

they created. And besides that, they didn't stop there. They told the workers that they would have to make health insurance unaffordable by imposing crushing premiums on these people, eliminating their holidays, eliminating their vacation and sick pay and other crippling costs. So the workers, who are not making a lot of money to begin with, there is no way that they could suddenly accept this. So they went on strike. And Stella D'oro—again, Brynwood Partners—responded by hiring a bunch of scabs to replace the strikers and, in essence, dismiss the strikers. Well, the strikers appealed to the National Labor Relations Board, the NLRB; and the NLRB ruled in favor of the strikers. It told Brynwood, who now runs Stella D'oro, that they must take the striking workers back with some back pay.

And now what is Brynwood Partners threatening to do? They are saying that they're going to close down, shut down the company entirely; and in essence, these workers would totally lose their jobs. How vindictive that is. They win a ruling from the National Labor Relations Board only to have Brynwood Partners say they're going to shut down this company, which has been run since 1932. It's really disgraceful when a company like Brynwood Partners—which obviously doesn't care about making cookies, doesn't care about the neighborhood community-type of business that it was—only uses this company as the bottom line.

Just the other day we had a rally in front of the Stella D'oro company in the Bronx, in my district, to show the workers that we stand by them and support them. I want to let Brynwood Partners know that I am not going to be quiet about this or take this lying down. There are other things that Brynwood Partners own, and we really ought to scrutinize and watch everything they do because if they are allowed to get away with this, they can get away with anything, if nothing more than the bottom line, as far as I am concerned, corporate greed. Something ought to be done for these workers. Again, the National Labor Relations Board ruled in favor of the workers, and so the reaction of the company is to just close it down. That is a disgrace. It should not be happening in 2009. This Congress needs to take note of it and needs to stand behind these workers.

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

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

GLOBAL TRADE AND JOB CREATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 6, 2009, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, this evening I have taken out this Special Order to talk about an issue that is of grave importance to the American people. There is no doubt about the fact that the American people are hurting. We are seeing tremendous losses across this country. People are losing their homes. In California, the State that I am privileged to represent, we have an unemployment rate statewide of 11.5 percent. People are losing their jobs; people are losing their businesses; and people are hurting. It's something that has been recognized by Democrats and Republicans alike. We right now are witnessing the implementation of policies that I believe, very sincerely, will exacerbate the problem.

We were promised when we were provided with the so-called economic stimulus bill—\$787 billion, but if you include interest a \$1 trillion stimulus bill—we were promised by the President of the United States that if we implemented that measure, we would not see the unemployment rate exceed 8 percent. And we all know today, unfortunately, as I said, in California the unemployment rate statewide is 11.5 percent. Nationwide it is 9.5 percent. Economists across the board and the President of the United States, even in an interview yesterday, have indicated that we are going to see a continued increase in the unemployment rate. Now that was, again, after we were promised that implementation of the so-called economic stimulus bill which would prevent unemployment from exceeding the 8 percent level.

Since that period of time, we have seen this House pass a massive tax, which is going to be inflicted on families across this country as it relates to energy. Now you will recall one of the hallmarks of the President's platform and the statements made repeatedly by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been that we would not see any kind of tax increase imposed on Americans earning under \$250,000 a year; and yet we know, based on the very modest report that came from the Congressional Budget Office, that we will see at least a \$175 increase in the energy tax imposed on Americans as it relates to this so-called cap-and-trade measure.

The debate that's going on right now relates to health care. We all want to do everything that we can to ensure that those 40-plus million Americans who are uninsured have access to quality, affordable health care. But the measure that is before us, I clearly believe, undermines the quality of care and the assurance that people will have access to quality health care. We also know that the cost imposed on small businesses and big businesses across this country will be very great. And those numbers, as have been shown in a wide range of reports that have been

brought before us, have led many to indicate that there will be a tremendous job loss because of this. Because the increased costs, as it relates to health care, inflicted on small businesses will lead many of them to reduce the number of jobs.

So I am very concerned, obviously, as are the people who I am privileged to represent from the Los Angeles area and the people across this country and, frankly, I think many Democrats as well as Republicans here in the House of Representatives, they are very, very concerned about this issue of dramatically increasing the size, the scope and the reach of the Federal Government. It is very well intentioned, of course, Mr. Speaker. It is very well intentioned because we all want to make sure that we focus on improving our environment and decrease our dependence on fossil fuels. We all want to ensure that every American does have access to quality affordable health care, and we want to make sure that we get the economy back on track. But I believe that the trillion-dollar economic stimulus bill, the so-called economic stimulus bill, the so-called cap-and-trade bill that has been put forward and the measure that would dramatically increase the cost of health care and diminish the quality of care are troubling signs. The reason I have taken out this Special Order—and I know I am going to be joined by colleagues of mine, Mr. Speaker—is that we are in a position where we still have a chance to actually focus on job creation.

I'm going to talk this evening about something that has been very near and dear to me for many, many years. It goes back to my education in college; and that is, the notion of the United States of America playing a leading role in global economic growth so that we can increase the number of good American jobs. That means good jobs right here in the United States of America. I believe that trade is key to that. Trade, global trade is going to play a big role in creating jobs, jobs, jobs. Because the natural question that has continued to come forward from this promise that we would not see the unemployment rate exceed 8 percent is, Where are the jobs? We have a chance. Mr. Speaker, we still have an opportunity to turn the corner on that. With a shrinking economy and mounting job losses and anxiety for what the future holds, we need the job-creating power of open trade more now than we have ever needed it. It's one of the very sad ironies of the trade debate. Tough economic times often lead people to say that we should pull up the drawbridge and lead to a term that I know no one likes to have hanging around their necks, but that term is protectionism. Protectionism is a bad thing. But frankly, during tough economic times, there are many people who happen to respond by being proponents of protectionist measures, in fact, avoiding the notion of more open trade. There is a fundamental and very dangerous misconception held by many, including,

frankly, many here in the Congress—I'm happy to say very few on the Republican side, but many on the Democratic side.

As I talk about this, Mr. Speaker, I also want to add that I hope very much we'll be able to get back to the bipartisan consensus that once existed in our quest for open trade. The fundamental and very dangerous misconception that is held by many is that engaging with 95 percent of the world's consumers who live outside of the United States somehow hurts job creation right here in the United States. Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker. We need to remember that 95 percent of the world's consumers don't live here in the United States. They live outside of our borders. So the notion that engaging with those 95 percent somehow hurts job creation here is preposterous. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Even during these difficult economic times, even during this economic recession, even during this time when people are looking for jobs, they've lost their homes, they've lost their businesses, we continue to be the world's largest exporter of both goods and services. There are 57 million jobs directly supported by this engagement in the worldwide marketplace today. Now that is more than one-third of our entire workforce who have trade actually responsible for the fact that they have jobs today. A million Americans have their jobs today because of our engagement in the global marketplace. It also means that more than one-third of our workforce would be threatened if trade were to be diminished. But the impact of trade engagement is even more far reaching than these 57 million jobs with a direct connection to global trade. There are tens of millions of additional jobs that are indirectly related to trade as well. Manufacturers that lower costs and become more competitive by importing parts of their supply chain actually benefit from trade. That means raw materials coming into the United States for manufacturers so that they can engage in the export of finished products, there are a tremendous number of jobs that are related to that. Manufacturers that lower costs and become more competitive by importing those parts for their supply chain actually benefit from trade.

□ 1830

So do the retailers and wholesalers who sell the goods these manufacturers produce. There are thousands of small businesses who provide services for exporters, whether it is information technology, the IT sector support, printing services, logistics or any of the countless business services that help facilitate companies that are globally engaged. All of these companies, all of these companies are indirectly tied beyond the 57 million jobs here in the United States that are directly tied to global trade. All of these support efforts create, again, tens of millions of jobs right here in the United States.

And so we as Americans benefit from both imports and exports as well.

Unfortunately, that message gets lost amid the constant barrage of anti-trade rhetoric which we regularly hear. The protectionists and the isolationists who want to disengage from the worldwide marketplace have been adept and relentless in making their case against trade.

That is why we are here tonight, to take a look at the actual facts and to try to set the record straight on the tremendous benefits of open trade and the opportunity it presents to help to begin restoring job creation in this country.

Again, Mr. Speaker, as we talk about these items that I mentioned, the economic stimulus bill, which hasn't kept the unemployment rate at the 8 percent level that was promised by the President, it has gotten instead to 9.5 percent, the health care measure and the so-called cap-and-trade bills which many studies have shown will cost jobs, we can help reduce the numbers of job loss if we were to focus on creating jobs through greater trade. It is instructive to look at past trade agreements and see what the impact has been on our economy and on our workforce right here in the United States.

Let's look at the U.S.-Chile free-trade agreement as an example. It passed with bipartisan support. But it also drew the usual criticism from protectionists who oppose open trade at every opportunity. This agreement was passed in 2003; so we now, Mr. Speaker, have 6 years of experience and data to draw from in analyzing what the impact of the U.S.-Chile free-trade agreement has been.

Since implementation of this agreement 5 years ago, our exports to Chile have increased by 345 percent. Now, when Congress considered this agreement, the International Trade Commission had estimated that there would be a 12 to 52 percent growth in the first 12 years. So far, we have seen growth that is nearly seven times higher than even the highest estimates that we had back in 2003.

More than 10,000 U.S. companies are sharing in the success by exporting to Chile. This includes large manufacturing companies like Caterpillar which relies on export markets for half of all of its sales, to small, family-run companies like Lion Apparel in Dayton, Ohio. These companies and their workers have been boosted by the explosion of new trade that was made possible by this U.S.-Chile free-trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, this is a success story that has been repeated throughout every agreement that we have implemented. Again, I underscore that, throughout every agreement that we have implemented, we have success stories to which we can point, which is why we actually have a manufacturing goods trade surplus with our free-trade agreement partners. Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker: we have a manufac-

turing—we are constantly hearing regularly from critics of trade that we have a tremendous loss of manufacturing jobs because of trade agreements, but we actually have a manufacturing goods trade surplus with our FTA partners. The key to increasing manufacturing jobs in this country is more, not fewer, free-trade agreements.

The same holds true throughout all sectors of our economy. Now, I spoke today with the CEO of UPS, one of the great companies, Scott Davis, who in yesterday's Wall Street Journal penned a fascinating piece talking about the new jobs that trade enables his company, UPS, to create. And these are the words from Mr. Davis. He said, for every 40 internationally shipped packages, UPS, United Parcel Service, can create one new job. This is only common sense.

He explained to me today when we were talking about this that if you look at those who were moving the packages, not just the drivers, but those who had responsibility for handling packages and all, it creates the equivalent for every 40 packages the United Parcel Service exports.

Greater engagement around the world means more economic growth, greater competitiveness and more job creation. It is just that simple. Now that is the good news, Mr. Speaker.

The bad news is that failure to expand our trading relationships were even worse, withdrawing into isolationism, which tragically is what has happened in the past couple of years, will have very, and already has had and will continue to have, very negative consequences at a time when we, as Americans, cannot afford to lose a single job here in the United States of America.

Because jobs, jobs, jobs, here at home, in the United States, is what this is about. It is what the American people are talking about. It is what they are asking for. It is what they were promised in last fall's campaign and what they had been promised throughout this year. And so we have before us a great opportunity that will, in fact, help us create more jobs.

On Monday, U.S. wheat growers announced that they are on the verge of losing half of their exports to Colombia if we do not quickly act on that agreement.

While the U.S. has stalled this agreement, Colombia has moved forward with other negotiations. It has just signed an agreement with the trading group known as Mercosur, the South American trade bloc led by Brazil which includes Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Colombia also intends, along with linking up with Mercosur, to conclude an agreement with Canada, our northern neighbor this fall, our NAFTA trading partner is engaging with Colombia now, in large part because we have failed to comply with the agreement that we made to have an up-or-

down vote here in the House of Representatives and in the Senate on the U.S.-Colombia free-trade agreement.

Without the U.S.-Colombia FTA, our wheat producers, who already face tariffs that can range as high as 124 percent, will not be able to compete with our Argentinean and Canadian counterparts who will enjoy duty-free access into the Colombian consumer market.

This is just one example, Mr. Speaker, of the competitive disadvantage our farmers, manufacturers and service providers face and will continue to face if the United States refuses to move forward or takes a step back.

Now we have three pending agreements. I mentioned the Colombia agreement. We also have pending agreements with Panama and South Korea that were negotiated in good faith. The first two, Panama and Colombia, are two very, very important key allies as we all know right here in the hemisphere. Their goods and services already enjoy duty-free access to the U.S. consumer market. That is a good thing. We are able to get cut flowers, coffee and things like that that come from South America, from Colombia especially, duty-free here in the United States. These agreements would simply level that playing field, providing us access to their consumer market.

The latter, South Korea, is a very important strategic ally as we know. And it is the world's 13th largest economy. The potential for economic growth and job creation by entering into what would be the world's largest bilateral trade agreement ever is staggering. With our unemployment rate at 9.5 percent and job losses, as we all know, mounting every month, we cannot afford to delay another moment.

These agreements, Mr. Speaker, are job creation agreements and American job creation agreements, which is something that Democrats and Republicans alike want to see happen. Job creation is at the forefront of Americans' minds right now. We know that.

Well, I believe comparisons of our economic situation and the Great Depression may be misguided. There is a very significant lesson to be learned from that time in our Nation's history. Conservatives and liberals alike agree that the economic decline that began with the stock market crash in 1929 was dramatically exacerbated and prolonged by the Republican-initiated, I'm embarrassed to say, the Republican-initiated Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which instituted dramatic, drastic protectionist measures. It began as an agriculture measure to impose tariffs on agriculture items and products, but it expanded. And it was very, very far reaching. This was precisely the wrong approach to take, plunging us as a Nation further into an economic depression.

I would hope that we have learned the basic lesson from our history: isolationism is always bad for an economy. But it is especially, especially

dangerous when we are already facing hardship.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has tried nearly every possible kind of bailout in order to stimulate our economy. And as we have seen in the past several months, not one has worked, certainly not as has been promised. It is time for us to turn to a proven policy that again will create good jobs right here in the United States of America, well-paying jobs. We know that jobs that relate to trade pay significantly higher than those that do not.

So it is time to move with this trade agenda. We can move it forward. We have an opportunity to do that.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be joined by a number of my colleagues who have been very active in our trade working group and, well, no one is on their feet at this moment. I will be happy to yield to my good friend from San Diego who immediately lurched to his feet and understands full well how important the issue of trade is, as he represents the very, very important gateway city into Latin America of San Diego.

I'm happy to yield to my good friend, Mr. BILBRAY.

Mr. BILBRAY. Thank you. I appreciate the gentleman from California for bringing this item up.

Mr. Speaker, one item I would like to discuss is the issue of our neighbors to the south. Every country in Central America has taken on the issue of free trade with the United States. And at great political risk, their political leaders have been willing to step forward and say, for the prosperity of the hemisphere, we must cooperate and work together, not just militarily, not just through aid, but through that long-term relationship of trade.

And it is sad to see that while they have the political bravery to do the right thing for their economies and for their citizens, our political system stands frozen in our tracks. Speaker PELOSI refuses to bring forward the agreements that their leaders have been brave enough to step forward and support.

Mr. DREIER. If I can reclaim my time just to add a comment to that, not only has there been a refusal to bring it up, but for the first time since implementation of the 1974 Trade Act, when a commitment is made to a country in good faith, with which we embarked on these negotiations, for the first time ever, after that vote was promised, we here under the leadership of Speaker PELOSI, utilized the Rules Committee, where I sit, and it was over my protest, of course, to actually subvert and prevent the up-or-down vote that was promised to our very, very important allies in Colombia.

I'm happy to further yield to my friend from San Diego.

Mr. BILBRAY. I appreciate that.

You can imagine the frustration of somebody that sits down with you, negotiates in good faith, give and take, comes down to an agreement, and you

tell them, go over and get your country to support it, and then we will go over and get ours, and you go ahead and do your part, you expend the political capital, you're brave enough politically to ask your people to support a proposal, and then you turn around with your partner, who asked you to agree and to move this agenda, to sit there and stonewall and refuse to even allow a vote, that kind of stab in the back with our partners.

And these are not partners, Mr. Speaker, that are far away. These are our neighbors to the south. These are people that not only we, but our grandchildren and our great grandchildren are going to be living with for centuries to come.

Mr. DREIER. If I can reclaim my time, let me just add that not only are they our neighbors to the south, but they are, without a doubt, our strongest allies on the South American continent playing a big role in dealing with the interdiction of illicit drugs coming into the United States.

And I regularly point to the fact that there is no country in modern history that has gone through a greater transformation for good in a 5-year period of time than Colombia. And the reason is that under the leadership of President Uribe, he has not only taken steps to demobilize the FARC and the paramilitaries in his country, but he also has made great steps towards dealing with the labor issues. And tragically there have been, in the past, labor killings, and there have been problems that continue to exist in Colombia. But he has been so helpful with us.

We do know that on the South American continent today there are leaders who are not only not friendly to the United States, but are subverting the cause of freedom; and we know those leaders, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Abel Morales in Bolivia and, of course, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua. We are seeing very serious problems here. And yet we have this important, strong ally dealing with these issues.

We promised them that we would have a vote so that we can create good, American jobs for Caterpillar's workers, for Whirlpool's workers, and for the other small businesses that exist.

That is why I think it is very, very important that we continue to hold up our tradition of supporting our global leadership and trade, continue to do that.

And I'm happy to further yield to my friend.

□ 1845

Mr. BILBRAY. Colombia is a good example of somebody who is brave enough to take on the drug cartels, was brave enough to take on the extreme leftists in their continent and be able to be brave enough to be an American ally. And for us to stiff-arm them and to basically punish them, it appears, for being a friend, who in the world will

want to risk themselves of being an ally of the United States? This is the example we're setting.

Moving on from Colombia, Panama is really a time-sensitive issue. Mr. Speaker, while we sit here today, Panama is moving forward with an aggressive program to rebuild the Panama Canal, one of the greatest, if not the largest, expenditures that Latin America has seen in our age. We are sitting on the sidelines while Panama is moving and looking to build this new project.

And can you imagine at the turn of the last century if America had sat back and allowed other countries to be able to take advantage of the economic opportunities, if Teddy Roosevelt had ignored the challenge of Panama and Central America, where we would be today and how history would be different.

Today, the Panamanians are building the canal. They want to buy Caterpillar equipment. They want to buy John Deere tractors. They want to see Bechtel and American companies come down there. They want to create American jobs because they want to have a full prosperity zone down there working with us to build the new canals.

While they're waiting to move forward, our political system in this city is stiff-arming them again, freezing them, and doesn't have the political bravery to do the right thing and allow a vote on a proposal that they were brave enough to move forward to.

So anyone who's listening to us and is looking at those factories that could be buying tractors, bulldozers, equipment, could be getting the contracts for the canal, just remember, it's your political process here in Washington that's freezing it out giving China and giving people from Iran, giving the rest of the world the leg up to get jobs out of the Panama Canal while Americans are being obstructed.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for his contribution. And just to take his great example on Panama and to further build on Colombia, it's very interesting.

It has been, as I look at my colleagues here, Mr. HERGER, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. CONAWAY, who've been very involved in this issue for so many years, it's hard to believe when I was given this number today, it has been 967 days—967 days—since we signed the agreement with Colombia. And people from the State of the great gentlewoman from Hinsdale, Illinois, who work for Caterpillar and others have actually been forced in that 967 days to pay \$2.1 billion in tariffs that otherwise would not have been there. And if one could think of the tremendous number of jobs that could have been created right here at home—because that's what this special order is about, Mr. Speaker. It's about creating good jobs here in the United States of America.

This Special Order is actually the brainchild of my friend from Hinsdale. We were having a meeting of our Trade

Working Group, and she proposed that we come to the floor and talk about how we can create more good U.S. jobs by expanding open trade.

And with that, I'm happy to yield to the author of this Special Order, my friend from Hinsdale (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank you for heading up this Special Order, and I thought I better get down here since I had proposed it. And I think it's a great idea because we—trade is so important right now during this recession. It is more important than ever that we continue to advance freer, fairer global commerce and not regress towards more harmful protectionist trade policies. And free trade agreements are one of the many ways to improve all of the Americans' standard of living and to get our economy back on track.

And you mentioned Caterpillar. Let me just say that there are two plants that are very close to my district, and I have had the opportunity to drive a top loader 10 times.

Mr. DREIER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I find it very hard to believe the gentlewoman from Hinsdale drove a high loader. A Caterpillar high loader?

Mrs. BIGGERT. A 10-ton loader that has a basket.

Mr. DREIER. If I were to witness that, Mr. Speaker, I would get out of the way, but I'm sure you did very well.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I can drive it forward and backward, and it is a huge vehicle. I think it holds a million golf balls in its basket, so you can imagine how big this is.

But this is such an important piece of equipment. And Colombia has had so many of these vehicles to go—for trade. And here, as you said, we have the tariff that has to be paid by Colombia at \$200,000 per vehicle for an off-road tractor going into Colombia while Colombian exports come into the United States nearly duty free.

So this trade agreement is so right because that \$200,000 per vehicle could be used and stay in America with a free trade agreement and supply many more jobs in my district and nationwide. And, in fact, in days since the Colombia Free Trade Agreement was signed here and has not been put into place, U.S. companies have paid over \$2 billion in tariffs on goods and services that are exported to Colombia. And the money, you know, could do so much more.

Let's go back for a minute to the Chile Trade Agreement, because I was the Republican whip on that. You put me in that position, and it was really an eye-opener, I think, for so many Members on this floor.

So many of them were skeptical. So many of them thought this was—that we shouldn't be entering into this, all of these global trade agreements. And the benefits that have been provided by that where American exports to Chile

grew from \$2.7 billion in 2003 to \$12.1 billion in 2008. That's outstanding.

Mr. DREIER. Reclaiming my time, I would like the gentlewoman to repeat that number. So, again, the actual raw number in dollar value of the increase in our exports from the United States is what number?

Mrs. BIGGERT. Our exports to Chile grew from \$2.7 billion in 2003 to \$12.1 billion in 2008, and U.S. imports from Chile grew from \$3.7 billion in 2003 to \$8.1 billion in 2008.

Now, I love those green grapes that come in from Chile. And, you know, this is a thing where food products and everything that's coming from there is that we send over our products when they're having their winter; they send over their food products when we're having our winter. So it works out.

And then another statistic is that in 2008, the U.S. was Chile's top source of imports and the second largest destination for Chilean exports while Chile was the 25th largest export market for U.S. goods.

So we are doing really well to have that partnership, and that's why we need to move ahead with these other trade agreements.

Let me just say one more thing about the Peru Trade Agreement also that was passed. My home State of Illinois, we exported \$198 million in goods to Peru in 2006. So, as seen with Chile and other countries, we have a fair trade agreement with the amount of exports to Peru that will only increase. So we should do everything to encourage the trade agreements that are now on the table.

And the cost, the cost of stalling these free trade agreements, for example, it's not fair that an Illinois company like Caterpillar should have to pay the \$200,000 tariff and so many other companies that face the same thing; plus, the national security issue, the fact that we're dealing with countries so that we're not allowing some of the countries that are hostile to us to just have such a foothold there.

With the Colombia agreement, I think a couple of things. And so many of these agreements have gotten into human rights or labor protections, and I think Colombia, in particular, has worked so hard to further reduce the violence and increase labor protections there by improving the labor and human rights in their nation. And we actually used to meet with President Uribe for so long, and it really was a shame then that we could not get this agreement through. And it really was unfair to change the law—I don't think you can change the law, but to have the Speaker not allow this agreement to come up within 45 days.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I would say to my friend it was not just—it was not just a change. It was, from my perspective, a complete abrogation of the responsibility that we had. And my concern is that we embark not only on other free trade agreements, but any other international negotiation with

any other partner in the world to deal with national security issues and other challenges out there. What good is our word after a commitment was made that there would be an up-or-down vote because of trade promotion authority that was granted by the Congress to the executive branch and negotiate this agreement saying we would have an up-or-down vote and then all of a sudden reneging on that commitment that was made?

I would be happy to further yield to my friend.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think you are absolutely right. That is a much stronger statement, and that is the statement that should be made to abrogate our agreement. And I think that after all that Colombia had done with the labor protections—for example, in 2005 and 2006, Colombia issued new Presidential decrees and regulations that addressed the concerns about the applications of labor laws, cooperatives, and temporary workers.

In 2006, they agreed to the establishment of a permanent representative of the International Labor Organization to be stationed in Colombia to promote the fundamental rights of workers.

In 2007, the Colombian legislature passed laws that significantly expedite proceedings and enhanced Colombia's existing labor courts. All of these changes, and yet we could not get this labor agreement and the trade agreement through after so much negotiation that it really is a shame.

So these significant efforts to improve labor relations in Colombia have led to the Colombian labor unions representing 79,000 Colombian workers to fully support the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. All of these things. It's an embarrassment.

Mr. DREIER. So the gentlewoman is saying that the unions in Colombia are supportive of this agreement?

I'd be happy to further yield.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Correct; 79,000 workers in the union support this agreement.

Mr. DREIER. We're constantly hearing, Mr. Speaker, that unions are all opposed to this agreement. It seems to me that the unions here in the United States of America are opposed to it, and I've never quite understood that. How can creating more jobs for the union members and workers at Caterpillar and Whirlpool and a wide range of other companies across this country be the wrong thing to do, opening up markets so that their products can be sold into those countries? To me, I can't understand it.

And when we've got the unions—all except one union, I'm told, and it's actually basically the public services union, which has nothing to do with the issue of global trade is the only union in Colombia that has opposed this. But I have had the chance in Bogota to meet with a wide range—and I know my colleagues have—of union

leaders who are passionately supportive of this measure because they know it will end up being beneficial to their country and their workers.

I'm happy to further yield.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I think there is a disconnect with some of the unions that they don't understand that this is what creates jobs in the United States when we have the products that we're going to export, and the more that we export, the more jobs that we have created, and this is what moves our economy along.

Let me talk about one more issue, and that is that the U.S. trade deficit is shrinking. In May this year, there was a 9.8 decline in the U.S. trade deficit. That means that we are exporting more and more. We have been at a deficit where we have imported more, so we are running a trade surplus.

Mr. DREIER. If I could reclaim my time, I will say to my colleagues something that I mentioned in my opening remarks, and I know that you'll agree with this, and people are always saying that these trade agreements cost manufacturing jobs here in the United States, people are thrown out of work because of these trade agreements, when, in fact, the opposite has been the case. We actually run a manufacturing job surplus with our partner countries with these FTAs.

And I'm happy to further yield.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I think that the surplus has been running \$9.3 billion for January through May of 2009.

Mr. DREIER. It's a very, very impressive measure.

Mrs. BIGGERT. So I thank the gentleman so much.

Mr. DREIER. I thank the gentlewoman for recommending that we take time to talk to our colleagues about this important issue.

And, again, I will say I know that she and Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. HERGER and others join me in hoping that this will be a bipartisan agreement.

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Let me just take one moment as I prepare to yield to my other colleagues, and I'm happy to yield again to my friend from Hinsdale, to talk about the much-maligned North American Free Trade Agreement.

Now, my friend comes from Texas. My California colleague is here. We represent States that border on Mexico, and we so often hear people describe virtually every ailment in society as being tied to the North American Free Trade Agreement when, in fact, more than one-third of all U.S. exports, more than one-third of all the exports leaving the United States of America, go to our NAFTA partners, and for some States, that percentage is significantly higher.

Michigan, we know what a devastating economy Michigan has. The number actually in Michigan is 68 percent of the exports from that State go to our NAFTA partners, obviously a great percentage to Canada but also much to Mexico.

In Ohio, we so often hear our colleagues from Ohio maligning any kind of trade agreement. Yet, 54 percent of the exports from Ohio, where do they go? To our NAFTA trading partners. Those jobs created in Ohio, 54 percent of them go to our NAFTA partners.

In Indiana, it's 52 percent. In fact, without the North American Free Trade Agreement the manufacturing workforce of these States would be devastated, and let's say that again, Mr. Speaker. While we hear that NAFTA is responsible for any job loss that takes place in Ohio, in Michigan, and in Indiana and other States, in fact, were it not for the North American Free Trade Agreement the manufacturing job loss would be tremendously higher than it is today.

Since implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States and Mexico, we have actually seen our trade triple to nearly \$1 trillion. Between 1993 and 2007, 28 million American jobs have been created, or a 25 percent expansion in our workforce. Between 1993 and 2007, U.S. industrial production, three-quarters of which is manufacturing, rose by 57 percent, almost double the productivity increase in the 12-year period before implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

And more than 110,000, small- and medium-size businesses export to Canada and Mexico, 110,000. I know many of them are in Texas, many in California, many in Illinois and other States. These companies are spread all across the country, but the top exporters to Canada and Mexico are, in fact, Texas, California, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, New York, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.

And so while we regularly hear the North American Free Trade Agreement as being maligned and responsible for any economic challenge we face in this country, the opposite is the case.

Have there been any people displaced? Well, of course there have been, and that's one of the reasons I've supported trade adjustment assistance, as I know my colleagues have, so that any people who do, in fact, face job loss that they will be in a position where they are able to be retrained, put into positions that will end up being very beneficial for them.

So I'm very pleased now to be joined by one of the great champions of the trade agenda who's a member of the Agriculture and Intelligence and the Armed Services Committees, and he's the gentleman from Midland, Texas (Mr. CONAWAY). I'm happy to yield to him.

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and those are some pretty startling facts. I'm a CPA and I tend to work better with facts than I do with hyperbole and make things up and guesses and wishes. Those facts are pretty startling when it comes to the—

Mr. DREIER. I must say, it's unusual for me to use facts.

Mr. CONAWAY. For the much-maligned North American Free Trade Agreement, most of the time you hear people criticize it, but they do it based on old data based off of misconceptions, and when you begin to lay out the facts to them, particularly from the States who—some of the most inflammatory comments that I heard on this floor about NAFTA come from Members from Ohio. And that's a pretty startling fact that we will have to confront them with perhaps the next time that they bring that up.

I would like to move back to Colombia because I think, given free trade agreements that are the most ripe for execution and for completion, Colombia would certainly be in that category.

My colleague mentioned it had been 967 days that that bill has languished in our system. Let me point out that, over 925 of those days, we're under the leadership of Speaker PELOSI. So it has been the Speaker who has stood in the way of reducing tariffs by \$2.1 billion, that my colleague mentioned earlier; insisting that the 35 percent tariff on automobiles remain in place; the 10 percent tariff on cotton remain in place; and the 10 percent on computers and other things made in the United States remain in place.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, would my friend repeat those numbers? I think that's very, very telling, and that is a tariff level in place basically undermining the ability of sending the products of U.S. workers here in the United States into Colombia.

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, it's interesting that between the unions and the Federal taxpayers, we own General Motors, and so a General Motors car made in the United States bears a 35 percent tariff if you try to sell it in Colombia. So you add 35 percent to the cost of that car, and it competes with a car say made in Korea or other places that don't have that tariff, and then we don't compete well on a cost basis. So those are American manufacturing jobs. They speak to you on behalf of the American taxpayers and the unions for a change, which I don't normally speak to, if we're going to prosper General Motors, why not do something that drops the tariff, makes us more competitive for the taxpayer-made automobiles to be sold in Colombia?

As you mentioned earlier, Colombia's continued with the unilateral trade agreements that they're doing that continue to disadvantage American businesses that compete with businesses from those countries that Colombia—

Mr. DREIER. Reclaiming my time, let's state for the record, I would say to my colleague, why it is that Colombia has resorted to these agreements with Mercosur, with Canada. The reason is very simply, 967 days ago when this agreement was signed, President Uribe and our friends from Colombia assumed that within a relatively short period of time, that we in both Houses

of Congress would do our due diligence of looking at the agreement, and then we would have had an up-or-down vote. So it's hard to blame our friends and allies in Colombia for having embarked on negotiations with Canada and with Mercosur as we have, again, reneged on our commitment to have an up-or-down vote here.

And I'm happy to further yield to my friend.

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, I thank my friend for yielding.

I was startled last week when I saw a headline attributed to a comment that our United States Trade Representative Ron Kirk made that trade still or was a high priority with the White House. High rhetoric but no action. I've not seen any pressure from the White House on the Speaker to tell the Speaker that we have a great friend in Colombia, we have an ally, a stalwart ally in President Uribe, and we need to quit thumbing our nose at him, quit treating him like a redheaded stepchild, and begin to treat him as the friend and ally we know him to be by recognizing the importance of this free trade agreement, and getting it passed, getting it signed and getting it implemented into law.

The only reason I can see so far, remaining reason, is our trade unions' opposition to this particular trade agreement. I'm not sure why they picked out Colombia because, in the grand scheme of things, Colombia's overall economy doesn't threaten any particular business in the United States.

But the remaining issue is with our trade unions. It's been my experience that Colombia has addressed almost every single one of the issues with respect to union organizers that was the pushback. They've decreased the violence significantly. They've agreed to ILO standards. As my colleague Mrs. BIGGERT mentioned earlier, they've agreed to an Office of the High Commission from the U.N. on human rights. All those things have been agreed to so there's no rational reason to continue to maintain the 35 percent trade barrier on automobiles. There's no rational reason to maintain the 10 to 15 percent trade barrier on movies and DVDs. There's no rational reason to maintain the 10 percent tariff on cotton. And finally, there's no rational reason to maintain the 10 percent tariff on computers. That hurts American businesses.

My colleague mentioned a while ago that our trade unions don't understand that when we make things in the United States and sell them overseas that creates jobs. I would respectfully disagree. They are bright, smart people. It's counterintuitive why they would be against creating jobs in America so that we could build stuff and sell it overseas, but I think they full well understand the mechanics of how that works.

So I would encourage my colleagues to continue to push on the Colombia

Free Trade Agreement. Colombia is the strongest democracy in South America, and at a time when there's unrest in Honduras, unrest in Venezuela, unrest in Bolivia and throughout that region, we need a strong ally in that country. We need to put our actions where our mouth is, in effect, and put this agreement in place so that we can quit insulting our good friend President Uribe by refusing to bring this up. I appreciate the gentleman for the time.

Mr. DREIER. I appreciate the gentleman for his very thoughtful contributions and I'd be happy to yield to my friend from Hinsdale.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I was going to maybe correct what I said. What I meant to say that there were people on the other side of the aisle that had blocked these agreements, and not the trade unions. I know that so many of them really do know how important this is.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for her contribution as well, and it has been an unfortunate thing. I believe that there are intelligent people within the union movement here in the United States who understand that creating jobs in the United States hinges in large part on opening up markets where 95 percent of the world's consumers are outside of our borders, and yet, they have, for some unknown reason, and there's lots of speculation as to why they do this, they have continued to drum up and really pander to what is the lowest common denominator of fear, frightening people. My gosh, if we embark on an agreement, we're going to lose jobs, when, in fact, every shred of evidence that we have is that the opposite is the case.

And I thank my friend for her contribution. I thank my friend from Midland as well.

Now, I'm very, very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to yield to our very, very hardworking colleague who for many years served as the top Republican on the Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Trade who's been a great champion of it, as a fellow Californian, represents important agriculture industry in his State, the largest industry. I say as an Angeleno, that I know full well that agriculture is the number one industry in our State of California, and the idea of opening up new markets is very important.

And actually, as the gentleman begins, I want to talk a little bit about the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement because I know that would play a very big role in benefiting the constituents he has, the farmers whom he represents.

With that, I'm happy to yield to my friend from Chico.

Mr. HERGER. Well, I thank my good friend from California (Mr. DREIER) for yielding and also for the leadership that you've given over the years in this incredibly important area of trade, of fair trade, of free trade, and how crucially important it is to our economy, not just to the district I represent but to our entire Nation.

And Mr. Speaker, the number one concern for Americans right now is the economy. Americans know that the health of the U.S. economy directly impacts their job and their ability to provide for their family and keep a roof over their heads.

At the beginning of the year, Democrats pushed through the Congress an unprecedented measure to spend \$787 billion in an attempt to stimulate the economy. That was money we had to borrow, creating a national deficit that will reach almost \$2 trillion by the end of the year.

The President assured the American people that this was the only way to prevent the unemployment rate from reaching 8 percent. Yet, with this mammoth deficit spending, the unemployment rate has skyrocketed not to 8 percent, but to 9.5 percent, with estimates indicating it will reach 10.5 percent before the end of the year and no end in sight.

While Americans continue to struggle to find work, Congress has moved on to other issues, ignoring one of the most obvious and efficient vehicles to promote economic growth and create jobs: trading with other countries. Importantly, this solution doesn't require the government spending billions of dollars nor does it require a huge expansion or invasion of the government into the free market. It is as simple as removing foreign barriers to U.S. goods and services so that our workers and businesses can compete on a level playing field in the global economy.

Most Americans don't know that the U.S. is not only the number one trading Nation in the world but also the number one manufacturer and that our record exports last year were the one bright spot in our economy.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me ask my friend to repeat that. We are the number one manufacturing country in the world? So few people realize that. People believe that it is China. People believe that there are other countries, that Mexico is, but we continue, even with this struggling, down economy to be the number one manufacturing country in the entire world?

Mr. HERGER. That is absolutely correct, number one manufacturing Nation in the world, the number one trading Nation in the world. Trade is part of the foundation of a strong economy and high standard of living.

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Today, for example, more than 57 million American jobs depend on trade, and these jobs pay 13 to 18 percent higher wages. Clearly, it would be in our Nation's best interest to build on this record, helping us through this difficult economic time.

The premise is simple: reducing tariffs and other barriers would make our goods less expensive and therefore more competitive in foreign markets. The additional sales from exports will help sustain and grow our U.S. businesses during this economic downturn,

creating much needed job opportunities in the United States.

When you combine the fact that demand is sluggish in the United States due to the high unemployment and general uncertainty about the economic outlook with the fact that 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States, it seems like the commonsense solution would be to encourage U.S. exports by reducing barriers abroad. The best way to do this is to negotiate market-opening trade agreements with other countries.

Mr. Speaker, my district in rural northern California is typical of many districts across the United States that are largely dependent on agriculture. We produce more almonds, walnuts, rice, and prunes than we can possibly consume, and heavily rely on exporting these goods to foreign markets.

The bottom line is promoting free and fair trade through these agreements is an essential component of economic recovery. Unfortunately, House Democrat leadership has failed to take this necessary step for our workers, despite the fact that we have three agreements—three agreements already negotiated and just waiting for congressional approval.

Two of these pending agreements are with close U.S. allies in South America: Panama, and Colombia. Both of these countries largely already have duty-free access to U.S. markets due to trade preference programs, while our goods face high tariffs in theirs. Yet, these nations want to move from a one-way trade relationship to a two-way relationship. Why? This Congress is preventing that from happening when our workers would benefit from new opportunities in these markets.

It is mind-boggling to me that the U.S. Government continues to ignore the needs of our workers in such a way.

We also have a pending agreement with South Korea, which is the most commercially significant agreement for the United States, as Korea is already our seventh largest trading partner.

Together, these three trade agreements would increase U.S. exports by at least \$10.8 billion, as estimated by the U.S. International Trade Commission. That clearly means more businesses for U.S. companies and more jobs for American workers. And these benefits are spread throughout the entire economy. All sectors benefit: manufacturers, agricultural producers, and services.

Yet, instead of providing this true stimulus to our struggling economy, Congress and the administration have chosen to tie our hands behind our back. We must realize the cause of this inaction. If the American people knew that denying a vote on the Panama agreement is causing U.S. workers to miss an opportunity to export heavy machinery to Panama for their \$5 billion Panama Canal expansion project, would they think Congress is acting in their best interest by sitting on the agreement? I think not.

If the American people knew that if Canada ratifies their agreement with Colombia before the U.S., Colombians will be buying Canadian wheat instead of U.S. wheat, would they think that loss in market share to our competitor is acceptable? I don't think so.

If the American people knew that if the European Union ratifies their agreement with South Korea before the U.S., Koreans are going to use European services instead of services provided by American workers, would they think their Members of Congress are doing what's best for American workers? Absolutely not.

By not finalizing these agreements, we not only miss out on opportunities for our businesses to expand; we will also start to lose our current market share to our competitors. The EU, Canada, China, and other nations aren't standing still. They will continue to push for their own market-opening agreements that would put U.S. goods and services at a competitive disadvantage.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that if we are not moving forward, we are moving backwards—and other countries aren't going to wait for us to catch up. Trade is an essential part of economic recovery and the American people cannot afford for this Congress to continue to ignore it. Expanding trade opportunities for our businesses will help them grow and expand, creating jobs that American workers need right now. And if that isn't reason enough, we don't have the luxury of time to sit back and wait while our competitors race by. I urge this Congress to act on behalf of American workers and pass the three pending U.S. trade agreements. Our great Nation is at a crossroads. Will the Democrat Leadership of this Congress take our Nation down a protectionist path, isolating our Nation from the rest of the world, or are they going to choose the path traveled by Pres's John Kennedy and Bill Clinton and embrace the quest for open markets that have helped make this country the greatest Nation in the world?

During this time of economic instability, it has never been more important for the leaders of our Nation to actively choose open markets and free & fair trade. The United States already tried protectionism in the 1920s—it was called the Smoot-Hawley Act of 1928 that raised tariffs on products in every sector which resulted in a worsening of the Great Depression. Mr. Speaker, the American people cannot afford to go down their protectionist path again. We desperately need the benefits & opportunities that these trade agreements create.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my colleague for his very thoughtful contribution, especially mentioning the very important Korea agreement.

This is about jobs, jobs, jobs created right here in the United States of America. And that is exactly what these trade agreements will do.

I thank my friend and all of my colleagues for their participation in this very, very important Special Order. I will say, Mr. Speaker, that we will continue this conversation, and look forward to work in a bipartisan way to get these agreements through so that we

can create more good job opportunities for our fellow Americans.

URGENT NEED FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I thank Speaker PELOSI and my colleagues for allowing us to come down for the next hour or so and speak to you. We're doing a joint hour. Occasionally, those of us who are pushing for health care reform to happen for our constituents this year have come down to the floor to share our thoughts about the urgent need for reform.

We're sharing this hour with the 30-something Working Group, which I'm honored to be a part of. And I know our hope is that, at the very least, Representative RYAN will be able to join us later this evening as part of this hour.

But we are here to focus our thoughts and our energies and to talk to our colleagues about the need to pass real comprehensive health care reform for this country and for our constituents. We know what the problem is out there because when we're out there at our town halls, when we're setting up our office hours at the supermarket or the grocery store, it's our constituents that are coming to us and telling us about the fact that they just can't afford this health care system any longer.

If you're lucky enough to have insurance, you've seen your family have to pick up more and more of the share. As the cost of health care goes up for businesses, they're passing more of it along to individual consumers.

So now, if you're a family of four out there, you're likely to be spending \$3,000 to \$5,000, at least, on health care, even when you have insurance. Your deductible now is in the thousands of dollars rather than in the hundreds of dollars.

That copay that you have to bring with you to the doctor's office now isn't \$5 or \$10; it's \$100 or \$150. Those drugs that used to only cost you \$5 or \$10 when you showed up, well, if it's in the wrong tier of drug, you may be paying 50 to 70 percent of the cost of that drug.

If you're a senior citizen and you happen to find yourself in the dreaded doughnut hole, not only are you paying the full cost of those drugs, and potentially bankrupting yourself in the process, but you're paying the highest prices in the entire health care market when you show up at the drug store.

You're paying more than the Federal Government pays for that drug. You're paying more than Blue Cross/Blue Shield pays for that drug. You're paying through the nose for it.

This health care system is broken. It's broken because the people that got it just can't afford it any longer.

Now, much of the cost is very visible to people. That cost that you now bear as an employee, that you didn't used to have to pay, that increased deductible or that copay, that hurt is felt. We're feeling it for you because we're hearing those stories increasingly about people that just can't come up with the money to pay that high deductible, people that just don't have the cash to fill in the drug company doughnut hole. That hurt is visible and real for our constituents.

But there is an invisible pain. There is an unseen hurt that we need to talk about here on this floor because there are a lot of businesses that are passing along the cost of health care, but there are also a lot of businesses that are eating the cost of health care, that don't want to have a high-deductible plan for their employees. So what they do is they pay it instead.

The business decides that they will pay the 10 percent increase in premiums, but it just means that their employees don't get a wage increase that year. Or when they were supposed to get a 5 percent bump up, they only get a 2 percent bump up.

There are millions, millions of employees in this country who should be making more in take-home wages but aren't because the businesses that they work for are paying more in health care costs than they ever have before.

Now that's just not me talking; that's just not anecdotes I hear from the business owners and the employees in my district. That's data. That's data that shows that over the last 10 years the premiums charged to employers from health care insurance companies have risen by 120 percent during the last 10 years—120 percent jump. More than double—a more than doubling of health care premiums charged to businesses.

During that same time, average wages have grown by only about 20 or 30 percent. During that same time, wages have grown at less than the overall rate of inflation. Guess what? That's because of the cost of health care eating into the money that people take home from their paychecks.

Lastly, the invisible cost comes here. Guess what, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues? We've got a system of universal health care in this country. We're not inventing a system of universal health care. We've got one now. It's just the most inhumane, most unconscionable, most inefficient universal health care system in the world because our Federal law guarantees you health care, but only until you get so sick, you get so crippled, that you get so desperate that you as an uninsured individual have to show up to the emergency room. And so you get care, but it's too late.

It's the most expensive, most inefficient way of delivering universal health care. There is a cost to that, because when that individual who could have just gotten a prescription to cover their growing infection and instead lets

it get to such an extent and such a degree of severity that they have to show up at the emergency room and they have to have major surgery to cure that festering illness and infection, there's a cost to that of 10 to 20 times what the cost of the preventative service might have been.

That cost doesn't just sort of evaporate in the air. It doesn't disappear into the ether. It's real. It's substantive. The hospital picks up that cost and forces private insurers to reimburse them more to help them cover the costs of the uninsured. Charges some of it back to the government. Every taxpayer in this country, a portion of your tax dollars that you send to the Federal and State government goes to hospitals and emergency rooms to cover the cost of all those 50 million people that walk in without insurance.

So there are costs all throughout the system, both visible and invisible, that we cannot sustain. And so we've come down here to the House floor today to not just focus on the problem—I think you've got to talk about the disease in order to get a diagnosis—but to talk about the fact that for the first time in almost a generation we are on the verge as a United States Congress of rising to the massive challenge that confronts our health care system.

We are on the precipice of passing real health care reform that lowers the cost of health care for everybody in the system whether you're an individual paying it or you're a business having to bear the burden of the cost, and at the same time makes the system more fair for people right now that are paying more for health care just because they happen to be sicker than somebody else; for those millions of people who can't find health care in the first place because they happen to have a pre-existing condition.

For all those senior citizens out there who are trying to decide between 20 different plans that the difference can only be deciphered in the fine print of the paperwork that they send you in the mail, we're going to make this system more transparent, we're going to make it more fair, we're going to give people more choice. And by doing that, we're going to lower the cost of the American health care system for everybody so that those very visible costs that are holding families back are controlled and those invisible costs that too often aren't seen by wage earners or by taxpayers disappear over time.

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So I'm really glad to be down here this evening. I see Representative SPEIER's joined us, so I'd love to hear from her as well. We're going to be joined later on, I know, by Representative RYAN and others to focus some attention on this problem of health care and the approach that we're going to take in this House. So I'd love to have Representative SPEIER from California join us to talk a little bit more about the challenges that we confront and