

played a crucial role in making Minnesota the wind leader it is today.

If that isn't enough, I want to highlight further the substantial benefits this crucial industry has had on Minnesota.

No. 1, the wind industry accounts for 3,000 good-paying jobs for hard-working Minnesotans, including jobs at the State's 16 wind manufacturing facilities. You can see all these green circles, and those green circles are where those manufacturing facilities are located. The workers at these plants and the facilities themselves help supply and maintain wind projects that contribute \$7.6 million annually in property taxes. Those projects, in fact, provide local communities with funds to help improve schools, roads, and all the other crucial services local governments provide.

Furthermore, Minnesota's strong manufacturing industry has supported rapid growth in the wind capacity of the State. Let me share those numbers with you. In 2011 the State added 542 megawatts of wind power capacity, the fourth-most of any State. So extending the PTC is crucial to continuing Minnesota's growth in wind energy and making progress toward a clean energy economy. In fact, the Minnesota utility, Northern States Power, will have close to 1,900 megawatts of wind in their energy portfolio by the end of 2012. And listen to this: In 2011 the utility got more electricity from wind than it did from natural gas.

I know many of us understand what the future could hold, based on what experts are telling us, and we know that wind and natural gas will be partners going forward.

There is a synergy between wind and natural gas. This stands out as an important milestone for Northern States Power. This company's investment in wind energy has helped reduce carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 3.1 million tons. So the leadership of companies such as Northern States Power demonstrates that when we invest in clean energy, we are creating jobs and strengthening our energy security at the same time.

I want to close with a couple of comments more broadly. Minnesota is not alone in its success, but these gains and the thousands of jobs that the PTC supports are at risk if we don't act. During the summer and the fall work period, we saw the effects of not extending the production tax credit. Companies such as Vestas in Colorado announced layoffs and pulled back capital investments.

It is pretty simple. Production tax credit equals jobs. We need to pass it as soon as possible. Enough is enough. If we don't extend it, we are going to see a very significant continuation of these job losses.

So let's find a way forward. Let's work together. Let's extend the PTC. The longer this extension is delayed, the quicker success stories from States such as Colorado and Minnesota could

disappear. We simply cannot let this happen. Let's extend the PTC as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

RUSSIA PNTR

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am pleased the Senate is considering a critical bill this week to establish permanent normal trade relations with Russia. I should have borrowed my friend's sign that says "PTC Creates Jobs," which may very well be an accurate equation, but PNTR also will equal jobs. We can compete given the opportunity to compete, and that is what these trade relationships are all about. This legislation overwhelmingly has passed the House. It is going to have strong bipartisan support in the Senate, and I believe it will pass today and needs to pass today.

Russia joined the World Trade Organization in August of 2012. Since that time, our exporters—U.S. companies—have not been able to take full advantage of the fact that they have this new way to get to the Russian market because we haven't granted permanent normal trade relationships to Russia.

Since all the other major WTO members already have that permanent relationship, they have had a real advantage since August of last year, as they can move forward immediately and compete and make agreements that American companies can't make. American companies are the only companies losing market share after Russia joined the World Trade Organization—and not because they are not as competitive. But until we do what we need to do here today, they will be working at a real disadvantage.

In addition to securing a level playing field for American companies, we also need to replace the Jackson-Vanik policy with something that, frankly, has now more real-world potential and real-world understanding. Russia is clearly not the Russia of Soviet days, but we still have reasons to be concerned about individual freedom of expression in Russia. We need to express that concern. That is why I am in support of a portion of this bill that Senator CARDIN and Senator KYL have fought for during this whole discussion and now have in this bill, in the House bill—the portion where we look at the terrible treatment and ultimate death of Sergei Magnitsky.

This provision will ensure that those who were complicit in those activities and in his ill-treatment and death don't get a free pass. It sends messages to other countries that while we want to trade with them, we also want to continue to speak strongly for the rights of individuals, no matter where they are, to speak up against their government.

Normalizing trade relations with Russia is also an important move to my State and, I assume, all our States.

I know in Missouri we exported \$86 million to Russia in 2011, and exports are up 6 percent already from that year since we started 2012. Worldwide, Missouri exports more than \$12.3 billion in goods and services—or at least we did in 2010—and almost half of that was exported to countries where we have free-trade agreements. We need to continue to do that. Nearly 300 Missouri companies supported 32,000 jobs that were driven by exports. So 32,000 people in Missouri have jobs because of trade, and a lot of that trade is in our hemisphere.

I want to come back to that in a minute. I am concerned on the Russian agreement that Russia has failed to agree to bring its animal health and food safety measures in line with the WTO agreement on the application of sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, called the SPS agreement. I am going to continue to monitor this situation to ensure that American agricultural exports—and pork would be a good example of this—don't face market access barriers in Russia.

Free trade has to be fair trade. Free trade doesn't work if it is not fair trade. If it is fair trade and free trade, American workers and American companies can and do actively and positively compete all over the world. In fact, we have a little bit of trade imbalance these days, and I think we should be concerned that 57 percent of it is in energy. If we become more energy self-sufficient, we could easily reduce our trade imbalance by 50 percent. If we just got North American energy as our focus for energy, we could only be more secure, and we would also have a better trade relationship.

This legislation we are dealing with today, the Russia PNTR, builds on the progress we made last year with the passage of the three free-trade amendments. Many of us on this side worked closely with our friends on the other side and the White House to get these long negotiated deals passed. In the 6 months since our free-trade agreement with South Korea took effect, trade between our two countries has increased by over \$30 billion—a \$30 billion increase in 6 months.

As we are trying to figure how to grow our economy, the export world and free trade is one of the places we can have the most speedy application of what we do to grow our economy. Thirty billion dollars in Korea alone.

American exports to Columbia have increased 20 percent since that free-trade agreement took effect. The ratification of the Panama Free Trade Agreement just went into effect a few weeks ago, but that enables American firms to fully participate in the economic opportunities that will occur with the expansion of the Panama Canal and the continued growth of that economy. What happens there is critical to us.

This agreement, I have said already, has passed the House and I think it will pass the Senate today. There are other

things we can and should do. We need to work with the President, and the President should be working with Republicans and Democrats who are friends of trade to do several things. One would be trade promotion authority. We used to call this fast track. This is where the administration can negotiate an agreement, and then the House and Senate either vote yes or no on that agreement. It is the only way to get agreements done in the world we live in today.

Right now, the administration has no realistic way of passing trade agreements through the Congress. The President needs to work with Congress so that we will give him the authority. He needs to ask for it, and he needs to want it so we can have these agreements. This gives our trading partners the confidence they need to make the concessions that you make in negotiation and know that the agreement is going to be the agreement. It is either going to be that agreement or no agreement at all.

Since the TPA lapsed in 2006, we haven't negotiated a single new free-trade agreement. If that doesn't tell us how important it is that we move back to a way to get these agreements done, I don't know what would.

Second, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. These negotiations seem to me to be languishing right now and need senior administration attention in order to gather the steam they need. A strong Trans-Pacific Partnership is the most effective way to consolidate our leadership in that part of the world.

At a time when China is aggressively moving into east Asia, we also need to look at the Philippines. Senator INOUE and I have a bill that would strengthen our relationship with the Philippines called the SAVE Act. I would like to see the administration work with the two of us to see what we could get done to have that relationship that has been so strong and has lasted so long become even closer as we figure out how to trade with that economy in a way that makes them more stable and closer friends of the United States. Frankly, we will benefit, our workforce will benefit from that agreement.

There is a Trans-Atlantic Free Trade Agreement that puts us in a better situation to trade with the European Union. This should be one of the easiest agreements we have ever done because we have two mature economies trying to trade with each other. The normal negotiations about labor and environment and other things that sometimes take so long in these agreements, frankly, shouldn't take long. The Presiding Officer has spent a lot of time with our NATO partners, and they would be the same partners that would be our EU trading partners if we will move forward there.

Finally, we need fresh trade policies with the Americas. We now have trade agreements with six countries that were part of the Dominican Republic

CAFTA agreement with Mexico, Canada, Panama, Colombia, Chile, and Peru, and we have a trading preferences agreement with Haiti. But we really need to look to see what we can do to trade in this hemisphere, improve our economic relationship with the South American giant country and giant economy of Brazil.

Your best trading partners should be your neighbors. Certainly, Canada and Mexico have proved that. When we send Canada \$1, they traditionally send us back somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1. Right now it is about 91 cents. In our trade with Mexico, Mexico now sends us back, a year ago probably—and this number continues to grow—75 cents. That is why on the energy front, when we deal with them, it makes a difference. So they have proven that your neighbors should be your best trading partners.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BLUNT. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 30 seconds.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUNT. We need to expand the economic partnerships to our neighborhood. The Western Hemisphere needs more attention. Trade makes sense for America. Trade creates jobs. Trade creates opportunity. I am glad we are voting on this trade agreement today.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine.

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

OLYMPIA SNOWE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, many of our colleagues will be leaving us at the end of this Congress, and I wish to take time this morning to pay tribute to some of my colleagues, particularly those with whom I have worked most closely. Of course, I must start with my colleague and friend from Maine, OLYMPIA SNOWE.

In ancient Sparta, there was a saying that roughly translated as this: It seems all the world knows what is the right thing to do, but it is only the Spartans who will do anything about it.

As my friend, colleague, and senior Senator from Maine, OLYMPIA SNOWE, ends her service in the Senate, I rise to pay tribute to this descendent of that legendary civilization. Olympia is a true leader who has always devoted her considerable intellect, energy, and commitment to doing what was right for Maine and for America. OLYMPIA SNOWE has dedicated her life to public service: 18 years in the Senate, preceded by 16 representing Maine's Second Congressional District, plus 5 in the Maine legislature adds up to a remarkable record of commitment to our Nation and the great State of Maine.

But that span of nearly four decades tells us only part of the story, for

OLYMPIA has truly set the gold standard for public service. From the State house to the U.S. Capitol, OLYMPIA has built an outstanding reputation as an informed, thoughtful, and effective legislator. She can always be counted on as a leader with integrity who pursued solutions and who had no interest in just scoring partisan political points. It is OLYMPIA's character that has made all the difference.

The private acts of public figures can tell us a lot about their character, so I wish to share with my colleagues this morning a story about OLYMPIA SNOWE that I witnessed personally. There was a Republican fundraiser going on one night and I was arriving late, driving up in a car. People were streaming out of the fundraiser and each of them was passing by a man who was on crutches, with only one leg, clearly destitute, clearly down on his luck, who was asking for money. Everybody but OLYMPIA SNOWE passed him by without a word, as if he were invisible. OLYMPIA went over to this destitute man on crutches, with one leg, and she not only handed him some money but she took the time to talk with him. I think that tells us so much about who OLYMPIA SNOWE is—her kindness to this individual, when everyone else was passing him by, her kindness to him when no one was watching, her kindness to him was a private act that told all of us so much about her character.

With her retirement from the Senate, OLYMPIA SNOWE will join the pantheon of great leaders our State has produced: Margaret Chase Smith, Ed Muskie, George Mitchell, and Bill Cohen. All of them, similar to OLYMPIA, exemplify the principle that public office is a sacred trust.

OLYMPIA's inspiring record of service is but part of an even more inspiring life story. Several times, from childhood on, OLYMPIA has been visited by tragedy that would have caused most people to become discouraged, disheartened, and negative. But each time OLYMPIA rose, transcended her personal tragedy, and was more determined than before to succeed and to contribute to a better life for others. Her well-deserved popularity among Maine people transcends party lines and is testament to her strength and her spirit.

The people of Maine and America are grateful for her many years of service. I am grateful for her leadership and her friendship. I know OLYMPIA SNOWE will continue to influence national policy for many years to come.

JOE LIEBERMAN

Mr. President, we have a tradition in the Senate of referring to our colleagues on the Senate floor during debate as "my friend from this State" or "my friend from that State," and oftentimes the word friend just means colleague. But there is a fellow Senator whom I call friend in the truest sense of the word. That person is the senior Senator from Connecticut, my dear friend Senator JOE LIEBERMAN.