

JOBS OUGHT TO BE TOP PRIORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with my colleague from North Carolina that it is time for us to not just reassess but readjust our policies in Afghanistan, scale it down and bring the troops home.

There's another area of consensus that I hope we can focus on: Most people agree that employment, that jobs, ought to be a priority for this Congress, for the government, for American business. Much of what you hear on Capitol Hill about creating jobs and employment is very, very contentious. Yet what is complex and controversial in Congress is not so hard when you move off the Hill, when you look at what the experts suggest, when you look at what the American people will support, for the shape of a future recovery is emerging in terms of a consensus about what we should do. I think we probably will; the question is when.

First and foremost, it is important that we rebalance our long-term programs and priorities. But in the short term, it is not only important to keep the spending levels where they are, it would be disastrous to cut it further. Chairman Bernanke said just last week that short-term increases can strengthen economic demand with a long-term adjustment to strengthen our balance sheet by reducing the deficit.

One of the first places to start is rebuilding and renewing America. Experts agree we have vast unmet needs; the Society of Civil Engineers suggests \$2.3 trillion that should be spent in the next 5 years on repairing our roads and our bridges, extending and enhancing our transit system. There are two dozen cities across America that are looking at reintroducing a modern streetcar which can be done quickly and will spark investment in those communities that have that opportunity.

We have aging and inadequate water systems that leak 6 billion gallons of water a day, enough to fill 9,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools that would stretch from Washington, DC, to Pittsburgh. We have an aging and ineffective electrical grid. We have pipelines that need to be upgraded for safety. There is environmental cleanup, especially expensive Superfund sites that otherwise will continue to put a cloud over the adjacent businesses and governments.

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This will create millions of family-wage jobs in the course of the next year. It is important to deal with our health care system, which is creating jobs. But, unfortunately, it's creating jobs now very inefficiently. We pay more for healthcare than anybody else in the world, by far. Compared to what other developed countries produce, we

have mediocre results as a whole. Spectacular for some Americans, but overall, Americans die sooner, get sick more often, stay sick longer. By accelerating the health care reforms to provide value instead of volume of health care, we can squeeze more value and the right type of employment that will be sustainable over time and help make Americans healthier.

There is, Mr. Speaker, no question that we need in fact to pay for this over the long term. But the path here is something that most of the American public will in fact agree on, and the experts have a consensus that this is where we start, with tax equity, making sure everybody is paying their fair share adjusting user fees for infrastructure to account for inflation—not anything immediate, but over the course of the next year or two—to be able to have the cash flow to meet our obligations for transportation, for water; reinstituting the Superfund tax that expired in 1995, leaving communities with the toxic legacy.

It's important to consider a financial transaction fee, something that other European countries have—that England has had for over a century—that would in fact give stability to our stock market. This is something that's within our capacity, Mr. Speaker. I hope we do it sooner rather than later.

H.R. 3080, UNITED STATES-KOREA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. I come to the floor today to talk about the need to pass the three free trade agreements that we will be voting on today. These agreements will mean more export opportunities, access to raw materials at a lower cost for American manufacturing, and make American companies and farmers more competitive in additional markets where they currently face high tariffs. Free trade agreements result in jobs and profits for American businesses.

In 2010, the Second District of Alabama saw 4,927 jobs directly supported by exports. Of the \$2 billion in total merchandise exports, \$769.4 million was to free trade agreement partners. The Korea, Colombia, and Panama free trade agreements will open up opportunities for businesses all over the Nation, including those in my home State of Alabama.

In regards to the Korea free trade and what it means to Alabama, in 2009 Alabama did \$300 million in exports to Korea, making Korea the 11th largest export market for Alabama. According to the Business Roundtable, the agreement that we will be voting on today will make more than half of Alabama merchandise exports to Korea be duty free. The immediate tariff eliminations in this bill gives Alabama exports a \$3.1 million cost advantage over similar

products exported by competitors who do not have free trade agreements with Korea.

Additionally, agriculture in Alabama will benefit from the Korea free trade agreement. Currently, U.S. agricultural products face tariffs up to 500 percent in South Korea. By eliminating these tariffs, agriculture will see over \$20.3 million in additional gains in sales to South Korea. In particular, it is estimated that Alabama's export of poultry will rise to \$4.4 million per year, and cattle and beef to \$3.7 million per year.

In regards to the Colombia free trade agreement, in 2010, Colombia was Alabama's 21st largest export market, with \$154 million in exports. The agreement we will be voting on today will mean an estimated 72.3 percent increase in exports for Alabama to Colombia and 56.4 percent in fabricated metal products.

And finally, Panama is one of the fastest expanding economies in Latin American. In 2010, the United States saw a 7.5 percent growth in exports to Panama. In regards to agriculture, the United States exported more than \$450 million to Panama in 2010.

The free trade agreements that we are voting on today are in total expected to increase direct agricultural exports from Alabama by \$22.8 million per year, and the increased marketing opportunities will add more than 200 jobs to the Alabama economy. It is unfortunate that these agreements have taken so long to be considered by Congress. They will have a significant impact on our economy. This delay has already put American businesses at a disadvantage with the South Korea-European Union free trade agreement going into effect in July of this year.

American businesses do not need a stimulus or stimulus programs that do not work. I have come to the floor several times to talk about how American businesses are being stifled by overreaching and burdensome regulations. American businesses have also been stifled by the slow-moving administration and ensuring that our businesses have the same advantages as those in other countries. These agreements remove the high tariffs that have been in place in important and expanding markets.

I will continue to work to protect and promote jobs here in the United States and in my home State of Alabama and will be voting "yes" on all three trade agreements. I ask my colleagues to do so as well.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. KISSELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KISSELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of the opposition that I will have to the free trade agreements that we'll be voting on today and to

speak of some of the details about those free trade agreements that seem not to be discussed. We seem to want to talk about how these free trade agreements will be good without understanding the details of what we'll be voting upon.

My opposition to these trade agreements is not based upon any type of partisanship. That negative force called "partisanship" that is too much part of our lives here in Washington, I don't deal with. This is not partisanship. This is not some type of blinded protectionism, that somehow we need to close our shores. I'm very aware of the global impact of our modern economy. And it's not based upon any type of ignorance of the potential good that these so-called free trade agreements can present to us. Indeed, I have lived in a part of the country that has suffered immensely from free trade agreements. I worked 27 years in textiles and watched the jobs leave. My district, North Carolina's Eighth District, is still suffering, as it has for the last 10 years, because of the results of free trade agreements.

Indeed, if you look at the facts of our Nation and where we are in our economy, it's hard to say that since free trade agreements have become part of our lives that it has been good for the Nation. We look at our working families. It was reported last week that our working families are now at income levels of the mid-1990s. We've lost so much of our industrial base. We've lost hundreds of thousands of jobs. And we continue to see our trade deficits climb and climb and climb.

Mr. Speaker, we have the world's greatest economy. We need trade agreements, but not these trade agreements. We need for people to come to us and say we would like to play in the United States market, and we should say what terms that we should have for that.

So what are the details of the Korean free trade agreement? We hear that it will create 75,000 jobs. The Economic Policy Institute tells us we will lose over 150,000 jobs. And we'll hear a lot about the jobs that were created, but we won't hear too much about those jobs that were lost, of which 40,000 jobs are estimated to be lost in the textile industry.

We won't hear about how 65 percent of something can be made in another country and brought to South Korea and finished there and then brought into the United States, recognizing that China is the next-door neighbor to Korea. So how much transshipment is going to come out of China, the 65 percent to South Korea?

We won't hear that North Korea will be allowed to send goods to the United States as a part of this trade agreement.

We won't talk about the currency manipulation that South Korea engages in, just like China does.

We won't talk about the tariffs that will stay in place, protecting Korean goods, while we drop ours immediately.

We'll talk about that we can sell more cars in Korea, up to 75,000, if they choose to buy them—there's no guarantees—when we know that South Korea now is selling hundreds of thousands of cars in the United States.

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Mr. Speaker, we need trade agreements, but we need trade agreements that work for us. This is not a reflection on the countries. It's a reflection on these old NAFTA/CAFTA-type trade deals that were negotiated years ago in the Bush era that have been dusted off and brought to us and being told to us that this is good for the American worker, this will create jobs. Unfortunately, the history of our trade agreements has been anything but that.

I was with an administration official in North Carolina a year ago, and I was told how good free trade had been for North Carolina. And I said, I can't address that, but I can address that free trade has not been good for my district. I was told that they could show me the numbers, and I told them I could show them the empty buildings, many of which are not even standing now. They've just been torn down, not replaced with jobs. Retrain our people for what, to ship more jobs offshore?

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to look at the details of this, look at our economy, and look at the jobs we have lost and say, is this good for America? No, it's not.

IN SUPPORT OF THE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GIBSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the fair trade agreements that we will vote on later today. I commend the Obama administration for their work in ensuring that our businesses and workers get the best agreement possible to grow the economy and create jobs.

While these agreements have been in the works for years, our country has benefited from the improvements garnered by our U.S. Trade Representative, Ron Kirk, and his team. This is particularly evident in their refining of the South Korean agreement so that our farmers and automobile manufacturers get a fair deal. Of course, each trade agreement is different, and they all have to be evaluated on their merits. Details matter.

Overall, these agreements will help increase U.S. exports by an estimated \$13 billion, adding \$10 billion to our annual gross domestic product and creating nearly a quarter million jobs, including many in my district in upstate New York; and we'll do that without adding a single dollar to the deficit. In fact, these fiscally responsible agreements will help cut the deficit.

Our farmers, in particular, stand to gain significantly from these agreements, opening up nearly \$30 million in

new business a year for our farmers in New York. These agreements are enthusiastically supported by our New York State Farm Bureau and by my Agricultural Advisory Panel, comprised of farmers from across the 10 counties and 137 towns I represent, a congressional district with over 1,000 family farmers.

Mr. Speaker, we have the smartest, hardest-working farmers in the world. Their issue is profitability. We help farmers when we attack the impediments to growth, which include taxes, regulations, health care costs, and energy costs. We help farmers when we have access to quality infrastructure—not only roads and bridges, but also access to high-speed broadband. And we help farmers when we expand markets to help them sell their goods. These agreements enhance our farmers' profitability.

Supporting our farmers is supporting the American way. Our family farmers represent the best of our country. And this is also a national security issue—no farms, no food. We must ensure our family farms can compete, or we risk losing them and relying on imports with the attendant food security risks. That's not what my constituents want; that's not what our country wants, which is why we need to pass these agreements.

Now, in addition to helping our farmers, the independent, nonpartisan U.S. International Trade Commission estimates key U.S. manufacturing sectors are also poised to gain. This includes the increase of U.S. exports of motor vehicles and parts by about 50 percent; metal products by over 50 percent; chemical, rubber, and plastic products by over 40 percent; and machinery and equipment by over 30 percent. This will directly help companies in my district, who are already relying on exports, with expanding markets for selling their products, companies like B&B Forest Products in Greene County, Momenive in Saratoga County, EFCO Products in Dutchess County, and Hudson River Stove Works in my home county, Columbia.

What's often missed in these conversations about trade are some of the key points. Right now, over 90 percent of the products coming from Colombia and Panama are already duty free, when less than 40 percent of our goods currently go duty free to these countries. Our goods to South Korea suffer under tariff rates about four times higher. With passage of these fair trade agreements, we will address these imbalances. These agreements will add to our GDP, strengthen existing jobs, and create new ones.

Let's recognize what's at stake, and let's not fool ourselves. If we fail to pass these fair trade agreements and do nothing, we will fall behind. In South Korea, we have seen our beef industry lose more and more of the share of that country's business year after year since the 1990s. South Korea is poised to increase agricultural trade with