

with us, the Members of Congress, on behalf of their constituents, what does this mean for the lives of our soldiers? What does this mean for the number of those who have lost their lives already and their brothers and sisters may now be in the greater line of fire with people being armed, and armed with what?

What level of weaponry will they have, and how far will this weaponry be able to go, and what will they be able to do with it? It is obviously a challenge.

It is time to bring our soldiers home. If this is what we are doing, let's transfer the fight to the Iraqi national Army and the Iraqi police.

Let's bring our soldiers home.

REPORT ON H.R. 2643, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Ms. KAPTUR, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-187) on the bill (H.R. 2643) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

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

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

U.S. TRADE POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, it's a great pleasure that we are talking this evening about an issue very important to a lot of us in this Congress, and a lot of folks throughout the United States of America, and that issue is trade.

I would like to yield to a colleague of mine. We came in this Congress together, and she has been very active in the trade deal and has established with me the trade working group in this Congress, Congresswoman LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California.

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in addressing the House and the American people regarding U.S. trade policy and its effect on working families.

Let me start by saying, first of all, that I am committed to trade. That's

right, I think that trade is good for America and its working families. If we do it the right way, trade can increase the availability of raw materials for production. Trade can also open markets for American goods and can bring exciting new products to American consumers. While I recognize the benefits of trade, not all trade agreements are created equal.

On May 10, the administration and Members of this House announced a "new policy on trade." Well, it's about time. Democrats have been calling for a new direction in trade for years, and I am pleased that the administration has finally taken initial steps to improve its trade policy.

But, alas, it is too little, too late. This new trade policy is little more than a rehash of the same failed NAFTA model that has been hurting U.S. families for more than a decade. According to the administration, the new additions to the Peru and Panama agreements would add long-sought labor and environmental protections to the basic NAFTA framework.

Unfortunately, even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce says that these new worker and environmental protections can't be enforced. That's not very encouraging, is it? Supporting this new deal requires us to believe in two things: number one, the actual benefits of the NAFTA free trade model; and, number two, the promises of the Bush administration.

We are supposed to trust an administration that has demonstrated its commitment to anything but the truth. Having misled us on issues like domestic wire-tapping programs, the war in Iraq, global warming, and the firing of U.S. attorneys, it now seeks our trust. How are we supposed to trust a record like that?

We have also learned some very hard lessons after more than 10 years of free trade failures. As we hear more familiar promise about the new trade deal, let's look at some of the old ones. NAFTA was supposed to solve illegal integration by developing a robust economy in Mexico that would allow hard-working people to provide for their families and stay at home. Well, that didn't work.

CAFTA was supposed to include bold new safety and wage protections for workers, but these protections are disappointingly weak, allowing countries to downgrade their very own labor laws.

In the Oman Free Trade Agreement, the administration actually negotiated a deal with an opportunity that, as our own State Department reported, was experiencing a forced labor problem—forced labor. How are our workers supposed to compete with people who are forced to toil?

Free trade was supposed to increase economic opportunity for everybody, for big businesses, as well as working families at home and abroad. But it simply hasn't happened.

Too many communities have been left to rot because corporations shut

down U.S. plants to chase increasingly cheap labor and weak environmental protections abroad. After decades of living with NAFTA and its clones, real wages for American families are down. Our trade deficit is in the tens of billions of dollars, and our manufacturing base is falling apart.

The American worker is now more productive than ever, but that increased productivity has not led to a corresponding increase in wages. The truth is that the NAFTA free trade model is designed to favor the wealthiest few and corporate bottom lines at the expense of small businesses, workers, families and communities.

In the coming weeks, we will be asked to consider first two of the Bush administration's trade priorities, free trade agreements with Peru and Panama. Despite the long record of failed free trade agreements, the Bush administration and free traders are going to tell us that Peru and Panama agreements are less controversial than the administration's other priorities, free trade agreements with Colombia and Korea, and the renewal of the President's fast-track negotiating authority.

This is a sign of how bad Peru and Panama trade deals are. Their only redeeming value, it seems, is that they are not as bad as the deals with Korea and Colombia. But that argument misses the point. Every bad trade agreement passed, makes it easier for another bad trade agreement to slip by.

When they say "not that bad," we should say "not good enough." Let's keep our eyes on the ball.

The Peru and Panama free-trade agreements are slippery slopes to other bad deals. Passing these deals makes it easier for the Bush administration to push through the Korea free-trade agreement which would gut the American car industry.

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It would make it easier for the White House to push through fast track authority, which gives the President a blank check to create additional agreements that gut our communities and our economy.

Passing the Peru and Panama Free Trade Agreements puts us on a slippery slope toward passing the Bush-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, a deeply flawed trade deal for working families in both countries.

I just returned from Colombia, and this was my second trip in 7 months. On these visits I talked with leaders from civil society, indigenous groups, organized labor and the political opposition.

Colombia is a great country with wonderful people, a vibrant culture and a growing economy. However, Colombia remains the most dangerous country in the world for worker advocates. Despite recent progress, the Colombian Government has still been unable to protect labor organizers from being attacked or killed over any specific

amount of time. The Bush-Colombia Free Trade Agreement will only exacerbate those problems. Without real enforceable worker protections, increasing numbers of Colombian workers will be forced into sweatshop conditions.

The Bush-Colombia FTA will gut Colombia's legitimate agriculture sector. Colombian farmers will be forced to compete with subsidized crops from the United States. Many farmers will be forced to choose between leaving their farms and growing more lucrative drug crops, the very drug crops that we see sending drugs up to the United States.

Free traders are going to say that denying Colombia a free-trade package, after giving similar agreements to its neighbors, will destabilize the Colombian Government and give a victory to Hugo Chavez. They are going to say that it sends a terrible message to an important ally that we still regard Colombia as a pariah state.

They're going to say that if the worker and environmental protections were good enough for Peru and Panama, why not Colombia and Korea?

Here's the bottom line. The Peru and Panama Free Trade Agreements are slippery slopes to more downward pressure on wages and benefits, both here and abroad.

You want to hear the surest sign that the Bush Free Trade Agreement is flawed? He couldn't even pass them when his own party was in control of the Congress. The Peru free trade agreement was signed in April of 2006, and yet the White House couldn't get the Republican majority to move it.

Some might say, we can't afford not to sign free trade agreements. After all, they say, globalization is here to stay. Trade and globalization are here to stay. The question remains, however, can we make them work for working families? And I say, yes, we can.

Trade can benefit our economy and the economist of our trading partners. We can negotiate deals that create new markets, bring new jobs and new prosperity. We can achieve significant new foreign market access and reduce our trade deficit. If we stand united for working Americans, we can deliver a real new deal on trade, not warmed-over promises masquerading as caviar.

Minor adjustments to the NAFTA-style deals are just not good enough. No more agreements based on the failed NAFTA model, no more Fast Track promotion authority. We cannot give this administration, or future ones, a blank check on trade deals that devastate our communities at home.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get off that slippery slope and get on the new path toward trade that promotes development and prosperity for all, not just for the wealthy few.

And I thank my colleague, a real leader on this issue, Mr. MICHAUD, for yielding me time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Thank you very much, Representative SÁNCHEZ. And

you're absolutely right. These trade deals are a slippery slope, and we definitely have to make sure that we change that trade model.

As you know, I spent over 28 years at Great Northern Paper Company in East Millinocket, Maine, like my father before me spent 43 years, my grandfather before him for 40 years.

NAFTA has killed our community. We used to have over 4,500 jobs. It's little over 500 jobs. Small businesses have gone under because the economy has been devastated because of a trade deal. We had unemployment that was over 33 percent.

We had individuals who are proud men and women who worked in the mill, made good wages, good health care benefits, they ended up on the food line. They are so many people that went to the food bank that actually the food bank ran out of food. The whole State chipped in and brought food, churches, communities throughout the State to help the devastation.

And it doesn't end there. If you go 30 miles south, another mill had closed its doors. Another 30 miles south of that, another mill closed its doors because of trade.

Yes, they are getting trade assistance, but they want their jobs. And what are they getting trained for, if there's no jobs to get trained?

So this definitely has caused a huge problem, these bad trade deals in the State of Maine, and people are upset, and rightfully so; and that's why it's important for this Congress to get off that slippery slope and head for a new direction, start a new direction; and that new direction is changing that flawed trade policy.

And I agree 100 percent, it's more than just a couple of Band-Aids. We have to look at the broader aspect of trade.

And I really appreciate your ongoing commitment to do what's right for workers, to do what's right for small businesses in this country, and it's the humanitarian thing to do as well. So thank you very much, Representative SÁNCHEZ, for your leadership in this issue, and I'll look forward to working with you as we move forward to deal with these trade issues.

I now would like to recognize a gentleman who I've really got to enjoy in this Congress, a gentleman who has really been a strong advocate for our veterans, who definitely has been a leader in that area on the Veterans Affairs Committee, but also a gentleman who is extremely interested in the trade issues, knowing what trade has done to his State in Illinois, Congressman PHIL HARE.

Thank you for coming to the floor this evening. I look forward to hearing your remarks as they relate to trade.

Mr. HARE. Thank you very much. And I thank my friend from Maine for his leadership. And as you know, you're my subcommittee chairman on Veterans Health. And you lead and you do a wonderful job on that committee.

And I'm just honored to be able to serve with you.

I want to thank you, and I want to thank my colleague, Congresswoman SÁNCHEZ from California, for her great leadership on this whole issue of trade and protecting American workers and standing up for ordinary people.

I don't have a prepared speech tonight, Madam Speaker. I came here tonight just to kind of have a dialogue for a few minutes and talk about some of these trade deals from the perspective of what I'm hearing back in my district from ordinary people who get up every day, worried whether or not they're going to keep their job.

I think we take a look at Korea. Here we have a trade deal that they are asking us to take a look at and support. 700,000 vehicles entered this country from Korea, yet our automobile manufacturers were allowed, allowed to ship 2,500 cars to Korea. Now, someone tell me if that's remotely close to being a fair trade deal.

I don't have a problem in the world with saying to the Korean government, look, I'm not asking for 700 to 700,000. But when we are only allowed to bring in 2,500 vehicles, compared to importing 700,000, that trade deal is dead on arrival as far as I'm concerned.

Plus, if you look what they're doing to our beef production and in terms of importing beef from this country, that issue is basically dead. Oh, they say they'll talk to us about it. But talk is cheap. And the reality of it is we have yet seen this government be able to move on a trade deal that makes any sense.

You look at Colombia. I was at a trade press conference the other day on Colombia. As you know, as my friend from Maine knows, Madam Speaker, I'm a union member, president, former president of my clothing and textile worker local.

If I had been as vocal for my union in the 13 years that I served in that capacity in Colombia, I probably would have been shot. We've had thousands of people who have been murdered, imprisoned, tortured. This is a government that we're supposed to do business with. We're supposed to trade.

Here we are, the United States, greatest democracy on this planet, and they want us to fashion some type of a trade deal with a country that has paramilitary people go out and assassinate trade unionists and their families. We can do a lot better than that.

I notice the President of Colombia was here just last week, and I echo my colleague,

Representative SCHAKOWSKY's remarks, Madam Speaker, when she said to President Uribe in her remarks saying, come back in a year. Come back in a year and prove to this Congress and prove to the American people that you're serious about these violations; that you're going to prosecute more than 39 people, which is all that's been prosecuted under this government.

My colleague from Maine mentions the loss of textile jobs and paper jobs

and steel jobs. I talked to one of my friends, Representative BUTTERFIELD, and he had, at one time, in one county, in one county in his Congressional district, he had 10,000 textile workers in one county. I said, how many do you have today? And he said, I have zero. They're all gone.

We can do a lot better than this. My basic question to those people who want these trade deals is just simply this. I understand the environmental and the labor standards, and I think those are good frameworks. What I want to know is, in every trade deal, what is the ramifications for our manufacturing base, for our workers and for our farmers?

I think it's a fair question to be able to ask anybody. When I do, I'm told by some folks, well, we're going to redo the trade readjustment for those folks who lose their jobs.

That's little comfort to somebody like Dave Bevard from Galesburg, Illinois. 32 years at Maytag. His wife has cancer. Health care runs out.

And one person suggested that I go back and talk to Dave Bevard and explain to him, if you can believe this, Madam Speaker, I'm supposed to explain to Dave Bevard that there's currency manipulation in China that's causing some of these problems.

And I remember saying to that Member, well, when I do, when I go to Galesburg and say that to Dave Bevard, I'd better be putting a catcher's mask on because I think I'm going to get poked. We can't talk to our workers like that, justify this. Currency manipulation.

I'll tell you why Dave Bevard lost his job; I'll tell you why Maytag went to Sonora, Mexico, because this Congress, under NAFTA, that passed NAFTA, helped those jobs to go to Sonora, Mexico, Madam Speaker. They outsourced those jobs, and this from a company that took \$9 million in Illinois taxpayers' money; and the workers gave, not one, but two wage concessions.

And guess what? The people in Sonora, Mexico can't afford those refrigerators that they're making. In fact, they're coming across the border illegally because they're not making enough money at that factory.

So to my friends at Maytag I would say, thank you for nothing.

Look, I'm a card-carrying capitalist. I've said this many times, Madam Speaker. I want to see businesses make money. But I also want to see a system of fairness in this whole trade thing.

I think it's the minimum we can do is to expect this Congress, that when we negotiate a trade deal, and when we're looking at a trade deal, is to stand up for those very people whose jobs are on the line.

These are veterans who fought and defended this country. These are people who want to put their kids through school. They want to see their kids get married and be able to afford a home. They want to spend some time and be able to retire with some dignity.

Instead, we outsource their jobs. We give them a Trade Readjustment Act that isn't really worth the paper it's written on in the final analysis. It doesn't nearly make it up.

Now I want to say one thing about that before I just conclude here. Some of the workers at Maytag were told, well, we know you're losing your jobs to Mexico, but here's what you should do. Go into a thing like health care. Growing field. My colleague from Maine and I probably ought to take a look at that maybe some day.

But they were told, you need to get into a growing field like health care. So 300 workers, displaced workers at Maytag did just that. That was the good news. They went to school for a year. The bad news was, there was only room for 30 of those workers, 30 of those workers to continue in practicums so that they could practice medicine.

So what was the response to those 270 people who were left out?

Have you thought of going into cosmetology?

Well, that's a wonderful thing. That's a great way to treat workers.

No, they don't think about cosmetology. What they think about is what should have been and what could have been. What should have been was this Congress, this House, should have said no to NAFTA.

And when it did say yes, and I wish I was here, I could have voted against it, should have had a moral obligation to say to those workers, we're going to do everything we can to help you hold on. But it didn't.

And I am saddened that some Members in my own caucus think that every trade deal that comes down is something that we ought to take a look at.

Let me suggest this, and I will close by saying this. I ran on this issue for the United States Congress. I talked about it every candidate forum I had. I had four opponents in the primary, and I ran on this issue of trade.

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I said I will support trade as long as it does not outsource our manufacturing base and that American agriculture has a seat at the table. I won that primary, and I went on to the general election, and I ran against someone who supported NAFTA, who supported GAT, CAFTA, supported all these Bush trade deals, and I walked out of that election with 57 percent of the vote. Part of that, I believe, is because the people of the 17th District of Illinois know what it is like. I had six clothing and textile plants in my district. I have three with one ready to go, soon to close.

I say, as long as I am in this Chamber, and I don't know how long that will be, I am not going to vote for a trade deal that will outsource one American job, that will take one farmer for granted, that will tell people you really don't matter because you have

to look at the whole picture. So I say this to Dave Bevard and to those people who may be watching tonight, from this freshman's perspective, and I can't thank Congressman MICHAUD enough for his leadership on this. I met him when I was running for Congress, and I remember one phone call I made to him when I was a candidate, and one of the first questions he asked was, "Where are you on trade?" And I told him and he said, "What can I do to help?" And he has been a wonderful leader on this issue.

And this battle will go on. This hour will end, but the battle will go on. And I am not giving up, and the people that believe that our manufacturing base can be saved, we are not giving up. I am going to support the Patriot Corporation, which helps keep American jobs here and stops giving tax credits to companies that outsource overseas. I want fair trade. I will vote for any trade deal that comes down as long as it meets the criteria that it stands up for ordinary Americans.

With that, I am just honored that I was allowed to participate this evening. Thank you, Congressman MICHAUD.

Mr. MICHAUD. Thank you very much, Congressman HARE. I really appreciate your leadership in this whole trade debate. It is very important, very valuable that we hear freshmen class, and the freshmen class has definitely been pretty vocal on the trade deal.

As I mentioned earlier, if you go anywhere in my district, you will see a lot of abandoned mills. What used to be vibrant, a lot of workers working there, they are no longer there today.

The other issue that is very important, and Congresswoman SANCHEZ actually touched upon it, is immigration. I know the Senate has been talking about immigration quite a bit. We will be talking about it soon. But before I vote for any immigration bill, I will look to see if they are taking care of the fundamental problem in immigration, and that problem is trade.

If you look at the reasons why a lot of undocumented immigrants are coming from Mexico to the United States, they are coming across the border to get a job. And the reason why they are coming across the border to get a job is because they are living in substandard conditions in Mexico.

Let's go back a few years to when NAFTA was passed. One of the arguments why we should pass NAFTA was because all boats will rise here in the United States and in Mexico. And by raising the boats in Mexico, the workers that come across the border illegally will stay because they will have their jobs, they will earn good wages, and there is no need to come across the border. As a matter of fact, at the time Madeline Albright made comments and encouraged Congress to support NAFTA because it will help solve our illegal immigration problems, and she went on to say if it doesn't solve them or help solve them, then we know it is a failed policy.

Well, it is a failed policy. It hasn't helped. It has gotten worse. And this is something, when we talk about immigration, we have to make sure we take care of that fundamental flaw, and that is with our trade deals. If it means voting against the rule when immigration comes up, I am prepared to do that because this issue is so important that we need to change the direction. We have got to get off this slippery slope if we are going to make this country continue to grow.

It is now a great pleasure to introduce a colleague of mine who is very familiar with labor issues, who is definitely taking on a leadership role, along with Congressman HARE from Ohio. Congresswoman SUTTON has been a true leader.

I really appreciate very much, congresswoman, all that you have been doing. You are a tireless advocate for working people here in this country, small businesses here in this country, and I really appreciate the way that you have taken on this leadership role, and I look forward to continuing working with you on issues as it relates to trade and other issues.

I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

First of all, I want to thank my colleagues Mr. MICHAUD and Ms. SANCHEZ and Mr. HARE. You have been leaders in this fight for a new U.S. trade policy for many years to benefit and to help our working men and women, our businesses, and our communities, and we appreciate your efforts. On behalf of the people of the 13th District of Ohio, I appreciate your efforts working to craft a new trade model that won't leave our businesses and our workers at a disadvantage.

And, frankly, last November in the election, the American people cast votes that reflect their desire to put an end to the flawed trade model that has had a devastating impact on our families and businesses and workers and farmers and communities.

And yet we recently heard about a new trade deal, and it has been mentioned here today, revolving around the Peru and Panama Free Trade Agreement. And that recent deal between some congressional leaders and the Bush administration seemingly provides that labor and environmental standards will be added to those two free trade agreements. However, shortly after that announcement was made, reports indicated that those standards might be put into side agreements or side letters, and those statements were made by those who represent the multinational interests who have been benefiting under our current failed trade policies. And they have boasted also about how those standards would not be enforced. And based on this administration's abominable record on enforcing free trade agreements, I think we can all agree that that is what will happen under this administration.

It has been mentioned here today that there was a free trade agreement

with Jordan that was entered into by this country, and there were many who support fair trade, like Mr. MICHAUD and Ms. SANCHEZ and Mr. HARE and me. Of those who support fair trade, some of them saw fit actually to support that free trade agreement with Jordan because it had environmental and labor standards in the agreement.

Well, what we saw is that despite those standards, under this administration, despite records indicating documented cases of child sweatshop labor, among other things, there was no enforcement of the standards. So the fact that they are going to be on paper but not enforced really isn't what I believe the American people had in mind when they voted, and I certainly don't think it is all that we need to be doing in Congress to fix our broken trade system.

Now, in an effort to shut down the debate, oftentimes those who are benefiting under the current trade system characterize those of us who are seeking to fix it as protectionists. They insinuate that we are really against trade and don't understand the realities of globalization. Well, that is incorrect. This isn't about being pro-trade or antitrade. It is about the rules of trade and ensuring that they are fair and enforceable. We need a trade model that truly allows fair competition because we know that if provided that opportunity, we will excel in the global marketplace. And that is the trade model that we are fighting for. We are fighting for a trade model that will not reward companies for moving overseas or outsourcing jobs and will put an enforceable end to illegal foreign subsidies and currency manipulation. We are fighting for a policy that will provide incentives to help our businesses, workers, and communities thrive that will require reciprocity of market access and ensure products produced elsewhere are safe for consumption here.

Now, we agree that we must invest in new technology, innovation, and workforce development, and we have to invest in research and development. But it is not an either/or proposition. Unless we also develop a new trade model, our workers, businesses, and communities will continue to be unfairly undercut, and we see that reflected in our soaring trade deficit.

So why is it that the Bush administration and many Members of Congress find it acceptable that other nations engage in unfair trade practices at the expense of those who toil here, whether it is a lack of meaningful and enforceable labor and environmental standards or currency manipulation, tariff and nontariff barriers, value-added taxes, and we could go on and on about the tactics that are used and keep our businesses and workers at a disadvantage? But for some reason it seems that there are those in Washington here who seem to believe that we can continue our current trade policies and that other countries will change. But why would they? It is working for them. Just look at our trade deficit.

Well, those politicians who think this is a good system that we have going should visit Ohio's 13th District. Come and see the places that I have the honor to represent because a lot of people there are hurting from the failed trade policies that have been thrust upon them. Ohio has lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000. Communities have been hurt and families struggle. Futures have been destroyed. There are kids out there who will not go to college. There are families out there where health care needs are not being met. And it is directly related to our failed trade policies. And unless we make meaningful changes by enacting a truly new trade model, we can't reverse this downward spiral.

So while it is encouraging that these two free trade agreements seemingly provide for the possibility of stronger labor and environmental standards, any enforceability, as I said, relies on the Bush administration, and it appears that it may be a paper victory to have those standards in the agreement even if they find their way into the core part of the agreement, which we are not certain that we will actually see.

One more thing or, I guess, it is the overarching thing: The Constitution of the United States rests responsibility for trade with the United States Congress. I think that we head down a slippery slope as we continue to cede responsibility to the President for trade. It should be understood, as was reflected in our recent elections, that Congress must reclaim its constitutional authority and responsibility and stop ceding its responsibility to the President. It is our job to ensure a vibrant and fair trade policy, and we have to focus our attention on this task before it is too late.

So the inclusion of labor and environmental standards on paper, okay. But, truly, the American people expect more. Our needs are much greater than that. And we must develop a new trade model that is enforceable and comprehensive, not just on paper but in reality. And we have to do it immediately to keep the faith with the American people.

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With that, I yield back to the gentleman from Maine.

Mr. MICHAUD. Thank you very much, Congresswoman.

I can see from your comments and from hearing your voice that you truly care about the people in your district. And that's what I think has been missing in this debate from some of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Some think, yes, we have a trade deal; if you don't like it, vote against it. Yes, that's the easy way out. What a lot of our colleagues do not understand is just what you have mentioned; these are people's lives. You've seen it firsthand, Congressman HARE has seen it firsthand, I've seen it firsthand, where people who have lost their jobs, who in

a lot of cases are up there in age, 50, 55, 60, that now have to change their lives, they have to try to get retrained, try to find another job. In the meantime, I know in my district, where we have over 33 percent unemployment, we have seen alcoholism and rape increase, divorce increase. The fact that students at high school, their dreams were shattered because they no longer had the means to further their education. We actually had a high school in my district where the senior class did not know whether they were going to be able to graduate or not because the mill that closed its doors paid 80 percent of the tax base, which they had not paid, so the accreditation was in jeopardy.

These issues are extremely important to each and every citizen in the State of Maine, whether you're a Republican, Democratic, green or independent. But there are also issues that are issues we have to deal with collectively, they're not Republican issues or Democratic issues. No one is to blame. I think there is plenty of blame to go around. Actually, it was a Democratic administration that brought us NAFTA. Now it's a Democrat-controlled House and Senate, that hopefully we will change the model. And that's what it is about. And you hit the nail right on the head; it's not about being protectionists, it's about how do we want that trade model to look.

I hope that the presidential candidates, as they go around this country, will start talking about trade. I am very pleased with a couple of the House Members, Congressman KUCINICH, Congressman HUNTER, a Republican, who has been very vocal on China currency manipulation. He has legislation dealing with China manipulation, along with Congressman RYAN. Congressman HUNTER also has bipartisan legislation with myself and Congressman PASCRELL, who is a lead sponsor, on the value-added tax. He is out there, out front.

I want to know where the other candidates are standing because this upcoming election is going to be extremely crucial to where this country is heading. We have a lot of issues we have to deal with, the value-added tax, currency manipulation. When you look at the whole patent issue, what's happening with that. We have a huge trade imbalance. How are we going to bring that trade imbalance back into line? That's why, Congresswoman SUTTON, I am very pleased to work with you because we're not only working as Democrats, we're working with our Republican colleagues across the aisle, we're working with environmental groups, labor groups. The business community, the United States Business and Industry Council, which has an association of small manufacturing businesses here in this country, has been very vocal on these trade issues, which is important because you have that business community and labor working together. That's what it's all about. Definitely

there are those large corporations who have operations in India and China. These trade deals are nothing but a bottom line for them, but that bottom line for some of them could ruin this country.

We are heading for a perfect storm. We have the largest budgetary deficit in our history. We have the largest trade deficit in our history. We cannot sustain that type of deficit, either budgetary or trade, if we are to maintain our status, if we are to be a world leader. That is why it is very important for the American people to demand that those who are running for higher office, whether it's Congress or the Office of the United States President, they have to demand to know where they stand on these issues and be held accountable. Because so far, from what I have seen, there hasn't been much leadership in that particular area.

If we are going to fund education, health care, issues with childcare, taking care of our veterans, maintaining our super power status of military, we have to have an economy that allows us to do that. We cannot have that economy if we continue to outsource our jobs overseas.

I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. SUTTON. The gentlewoman's points are well taken.

I am glad you brought up the issue of how far-reaching the effects of our failed trade policies go. I mean, the reality is that when we lose these jobs due to our broken trade system and the unfair trade policies that others pursue and we don't stop, what happens is our communities sometimes crumble because when those employers pull out and the jobs are gone, the tax base is gone. And then the city can't deliver services, our schools can't fund our education for our children. So it has these multiple ill effects that are set in motion.

You also raise a really important point, and I think it's worth emphasizing. Oftentimes, Congressman MICHAUD, when we have these discussions about trade, they like to say this is about business versus workers. And as you rightly point out, of course, the U.S. Business and Industry Council has been saying much of the same things that we've been saying here on the floor because they know that the window is closing, that there are many who want to literally "make it in America," but because of the policies that we have in place, it is becoming all but impossible for them to do that. Once that window closes, I don't know how we get it back. So, we cannot allow that to happen.

On that point, I think that while we are sort of focused on this new deal about the Peru and Panama Free Trade Agreements, which of course represent a very, very small, minute portion of trade with this country, we are focused on that and the fact that there will be, at least on paper, some environmental and labor standards. Of course we are

all very much in support of environmental and labor standards. But when we know that they are not going to be enforced and they are then just going to result in two more trade agreements that will result in more jobs being lost in this country, it doesn't really seem like the right place for us to be focusing when we have such a short window of time.

Again, you point out some very important pieces of legislation that are pending here in the House, including the Currency Manipulation bill that Congressman RYAN and Congressman HUNTER have sponsored and I think we are probably cosponsors on. That is an important place that we could be focusing on that could make an important difference in the very near future if we could enact.

The value-added tax, a similar situation. We could be focusing, as Congress is responsible for trade, on these matters that would really make a difference in the way trade plays out for the people who we represent in this country. I think that that would be a much better focus than to continue to cede responsibility to this administration.

It is a critical time. I know that the people back in Ohio are counting on us. And Ohio is going to be in the center of the storm, if past history is any indication, in these upcoming presidential elections. And this is an issue, I can assure you, that will be front and center in the minds of those people in Ohio as it was last year when they cast their vote.

With that, I will yield back to my good friend from Maine.

Mr. MICHAUD. Thank you very much. This is, as you said, a very important issue. And we are on a slippery slope currently.

When you look at Fast Track, Congress is giving up our responsibility as elected officials, as a co-equal branch of government if we pass Fast Track. Congress has no ability to amend trade deals under Fast Track, and I think it's taking the easy way out. I do not believe that Fast Track should pass. I will oppose Fast Track because it is not a good deal for Congress and it is not a good deal for the American people. We have to look at how we can change that model.

We have talked, I heard earlier, about the issues of training. Well, if you look at what happens when a mill shuts down because of unfair trade deals, yes, they do get training, as I mentioned earlier, but what are they going to train for, particularly when you have mill after mill after mill close because of trade deals, there's not much you can train. But also, when you look at some of the benefits and some of the problems we have seen because of mill closures. In the Katahdin region, where I am from, when the mills shut down, a lot of individuals actually had to tap into their 401(k) plan just to survive. What happens when they file their income tax? They get

penalized because they had to tap into their 401(k) plan. That's unfair. That's unjust. When they applied for unemployment, guess what? They're taxed on their unemployment. Now, if you want to talk about giving tax breaks to anyone, it's those who are unemployed who actually should have the tax breaks.

You look at what has been talked about earlier as well, the labor and environmental standards that they say will be part of the cortex on Peru and Panama, that is yet to be seen. I think we have seen articles in the paper where the administration is starting to slip out of that deal to try to conjure up some other deal and say, well, we will put it in the side room and what have you. So it will be interesting to see what they finally come up with.

But no matter what you do on labor standards, when you look at the Colombian trade deal, some of our colleagues say well, there are some labor violations. Well, I like the way that they talk about "some labor violations." They are talking about assassinations of trade activists. That's more than just a labor violation. And to say that well, we will put the standards in the trade deal, that is not going to solve the problem.

I met with the President of Colombia and I told him right up front that I want to see results before I support anything. I don't want to see more verbiage in a trade deal to say that they will take care of the problem. If they want to stop these assassinations, they can do a lot more than what they are doing currently today. I met with several elected officials, individuals from Colombia, on a couple of different occasions. And when you look at how some of these people are being assassinated, on two separate occasions, with other Members of Congress, when I was talking to these individuals, what they have done is to set an example of someone who is a union activist. They have actually beheaded them in front of their neighbors, to set an example, and played soccer with their heads. And this is a country we are going to sign a trade deal? That is outrageous, and it is just disgusting to see that sort of thing happen.

Before I do anything on the Colombian trade deal, I want to see the number of trade unionist assassinations drop. I don't want to see writing, I want to actually see results. And that is what is so important, when you look at these trade deals; they are affecting people's lives. These people are more than just numbers on a paper. I wish some of our colleagues could really understand that. I don't think they do. Probably because they haven't been affected like your district, Congressman HARE, my district.

I think it is important for the American people, also, to really focus on what is happening here in Congress. Just because it's a new Congress doesn't mean that we are going to change in a new direction when it

comes to trade. They want to see results like we want to see results, and hopefully we will see results in this upcoming debate on trade.

And there are some issues we can do right now without trade deals. We can pass the Currency Manipulation dealing with China, that can be done right now. We can pass the value-added tax issue, that is a disadvantage to businesses here in this country. That deficit alone is I believe \$379 billion, a tax that is affecting companies here in the United States.

□ 2045

That is not fair. We have to deal with that.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, the point is, if we're going to trust this administration to enforce labor standards and environmental standards, this is the same administration who hasn't even administered our own National OSHA program and has had one OSHA standard that they had to enforce, and that was because this administration was sued to get it.

I would hope my colleagues wouldn't just listen to us this evening. I would hope they would listen to the American people. Poll after poll say, if the American people are asked across the country, north to south, east to west, they are asked about these trade deals, the American people want to see that American workers have a right to be competitive.

I wrote down a list of some things: Steel, televisions, camcorders, clothing. The list goes on. It isn't that we don't have the workforce that can manufacture and make these things. They were quality products for years and years and years. Unfortunately, we have had a Government that felt that it was okay to take those jobs and to move them out.

I would also remind some of our colleagues that not every person that gets out of school wants to sit behind a computer terminal. There is great strength in working as a welder. It is a great task to be a fitter. It is a great task to be able to do something with your hands. God didn't create all of us to sit behind a terminal. I am convinced of that, because I am computer illiterate. I am living proof. I cut lining for men's suits for 13 years, and I know this: I know that we manufactured a marvelous product. I know my cutting room was outsourced because you can't compete against 17 cents an hour.

The unionized clothing worker back then was making a whopping \$6.07 per hour when I worked in this factory. So this nonsense about American workers pricing themselves out of jobs because of collective bargaining agreements, that dog, as they say, just isn't going to hunt.

I would ask this body, this House, to pay attention to what the American people said last November. They sent

us here to do something positive for them. I haven't met a worker yet who said, could you do me a favor, PHIL? I hope you do the best you can when you get out there to make sure I can get some TRA funding and lose my job. People want us to stand up for them, and that is what we are here tonight for.

I want to commend the Congresswoman from Ohio, BETTY SUTTON. She has been a tremendous force in this issue of bringing it forward, staying with it and not being afraid to take some lumps, because sometimes we can do that in this business.

But let me tell you, this issue that we are talking about this evening is one of the most important issues this country faces. We are going to be at a crossroads with these trade agreements. We can either decide to stand up and be counted, or we can stand aside and watch these jobs go and bemoan the fact that they are gone down the road and try to solve this by throwing some money at a TRA program that not only needs to be reworked, it needs to be reworked because it isn't working, and it hasn't been working for a long time for American workers who have been displaced.

I just want to close by saying this tonight: I am for trade. I have said it before. I am for any type of a fair trade agreement that works. But I will not vote for a single piece of legislation that comes to this floor that will outsource one more job, not just from the 17th District of Illinois, the 13th District of Ohio, a district in Maine.

But from Maine to California, we have a responsibility. I am here because of the working men and women of my district. I am going to do the very best I can. And I will tell all of them that are watching, I would encourage them to talk to their Representative and to try to tell them just how important this issue is and what is at stake.

Let me again thank my colleague from Maine for his leadership on this issue. He is probably one of the most forceful voices we have in this Chamber to stand up for American working men and women. I am honored to be here tonight, and I'm honored to serve with you, and I thank the gentleman for giving me this time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Well, thank you, very much, Mr. HARE, for your compliments. But we are here as a team. We are here to do what is right for the American people, whether you are an employee, whether you are an employer, because that is very important.

I know that you know as well as Congresswoman SUTTON and a lot in the freshman class who actually ran on this issue, you have seen what it has done to your districts. You have seen what it is doing to our country. It is very important that those who are sitting here get out there and talk to the people who have been affected by this.

It is not that we have to pass trade deals because you want to be good on

business or vote against them because of labor. This isn't a business-labor issue. This is an American issue. It is an issue that is extremely important if we are to sustain our status in the world. We have to make sure that we have trade deals that are fair. It is not about being protectionist. It is about the rules of trade. That is what it is about, the rules of trade. And I think it is extremely important that the majority party and the minority party and the rank and file Members who are dealing with this issue look at it in a comprehensive manner.

We have to do several things, as I mentioned earlier, and there is a lot we can do next week and the week after without any trade deal. The currency manipulation, there is legislation dealing with that. There is legislation in dealing with the value-added tax. If those people who are very interested in trade, the so-called free traders, we can pass these pieces of legislation this month to say, yes, we are serious about trade, and here is a start. Then we can start looking at some of these trade deals that have been negotiated, the Peru and Panama trade deal, what has happened with Korea, and see whether or not we should enact those. But we have to start, and we have to start today.

We are a new Congress, a Congress to which the American people said that we want a new direction in this country. And we have to give them the new direction that they want, because I can guarantee you, in this upcoming election cycle, if we do not make changes in how we deal with the trade issues, we will be on a slippery slope. I don't want that to happen.

I think the American people deserve better. The American people deserve better, and the business community in this country deserves better. Hopefully we will be able to give them that.

Once again I want to close by thanking you very much, Congressman HARE, for your strong leadership, and you, Congresswoman SUTTON, both in the freshman class. You're a breath of fresh air here in this Congress. I look forward to working with you as we move forward in this debate.

THE SUBURBAN AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BERKLEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, as we begin the work of this Congress, we should follow several key principles. Our first principle, which should be the main work of this House, should be focused on key major issues before the country; the second principle is that we should be effective and enact solutions for the American people; and the third is that we should use this debate to build consensus to deploy bipartisan action on behalf of our country.

One commentator looking at the record of the current Congress said that we are packing two days of debate into a four-day workweek. When you look at the record of this Congress so far, you can see that we have taken action on 13 bills to name a Federal building or post office or to build a road, we have enacted five bills to extend preexisting laws that were already on the books or passed last year, and we have passed eight bills cosponsored by a large number of Republicans or passed entirely without opposition. It is not an impressive record of work so far. And when you look at the actions of this Congress, you can see many pieces of legislation on which there has been no action in this Congress, despite a great need by the American people.

One of the key pieces of legislation that passed in the 109th Congress was the Deleting Online Predators Act. This is a bill which would protect children from online predators, especially those who use social networking sites like MySpace.com, the number one website on the planet, where the Center For National Missing and Exploited Children reports that at any one time there are 50,000 sexual predators online trying to get the attention of children.

This legislation, the Deleting Online Predators Act, passed the House of Representatives last year by a vote of 410-15. It stalled in the Senate, and as of yet in this Congress there has been no action whatsoever.

In the last Congress, we also passed the Student and Teacher Safety Act. The Student and Teacher Safety Act was endorsed by the National Education Association and would say that for any registered full-time teacher in America, that they have complete discretion to search a book bag or a locker to make sure that the classroom was gun-free. As a former teacher myself and as someone who has worked with many teachers, I think it is appropriate for the Congress to use a teacher's full-time professional judgment to make sure that their classroom, their workplace, was a safe place to be, not just for teachers, but especially for children.

When we have seen attacks in places like Winnetka, Illinois, or Columbine, or even Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia, we can see that there is a need to fully empower teachers with the right to search to make sure that their facilities are safe. The Student and Teacher Safety Act passed the House unanimously in the last Congress, was delayed in the United States Senate, and no action has been taken this year.

The Congress in the last term also passed the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Act. We have seen throughout America, especially in suburban communities, rapidly disappearing green and open space. It is very important for us to defend the National Park System. In fact, I think the country should set a long-term goal of doubling the size of the Na-

tional Park System. But we also want to make sure that we preserve green and open space close to where Americans live, in the suburbs.

This act would establish new and local grant programs to help protect suburban open space. Without action by the Congress, in 20 years time, many of the areas where we currently see green and open space could be an unending series of strip malls, removing an ambience, hurting our environment and delaying our ability to take effective action on global climate change. This legislation passed unanimously in the last Congress, but this Congress has failed to take any action on it.

One of the critical issues before this Congress is whether to pay Members of Congress who have been convicted of a felony and who have lost all of their appeals and beyond the shadow of a doubt stand condemned before the American people, and yet still collect a pension for their service in the Congress.

We have seen Members of Congress, like Dan Rostenkowski or Bob Ney or Duke Cunningham or James Traficant, all completely convicted by a jury of their peers beyond the shadow of a doubt, Members of Congress who lost or did not exercise any of their appeals, who are currently or have served in jail, and yet today or in months past have collected their congressional pensions from the jailhouse ATM.

In 1996, the Congress passed comprehensive reforms to kill the pension for any Member of Congress convicted of any one of 21 separate public integrity felonies. It was a bipartisan victory, with the full support of Speaker HASTERT and Speaker PELOSI. This legislation, once again, was delayed and killed in the United States Senate.

Today we have seen Members like Congressman JEFFERSON from Louisiana, indicted on 16 felony counts, and, but for this legislation, would have a right as a nine term Member of Congress, if convicted and if losing all of their appeals, to collect a \$50,000 a year pension, even if convicted for betraying the very taxpayers that pay that pension.

□ 2100

The Congress in February passed very limited pension reform legislation which wouldn't kill the pension for a Member of Congress on conviction of 21 felonies, but instead would only kill that pension for conviction of any one of four felonies. And basic felonies like wire fraud and income tax invasion would still allow the payment of a congressional pension.

Despite limited action by the Congress in January both in the House and Senate, legislation to kill the pension of a Member of Congress convicted of a felony has been completely stalled, completely stalled in February, in March, in April, in May, and now in the first weeks of June with no action and potential actions against other Members of Congress convicted of a felony.