

trade thoroughfare for the United States and the world.

And finally, the Colombia free trade agreement, which was a vote that took even greater deliberation.

Colombia is a strong U.S. ally in Latin America and is a critical regional and global partner. Colombia's market is the third largest for the United States in Latin America and U.S. producers have been losing market share quickly as the Colombians strengthen economic ties with Canada, the European Union and the Mercosur countries of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. As other countries facilitate trade with Colombia, American producers have faced continued tariffs on goods exported to Colombia, while Colombian goods face few tariffs into the United States. Currently, the average U.S. tariff on the few Colombian goods subject to a tariff is 3 percent. Colombia's average tariff on U.S. exported goods is 12.5 percent. This agreement will increase market access for U.S. goods and services in Colombia by immediately eliminating duties on 80 percent of U.S. exports to Colombia, with all remaining tariffs eliminated within 10 years.

These numbers show why American businesses have been eager to level the playing field with foreign competitors that have benefited from preferential tariff treatment in Colombia. Still, there have been long-standing concerns with Colombia's history of violence and its human rights record, issues that deeply concern not only me, but many Coloradans. I have looked to Colombia and supporters of this agreement to make the case that adequate progress has been made to determine if the United States should move forward with a trade agreement at this time.

The Colombian and U.S. governments, as well as organizations that have opposed and supported the agreement, acknowledge the problematic record Colombia has had on human rights and labor protections. Most agree that progress has been made, though many disagree to what extent that progress has improved labor conditions and lessened human rights violations. After meeting with groups on both sides of this debate, I concluded that maintaining the status quo was not the best answer. Leaving things as they are now would not create any more incentives for Colombia to maintain or further cultivate its commitment to resolving issues of violence. Nor do I believe that the status quo would strengthen the ties with this key ally in South America. I ultimately believe that the recent labor and legal reforms in Colombia represent concrete steps in the right direction. The commitment of Colombia's political leadership to improving its record is also an indication that Colombia can move beyond its past. The primary objective is for our two countries not only to maintain the shared goal of reducing violence and protecting workers' rights, but also to become stronger economic

partners, enabling American business to compete in Colombia's market on a level playing field with our international competitors. Both of these goals help justify moving beyond the status quo.

Let me be clear: we must continue to work collaboratively with the Colombian government to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken toward responsible and meaningful reforms. A meaningful step in this direction is President Obama's commitment to allow the agreement to enter into force only when Colombia has sufficiently met predetermined benchmarks. These benchmarks include efforts to increase protection of labor activists, enforce core labor rights and reduce impunity for perpetrators of violence against union members. Additionally, the underlying agreement includes strong labor provisions that protect the right to organize, the right to bargain collectively, and to provide protections against forced labor, child labor, and employment discrimination.

These changes may not all happen overnight, but we can ensure that what remains to be fixed will be supported by our strengthened economic relationship and the social and economic incentives for Colombia to maintain a positive trajectory in reducing violence. Does the passage of this agreement mean that all of the ills facing Colombia will be cured? I make no such assumption, and I know it will take work and diligent oversight. The burden will be on the Colombian government to follow through on promised reforms and ensure they have the intended effect. It will also be up to this administration to ensure that the benchmarks laid out in its labor action plan are met to the greatest extent possible and that Colombia continues to meet these goals. Finally, it will be up to Congress to provide ongoing oversight to ensure everyone is meeting their responsibilities. I, for one, will be watching.

In addition to these agreements, I note briefly that Congress came together in a bipartisan manner to reauthorize a robust Trade Adjustment Assistance Program that will assist workers, firms and farmers to retrain and retool so they can better compete in the global economy. This was a necessary precursor to my support of these three free trade agreements.

In sum, the free trade agreements with Korea, Panama, and Colombia, while not perfect, present strong opportunities for Colorado and U.S. businesses while also including some of the most robust labor and environmental provisions that we have ever had in a trade agreement with any country. Trade issues are never clear cut, but simply put, trading with our neighbors and partners can help our economy when we set the terms fairly and find balance. By helping to ensure that our trading partners play by fair rules, and by opening foreign markets for U.S. products, the United States is better

positioned to win the global economic race.

JOHANSON CONFIRMATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last night the Senate confirmed David Johanson as a member of the International Trade Commission. I would like to take a moment to congratulate David on his confirmation. The ITC administers the Nation's trade remedy laws and provides Congress with independent analysis and information on matters relating to international trade. I am confident that the International Trade Commission will benefit greatly from David's intelligence, experience and extraordinary work ethic.

David has served as International Trade Counsel to the Senate Finance Committee since 2003, first under the leadership of Senator GRASSLEY and now with me as ranking member. With his help, the committee accomplished much in those 8 years. Under President Bush, we renewed trade promotion authority and worked together to pass trade agreements with 14 countries agreements that helped to grow the U.S. economy, increase exports, and create American jobs. We also used that trade promotion authority to negotiate and pass our trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama.

Much of the focus of David's work on the Finance Committee has been on agricultural issues. These are often some of the most contentious issues in international trade, but David proved himself to be a tireless and effective advocate for U.S. exports. With his help, this Committee was able to reopen important international markets for American agricultural products, including the critical Chinese market.

In closing, David will bring 15 years of experience in the field of international trade law, an extraordinary work ethic, meticulous attention to detail and pragmatic creativity to his new role as a member of the International Trade Commission. We wish him well on this next phase of his career and thank him for all of the great work that he has done in the U.S. Senate.

FORT MONROE NATIONAL PARK

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today marks the start of an exciting new chapter for Fort Monroe in Hampton, VA. I welcome the President's decision to use his authority under the Antiquities Act to protect this special place by declaring it a national monument and the country's 396th National Park unit. A National Park Service presence will ensure that we can properly preserve this historic, natural and recreational resource for the benefit of present and future generations.

On this important occasion, I recognize the effort that has gone towards establishing a National Park unit at Fort Monroe. I have been fortunate to

work with a bipartisan, Federal, State and local group that includes Senator JIM WEBB, Congressmen SCOTT RIGELL, BOBBY SCOTT, ROB WITTMAN and RANDY FORBES, Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell and his administration, the Fort Monroe Authority, the city of Hampton and Mayor Molly Ward, State and local elected officials, conservation partners such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Conservation Association, individual advocates and citizen groups including the Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park, and many others who have been committed to this effort. I thank Secretary Salazar and the National Park Service for their work and their visits to Hampton this summer to hear firsthand the overwhelming public support that exists for this new National Park Service site. Now that we have solidified a National Park Service role, it is critically important that the city, the region, and the Commonwealth continue to work together to make the most of this tremendous opportunity to showcase Fort Monroe's incredible place in our nation's history. I look forward to continued progress at Fort Monroe.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COLORADO CELEBRATION

• Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the sesquicentennial of the 17 original counties created by the Colorado Territorial Legislature in 1861. These counties celebrate this significant milestone today, November 1, 2011.

Congress established Colorado Territory on February 28, 1861, and the territory's first legislative assembly convened on September 9, 1861.

The 17 original counties—Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Costilla, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Gilpin, Guadalupe, shortly thereafter renamed Conejos, Huerfano, Jefferson, Lake, Larimer, Park, Pueblo, Summit, and Weld counties were established by the territorial legislature within the present boundaries of the State of Colorado.

From the snow-covered mountains of Summit County to the farm lands of the San Luis Valley, these original counties established the foundation from which the most beautiful State in our country grew and developed.

Colorado became the 38th State of the Union on August 1, 1876, under President Ulysses S. Grant, and became known as the Centennial State.

Over the past 150 years, counties had their boundaries revised, new counties were created, and some were abolished, and today, the State of Colorado has 64 counties, each one with its own unique history, geography, and cultural heritage.

I take this time today to congratulate Colorado on the 150th anniversary of our State's first 17 counties and to

recognize all of Colorado's 64 counties for their vital contributions to our great State.

As we welcome this milestone in the history of Colorado, we can no doubt look forward to another promising and prosperous 150 years.●

REMEMBERING DR. WANGARI MAATHAI

• Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, 2 months ago, on September 25, 2011, Dr. Wangari Maathai of Kenya, the first African woman to receive a Nobel Peace Prize, passed away after her fight with ovarian cancer. She was a woman of firsts, of force, and of foresight. She was a woman who empowered millions of African women with hope and opportunity.

Born on April 1, 1940, in Nyeri, Kenya, to peasant Kikuyu farmers, Wangari Muta Maathai, at the urging of her older brother, attended primary school at a time when it was rare for women to receive an education. Her father worked for a White landowner who forced him to sell all his crops to him at whatever price was offered. From an early age, Dr. Maathai possessed a deep and abiding love and respect for nature. As a child, she spent time at Kanungu—an underground stream that flowed close to a sacred fig tree, and she would till fields with her mother, once saying, “I grew up close to my mother, in the field, where I could observe nature.”

She went on to secondary school where she graduated at the top of her class. In 1964, she was awarded a scholarship to attend Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, KS, where she graduated with a biology degree. She pursued her master's of science at the University of Pittsburgh. From there, she continued her studies in both Germany and Kenya where she earned her doctorate in veterinary anatomy from the University of Nairobi. She was the first woman from East or Central Africa to earn a doctorate degree, and also the first woman to hold a professorship at the University of Nairobi's Department of Veterinary Anatomy which she later chaired another first for a woman.

Through the force of personality, she reinforced the links between poverty and health, economic security, and environmental sustainability. Returning to Kenya from her studies abroad, she saw how deforestation and planting of cash crops had stripped the land of resources, causing animals and plants to disappear. The result was a lack of food, water, and rampant erosion. The effect was particularly devastating for women who were not only the family caretakers, but as subsistence farmers, depended [S3]upon the land for their livelihood.

In 1977, Dr. Maathai had the foresight to establish the Green Belt Movement which sought to combat the aggressive deforestation occurring in Kenya. Asked about her efforts, she once said,

“It occurred to me that some of the problems women talked about were connected to the land. If you plant trees you give them firewood. If you plant trees you give them food.” While many derided her efforts, this Movement, made up mostly of women, has planted more than 30 million trees across Africa and helped approximately 900,000 Kenyans develop and sustain their ability to care for themselves and their families.

The Green Belt Movement would spread across the continent. Dr. Maathai inspired the development of the Pan African Green Belt Network. Her efforts have resulted in Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe starting their own reforestation efforts. The Movement not only emphasizes the relationship between the people and their land, but also empowers women in the areas of family planning, reproductive health, nutrition, food security, and leadership development.

Dr. Maathai's environmental work eventually permeated the realm of politics. As a proponent of civic responsibility, she entered politics with the understanding that “the message for Africans is that the solutions to our problems lie within us.” As an advocate for the poor and under-represented, Dr. Maathai suffered not only political taunts but also physical violence at one point being brutally beaten by police and at another time, a victim of a tear gas attack. Throughout the 1990s, Dr. Maathai was repeatedly arrested, imprisoned, and threatened for exercising her rights.

Despite physical threats and political setbacks, in December of 2002, she was elected to Kenya's National Assembly and was appointed the Deputy Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Wildlife. She was also instrumental in the creation of Kenya's Bill of Rights. She went on to serve as the Presiding Officer of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council ECOSOCC, of the African Union, as well as Goodwill Ambassador to the Congo Basin Forest Ecosystem.

As the author of multiple publications, Dr. Maathai garnered many awards including the 1989 WomenAid International Women of the World Award, the 1991 Goldman Environmental Prize, the 1991 United Nations Africa Prize for Leadership, the 1993 Edinburgh Medal, the 2001 Juliet Hollister Award, the 2003 WANGO Environment Award, and the 2004 Sophie Prize. She has received numerous honorary degrees from a wide array of institutions including: Yale University; Williams College; University of California at Irvine; and Morehouse University. In 2005, she was honored by both Time Magazine and Forbes Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world and as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world, respectively. She was also a United Nations Environment Programme Global 500 Hall of Fame recipient. In 2006, Dr. Maathai