will no longer be a rubber stamp. We are going to impose a new template that incorporates some of the things that we believe are core standards for the American worker, but also for us as Democrats and for the environment.

We have been joined as well by our colleague from Wisconsin Mr. KIND, a cochair of the New Democratic Coalition. I know he would like to participate.

Mr. KIND. If the gentleman will yield, I am very, very glad my colleagues here tonight are taking time to try to explain what all the news has been about the last couple of weeks, and this is a very important template of trade that has been reached with the Democratic leadership here in Congress, with the Bush administration.

Let me congratulate both of you for the leadership you have shown on the Ways and Means Committee on this issue and so many other economic issues that affect all of our constituents across the country.

I also want to commend Chairman RANGEL, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee; and SANDY LEVIN, who is the chair of the Trade Subcommittee; and Speaker PELOSI for the negotiation and hard work that they put into this template of how we move forward on trade agreements in this country.

For the first time I believe that the values of this Nation are finally starting to be recognized and reflected as a basis of these trade agreements; the attempt to try to elevate standards upwards, rather than having a race to the bottom when it comes to trade rela-

tions, because so many of our constituents have felt for some time, and we have heard it in our own congressional district, that the trade agreements really don't speak to their needs, that they are competing on an uneven playing field in relation to the rest of the world.

That is really what this agreement was about, was trying to level the playing field, to try to elevate standards globally, not only influencing and recognizing the needs of our workers here in America, but trying to influence and recognize the needs of workers throughout the rest of the world by having basic principles as part of the trade agreement, core international labor standards as part of these trade agreements as we move forward, environmental protections, all on an even par of enforcement with other important provisions that are part of the trade agreement.

But let me also admit the sheer political fact, and that is there is very little political upside in supporting trade in Congress these days because it is so unpopular back home. I think because of that, because of the growth of globalization and the interrelationship that we have now in the world economy, very few workers feel that there has been a real upside to them.

That is what we are trying to accomplish in this trade agreement is a recognition that they, too, have a place at the table when this comes to trade; that they do have rights that need to be protected and assured; that we should be a Nation that stands up in opposition to the exploitation of child labor or slave labor; that other workers around the world, as they do in the United States, have the right to collectively bargain so they have better leverage in negotiating decent, fair working conditions and compensation for themselves and their families, wherever they may be living in this planet.

But, to me, trade has been more than just goods and products and services crossing borders, although that is what most people think about as trade. Trade is also an important tool in our diplomatic arsenal. It is also about how we, the United States, chooses to engage the rest of the world, whether it is a negative engagement or a positive engagement.

Nothing could be more positive than having a healthy trade relationship with rules in place that everyone has to live by. I happen to believe something that Cordell Hull, who was FDR's Secretary of State, said many, many years ago, and that is when goods and products cross borders, armies don't. There is so much conflict, and there are so many rivalries, and there is so much violence in this world today that trade, if used right, with the right rules of engagement, can be a positive experience not only for our own economic needs here in the United States, but also abroad. To me, that is what this agreement really speaks to is in-

corporating these types of values now as we move forward.

We have got a few trade agreements that we are trying to work on; Panama and Peru, for instance. Colombia and South Korea may need some more work in talking to a lot of our colleagues, but at least we are establishing what those rules need to look like. Now we can get down and haggle out the details as we do move forward.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. If the gentleman will yield, I think the way you put it, I wanted to just echo that. What trade agreements really are are setting the rules. I think you are right. There has been, I hear it, I think we all hear it. We go in our districts and people say trade is ruining us. Yet many of those same people work in companies that sell products overseas and are proud of the work that they do. They realize how specialized, how important the work is that we do, and how we often are still setting the standards in the world marketplace.

But the reason to set these rules and to set the rules as strongly as we can, and we are setting them now, it doesn't mean they won't be changed at some point. They may need some tweaking, which is why you renegotiate these agreements. They don't go on forever. It is a dynamic marketplace we are in.

But it also means we can then go enforce those rules. And when we see lack of enforcement, I understand that frustration. I have businesses come to me, and I have tried to advocate on their behalf to say, wait a minute, it is in the rules, and we are unfairly disadvantaged. Is there something we can do? Sometimes there is.

We have seen dumping of steel. We are concerned about currency manipulation in China. These are complicated issues. In some ways, I am learning some of them myself.

But the fact is there are such different systems in these different countries, and we need to recognize that. But there are so many nations now that want to have a capitalist system and be able to have private investment and to be able to compete with us. At the same time there are very different rules in some of these countries, so we have to have a mechanism for interpreting what is fair and what is not.

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That is part of the reason we do these trade agreements. So if there is unfair manipulation, if there is dumping and State support for a company that makes it very difficult for us to compete, we have the rights within these agreements to bring forward those complaints and to have a fair hearing.

Mr. KIND. We had a very important caucus meeting earlier today, the Democratic Caucus, talking about the provisions of this trade agreement.

What I heard in that caucus, and I am not going to speak on behalf of those who spoke, but there was a lot of pent-up frustration. For the last 6 years with one-party control, our

ideas, thoughts and values were excluded in terms of the template of trade agreements and what was in these bilateral regional trade agreements coming before Congress.

But also, as you just recognized, there is a big concern about the lack of enforcement of existing trade agreements and the likelihood of enforcement being done by this current administration in future trade agreements when they come before Congress asking for our ratification. That is a legitimate concern, a concern that I hear back home from a lot of my constituents as well.

Unless the administration wants to step up and start enforcing these trade agreement and say we entered into these trade agreements for a reason, and that is to uphold the terms of the agreements and make sure everyone is playing by the same rules, trade confidence in this country is going to continue to ebb, and it is going to get worse. I think that would be disastrous ultimately for our long-term national economic growth and for helping our workers and expanding economic opportunities both at home and abroad.

So there is a big question mark with the majority of the people in this Congress with regard to the administration's willingness to enforce these agreements.

Mr. CROWLEY. I think one of the aspects of the template that we are talking about this evening, dealing primarily with the environment, for instance, is something that has not gotten as much attention as the labor and the ILO declaration has gotten in terms of its incorporation within the template.

But I think it is important to note for the RECORD that the policy, as it moves forward under this template that the Democrats have created, will require our trading partners to enforce environmental laws already on the books, that they have agreed to, and comply with several multilateral environmental agreements, MEAs, which would include: the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species; the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances; Convention on Marine Pollution, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention; the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; the International Whaling Convention; and the Convention on Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.

The U.S. is a signatory to all of these agreements, and I believe that free trade agreements cannot be used to undermine any of these MEAs. I think we all agree, as Democrats, that protecting the environment and protecting our planet is something that is an important element in any free trade agreement.

Mr. KIND. I look forward to working with my colleague here who, I think, appreciates this. As we go forward with this new template, we also need to focus on capacity building in a lot of these nations that we are trying to

enter into agreements with, countries like Panama and Peru that aren't exactly wealthy and have a lot of resources, but to enable them to establish the institutions so they can do a better job of policing labor standards or environmental standards within their own countries. I think there is a great need and calling for us to do that.

But, ultimately, there has to be a willingness on our part and the administration's to take these agreements seriously and to enforce them seriously.

We all hear it back home; when you see someone losing their job or a plant closing down, it is usually laid at the doorstep of one of two factors. Either it is bad trade or it is illegal immigration. It is obviously more complex than that, but we need to have a broader discussion within the context of trade, as well, in regard to worker empowerment so that when people do lose a job, they don't have to make a showing of trade relation in order to get any assistance from the government. When a factory closes, it does not matter to the family affected whether it is trade related or some other circumstance, because they feel the pain the same way.

We have to step up our efforts in education and worker training in this country so our workers have the skills to compete in a 21st century economy and so they can be full participants. We should also be talking more about portability of health care and pension and retirement security, so it is not necessarily tied to a single job or occupation; and when they lose it, they lose all of that, the whole fabric of supporting their family is destroyed overnight.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. We spoke before about all of the other things that we need to do to ensure that our businesses and workers are fairly able to compete and excel.

One of the other things that I was going to say is that when we look at these new environmental standards, it also creates opportunities for American businesses. We have been speaking in a different context about the way we are going to create more energy-efficient businesses and products. And I am sure you have been visited, as I have been visited, by entrepreneurs across this country who have great ideas and are trying to move to market with solar and wind and biofuels and are ready to go.

When you think about these other countries that are trying to move very quickly to gear up and create new businesses, they are going to be looking for that technology and they are going to be looking for the scientists and the engineers. Hopefully, we will do a little patent protection and intellectual property protection, but this is where America has been so great, have that innovation and be on the cutting edge to do the very next thing that will then be bought by not only other American companies, but by other nations' com-

panies as well. I think there is a hunger across this globe for that kind of interaction and cooperation. Market working, that is really what this is about, and trade capacity.

So what this does, and it is not the end-all and be-all. I think that is something we want the American people to understand. These are trade agreements, some of the rules and trying to make sure that it is fair for American businesses and American workers, and then are enforced. But we have a lot of other work to do on education and health care and research and development and some of our tax laws to, in fact, make sure that we can compete and it is fair.

But I think we, as new Democrats, in particular, are very excited about this challenge. It is scary. We hear from families who are committed to making some of those other changes, particularly in trade assistance adjustment. I think we will. So we recognize how difficult this is. There have been certainly some serious bumps, and those are very, very hard for families.

But we also have seen businesses grow and thrive and we have seen individual workers go on to do remarkable work as well. That is what we are trying to do with not just the trade agreements, but with all of the work that we are trying to do in here in the Congress.

Mr. CROWLEY. We have been joined by another member of the New Democratic Coalition, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) who has a keen understanding of a number of the issues we just spoke about, trade being one, and immigration being another. That may be a subject for another evening for us to talk about.

HENRY. I know you want to weigh in a bit as well on the trade template that the new Democratic leadership has been able to forge.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. CROWLEY. I certainly appreciate the hard work of Speaker PELOSI and Chairman RANGEL and the ranking member, Mr. MCCRERY, as well as SANDY LEVIN, working with the administration to come up with an agreement. This is very important.

Let me give you some of my personal experience. I am from Laredo, Texas, which is the largest inland port in the U.S. If you want to see trade, go to a place like Laredo, Texas. I have seen not only the primary jobs that are created, but also the secondary jobs it creates when we talk about international trade.

When you look at the U.S. economy, the \$12 trillion economy is bolstered by trade, which is a pillar of our American economic power. In 2005, U.S. exports to the rest of the world totaled \$1.2 trillion and supported one in five of the U.S. manufacturing jobs we have. Jobs directly linked to the export of goods pay 13 percent to 18 percent more than the U.S. jobs that we have.

Agriculture exports hit a record high in 2005 and now account for 926 jobs

that we have. So trade creates jobs, and I think the balanced approach of the new Democrats plays a role in developing this and is something that is so important to us.

I believe in trade for several reasons. It is not only the economics, but the other thing is, we have to stay engaged in the dialogue. If, for whatever reason, the United States would turn against trade, that is not going to stop the world. Other countries are going to continue entering into their own trade agreements. That is why it is important that the United States continues trade negotiations and stays in the dialogue.

If I can say one thing, and then I will leave it open, one of the things that I have seen is ever since President John F. Kennedy talked about the Alliance for Progress, he looked at countries like Peru and Colombia, to make sure that we have that dialogue with them because if we are able to do that, then we can bolster those economies. And again, talking about immigration just briefly, but the more jobs you create in those countries, hopefully the fewer people will come to the United States. Being on the border, we see those people trying to get better jobs in the United States.

Mr. KIND. I think you are exactly right. I would submit that in a short while we will be engaged in a immigration reform debate in this Congress. But as long as we have a huge economic disparity right across our border and throughout the Western Hemisphere, really we will be battling the issue of people wanting to come to the United States to realize the hope and the promise of our country and a better way of life for themselves and their families.

Trade is a way to try to elevate people's standards upwards and create job opportunities across the globe. Or we will always be at the losing end of the immigration proposition because of what the United States has to offer and the temptation to enter this country either legally or illegally for a better way of life.

Mr. CROWLEY. We are talking about uplifting these other countries, as well, by transposing our core values as it pertains to labor standards, as it pertains to the environment. I think that is something that should not be lost on anyone when we look at what we are attempting to do here.

Talking about Kennedy, talking about anyone who has looked to the hemisphere that we are in, as well as the Southern Hemisphere, in many respects you cannot move that hemisphere elsewhere. We are connected by land mass.

I think as we move forward on the immigration debate and we discuss this more and more, many of us believe we should be helping those countries with direct aid and assistance, to help them become better democracies or become democracies.

We see what is happening in some of those countries in South America that

are trying to experiment with other forms of government that we don't necessarily agree with. It is not the way that we would prefer to see South America move. I think that is why being able to bolster some of those countries down there and show that there is a positive benefit to be gained by having a positive relationship with the United States in this template in trade and moving forward could very well be an example that could be set for other countries in the region.

We have been joined by our friend and colleague from New York, Congressman MEEKS, who has certainly been engaged on many trade and immigration issues, and has worked with Venezuela and other countries.

And I would love to have your input as well.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. You are exactly right, Mr. CROWLEY. Some people would like to say individuals, particularly in our hemisphere, that globalization and trade is taking advantage of them, that they are poor. Yet these individuals, long before globalization existed, were poor and taken advantage of. Here is an opportunity because of globalization to give them a hand up.

Part of the problem has been that people have turned their backs on them. When we trade and create jobs and opportunities for them in their country, as well as making sure that we are creating jobs and opportunity in our country, we have what is called a win/win situation.

For example, there is something called FedEx. For every 40 packages that FedEx sends someplace else, we create a job in the United States of America.

Mr. CROWLEY. If the gentleman would yield, I prefer to say for every 40 packages UPS delivers, we create one additional union job.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. And I concur. We are creating opportunities for individuals here in the United States of America, as well as giving individuals an opportunity for jobs in these foreign countries.

Many of the people are in the informal sectors in their communities right now. When you go to South America, you can talk about Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, they are in the informal sector. What we are doing is creating a formal sector where they can get health benefits and talk about creating a future with pensions for their kids for tomorrow. We are talking about giving them a hand up which they don't have now in the informal sector.

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Mr. CROWLEY. We're also talking about trade capacity building.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Absolutely.

Mr. CROWLEY. They are going to want to afford our products the more they can afford our products.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. As a result of that, and I'm direct evidence of it, what they will do is then they will

begin to educate their kids so that they can now send their kids to school. And that becomes their focus—to make sure that the next generation is better than theirs as far as education is concerned and health care. It's exactly what we've done in this country. So why should we just say it's exclusively for us and not want to share the benefits of what we've gained in this country with others? That's what leadership is all about, and that's all that we're doing here.

We're not saying that we're going to turn our backs on other individuals, say we're going to help them, and we're going to help yourselves, because you know what, the number one jobs, when you look about creating jobs in America, it's services. The services are creating jobs over and over and over and time and again. And what we're doing also by, you know, trading with our services in other areas, we're creating jobs and opportunities, and, in fact, our businesses. I often say this, become our best ambassadors because they look at the jobs that Americans have created, and they say, well, thank you for lifting us up, thank you, for showing us that you are not turning your backs on us, thank you, because we're the only superpower in the world. So folks are looking at us to be leaders in that regard, and if we turn our backs on them, leaving these individuals not to have hope and opportunity for tomorrow, then we will become the ones that's isolated them, and we should not.

It's good foreign policy. It's good domestic policy, and it just makes overall, good moral sense.

Mr. KIND. There are a lot of positive features to trade, but the congressional district I represent, western Wisconsin, is still heavily manufacturing, a lot of agriculture, and there's been a lot of displacement and a lot of jobs lost.

And I don't think any of us here on the floor tonight are promising that with this new template of trade that we're going to be able to guarantee everyone's job in this country. You just can't do it. In fact, each generation of Americans have had to wrestle with their own transition and economic displacement that's occurred at that time period. Whether we're moving from the agrarian to the industrial age, from the industrial age to the information age, to the next new thing, there are going to be displacements.

As long as we can remain the most innovative and creative Nation in the world, which we've been able to sustain for some time, we're going to be able to make those adjustments probably a lot easier than other people around the globe.

I don't think anyone's here to offer this hope or promise that everyone's job is going to be guaranteed with this new template right now. We can't do that any more than we can shut down the information age or shut down the World Wide Web and the Internet. Now with the push of a button, we've got services crossing borders and collaborations being created that we've never

imagined before, and that's a large part of globalization today.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. I just want to make a point here that when you talk about lifting up, I want to make sure that people understand what trade agreements really are about. This is not the foreign aid bill, and we will discuss it in another moment, and I think there's important work that we do through some of that.

This is also saying to the countries, if you're going to be our trading partner, you have to allow certain labor standards. Some of them are really very well known. We'll not allow child labor or slave labor. But we're also saying that your workers have a right to organize, have a right to bargain, and to be able to have workers in some countries that have not had this opportunity to be able to band together.

We know how important it is, as part of our own history continues to be in speaking up on behalf of workers and making sure they're paid fairly and treated fairly, that our rules are fair.

Mr. CROWLEY. Free from physical harm.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Exactly. We know there's a huge struggle.

So part of what we're saying is if you're going to be our trading partner, then there's certain expectations about the way you treat people, and that is true in the workplace. And once we're partners, there are also broader issues, of course, about human rights and about rule of law, and, you know, we have some deep concerns about this as well. And this becomes sometimes complicated, but having that trade agreement often allows the beginning debate and engages us to be able to make, in some ways, some of these other expectations for themselves and for us as well to be part of the world community, to be part of the world economy.

And part of it is we don't want our own people to be disadvantaged, but because we understand they have a right to organize, they have a right to speak up, and if we have some kind of engagement with them, then their standard of living will improve and, of course, hopefully their human rights.

Mr. KIND. I think you're exactly right. One of the forces, quite frankly, that we are contending with in the United States, in this hemisphere, especially in South America, is a gentleman by the name of Chavez, the President of Venezuela, who's been fond of traveling around, spending his petrodollars all around, and delivering a very anti-American message.

I think one of the reasons that message is starting to resonate, much to our concern, is because a lot of the workers in those countries where he's visited have felt excluded and left out of trade agreements. What's in it for them? And finally, for the first time, with this agreement, we're starting to address our concern for their needs as well.

Mr. CROWLEY. If I could interject, no longer will our trade agreements be

negotiated by our government on behalf of and solely for the benefit of multinational corporations. This is also under this template an opportunity to negotiate and have the American worker be a part of those negotiations, at least have a sense that someone here on the Democratic Caucus is looking out for their interests and for the interests of the poor people of the countries we're talking about.

Mr. CUELLAR. Let me just follow up on the points that they make.

First of all, for the people, like the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania said, if people are interested in labor standards, the environment, raising up the wages of certain countries, the only way we can do this is by having some sort of dialogue. If we retreat back, then there's no vehicle to use to raise those standards, and this is why those trade agreements are very, very important.

The second point is, and Mr. CROWLEY mentioned this, if you're interested in the rule of law, if you're interested in the principles of democracy, if you're interested in the economics, like the gentleman from New York said, we have to have some sort of vehicle to engage those countries, because if we don't engage them like you said, other countries will do it. So either we get engaged, or somebody else is going to do it.

Let me just give you a brief history about what happened to us in Central America a few years ago. We decided to turn our back to a lot of those countries. What happened? In the 1980s, you'll recall the Communists, Nicaragua, the sandanistas all came in, and all of a sudden the United States said, oh, you know what, we better get engaged. So, instead of having trade agreements, we started sending arms to those countries.

The response to that was the Caribbean-based initiative, and, of course, we saw what happened with the other trade agreement we did. This is why history should teach us that if we don't get engaged with countries, then somebody else is going to fill the vacuum, whether it's Chavez, like you mentioned a while ago, or it's going to be Castro or somebody else. But if we don't stay engaged, we're going to lose this. So this is why it's so important that we stay engaged in these trade agreements.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. You're absolutely right, and here's another reason why trade agreements are important, because if you look at particularly our recent trade agreements, what they do is they level the trade balance. Because a lot of these nations, when you talk about Central America, they were already open to come to our market. They were open to come to the United States. We didn't have access to theirs. So we were able to level the trade imbalances.

And, in fact, when you talk about where we have the biggest imbalance, happens to be with China, but you

know what the fact of the matter is? We do not have an FTA agreement with China. We don't even have one with India. We've negotiated them. We were able to negotiate them so that we can balance it so that it's fair to both sides as opposed to it being unfair on one side.

You use the FTAs as an agreement to balance the playing field, to balance the trade imbalances to a large degree as well, as well as create hope and opportunity for people both abroad and at home.

Some folks say they don't like trade at all. Well, I challenge them, especially if you're poor. I come from the southeastern Queens in New York. I was raised in public housing. There's certain things that we can't afford, and I look at poor people, a number of them, some of the trade has helped them because they can now buy some goods that they may not have otherwise been able to afford. So we've got to look at both sides of this. It has created some jobs.

Where we've got to make sure that we're focused in the country is the competitiveness issue. So we've got to make sure that we're educating our young people so that they can take the jobs, the high-paying jobs that, I might add, that globalization and us being a leader in technology and information technology in particular and the services, that we can create opportunities for them.

So, yeah, are there some dangers. If we allow our public educational system to continue to go downhill, and we don't now focus on it, and we don't make sure that our people are educated so that they can take the high-paying jobs that are being created, then, yes, we're in danger of succeeding as a country, period. Education is our greatest resource, and competitiveness is where we've got to go, and that's what our focus should be.

We should be working out together to make sure that we're competitive with the rest of the globe because otherwise we lose out on this. It's not as if to say globalization is a bad thing that's going to go away tomorrow. Obviously it's not, and it's helping millions of people.

There are 6 billion people in the world, 6 billion people in the world. There's only 300 million of us in the United States of America, 300 million. And of the 6 billion people in the world, over 3 billion of them live on less than \$2 a day. Why? They're in the informal sector. Why? There's no hope and opportunities for them.

Don't you think that as we being the only world superpower, that we can do something better; being humane, being the country that we are, we could do something better for them?

Mr. KIND. You're exactly right. We're less than 4 percent of the world population, and we can no sooner turn ourselves into a fortress of solitude and hope to maintain economic progress and opportunity in our own country.

But the Democrats in Congress haven't been dealing with trade in a vacuum. We've been promoting this innovation agenda for some time. We have had legislation on the floor to try to enhance further fields of study in those crucial fields of math, science, engineering, technology, those fields that will enable our students and workers to be innovative and creative and develop into high-paying jobs that we hope to see here in the United States.

We've been moving that legislation forward, working with our Senate counterparts. We're trying to increase research investment in the National Institutes of Health, for instance, so we can be at the cutting edge of medical and scientific breakthroughs. All this is interwoven into the economic agenda the Democrats have been standing for that the New Democratic Coalition has been a big part of in helping to formulate that agenda.

That's, I think, the direction we need, and I think the American people want to hear that type of message and see that type of agenda. Our concern is there's a lot of economic anxiety throughout the country, and they want to know what their role is going to be in this global marketplace. Perhaps more importantly, they want to know what kind of future their children have to look forward to.

The Democrats for the first time have been able to get legislation to the floor that speaks to those needs, that starts speaking to those anxieties. Will it solve all those problems? No, but I think it's the best hope that we have to make sure that our country is well positioned to stay competitive globally.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. I know we're concluding our hour, but I just think that's a great note, as New Democrats, for us to end on.

It is important for us to move forward on these trade agreements. I think all of us would say this is a major breakthrough for the Democrats to see this kind of labor and environmental standards and kind of enforcement and commitment to do that.

But the real question is, this is just a piece of the puzzle. This is only one part of it, and we're committed to a much broader agenda of making sure our young people are prepared for the future, that some of our slightly older people also have the enormous opportunities for new directions for them as well, and that our businesses can be competitive.

So we've a lot of work to do to making sure that our tax policy and our trade policy and our education and health care policies and energy policies all contribute to making sure that America has that economic capacity and opportunity for all of our people.

Mr. CUELLAR. Let me just make two points to conclude.

First one, let's talk about the Constitution. Why are these trade agreements different? Why are they going to be different; whether it's Peru, Colombia, Panama or Korea, why are they

going to be different? First of all, in the past, the President pretty much negotiated the agreement, and it was an up-or-down deal. This time, the Congress, through our leadership, through the New Democrats, we're asserting ourselves through the commerce clause. That is, we have the right to assert ourselves to make sure that we're part of the process so we can set up the framework. And this is why these trade agreements from now are going to have a different type of framework, because Congress is getting involved in the development of that trade policy, number one.

Number two, I will conclude with this. In 2005, the U.S. exports to the rest of the world totaled \$1.2 trillion. Think about that, \$1.2 trillion. Jobs have been created all across the country not only by big companies, but also by the medium and small companies.

Second of all, jobs that are directly linked to the export of goods pay 13 to 18 percent more than the other U.S. jobs. I have seen this personally in my hometown where we have this trading community. It works, and we have to stay engaged, and this is why this new framework that the New Democrats have developed along with our leadership will provide the pathway for new agreements in the future.

And thank you again for all the work that y'all have done.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Let me conclude with this.

Number one, I want to just compliment Chairman RANGEL and Chairman LEVIN. They have done a great job. I mean, it's something the Democrats have been asking for since the 1990s, I've been in Congress, to make sure it's been included in every trade bill. They've done a fantastic job to make sure that we protect environmental rights and labor rights, et cetera.

We care about those individuals that we know are going to be hurt, because in any agreement there are people that get hurt, and when we talk about we've got to do a real comprehensive program so people can be retrained and go back to work.

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Now that's even more than just trade agreements, because, you know, if you check it out, really, more people have lost their jobs through efficiency and technology. Think about it.

How many people does it take to produce a car today than it did yesterday. When you need a telephone operator, does anyone pick up? It's technology that picks up the telephone. You know, EZPass, and all the conveniences that we currently have. We better do a better job.

I think that Mr. RANGEL and Mr. LEVIN have put that in that we will do a better job, and retraining Americans who are hurt, not only because of trade, but who are out of the job for any reason, whether it's technology or because of a trade agreement.

As Democrats, we are focused on that. We can do that. We can do good

by our folks at home, but we also can do good by the people abroad so that we can be the leaders of the Nation. We are the world's only super power.

Mr. KIND. I also want to commend JIM MCCREERY, who is ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee, and the Republican colleagues on Ways and Means who are also embracing this template to go forward on trade agreements. But as Chairman RANGEL reminded all of us today in caucus, this new template doesn't commit any single member on future trade agreements. We will still have the opportunity to review them when the President formally submits them for our consideration. We will see if they are the best deal struck for our Nation and for our constituents' best interest.

I think now, with this agreement, the template is finally shaping up to where we can get wider bipartisan support. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done. We can't hold this out as the silver bullet to the challenges that our workers are experiencing day in and day out, but trade is going to be an important part of our economic equation, whether we like it or not, because of the effects of global warming and the ease of transporting goods and products, services, across borders, all that is breaking down.

The question is, whether we roll up in a fetal position and pretend it's not happening and try to pursue neo-isolationist policies, or whether we embrace this change and try to make the changes that we have to, to be in the best position to stay competitive.

That's really, I think, what the discussion will be about in the coming weeks when we start analyzing these trade agreements coming forward. I want to thank my colleagues for taking some time this evening to discuss a very important issue on the floor. Hopefully, we will have some more discussions in the future.

Mr. CROWLEY. Let me close by just saying thank you, thank you to the gentlelady of Ohio for chairing this hour of debate, as well as all my colleagues for being here this evening and participating in this free-flowing discussion on this new template.

This new template, as we go forward, it really is a new day in terms of trade negotiations, and the relationship between the minority and the majority here in the House of Representatives, the comity that has now been brought back, I think, to the Ways and Means Committee, to the House in some respects. Hopefully, this can be an example of other things we can work on in the future on behalf of all of our constituents, again, Democrat, Republican, Independent and the like, to move the agenda of America forward.

I want to thank each of my colleagues for participating this evening.

PATRIOTISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SUTTON). Under the Speaker's announced