

We no longer have the finest infrastructure, but we can be bipartisan and thoughtful. We can reverse this 20-year slide. We can put hundreds of thousands of people to work across America at family-wage jobs this year and rebuild and renew America so our families are safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

WE NEED THE RIGHT TRACK, NOT THE FAST TRACK

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

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, TPA, TPP, TTIP, WTO, GATT, fast track, to the American people, we have made the ability to understand trade relations with other nations nigh on impossible.

Politicians, pundits, and prophetic economists are issuing clarion calls to free trade. We all like free trade, but these same advocates insist that we do it fast, you know, put it on a fast track with “trade promotional authority.” Listening to these experts, they insist that we cannot do trade without it. Never mind that for 160 years we negotiated without it under the guide of the Constitution and the watchful eye of the Representatives of the people.

Now, they want the negotiations to be secret: Don’t worry. The trade agreements are complex. They will give us the final agreement, and we will have a little bit of time to look it over. Can’t change it. Just look it over, and then you can have a simple up-or-down vote that could bind America to the terms of other nations.

“But it will create jobs?” they say, just like NAFTA, just like the world trade agreement, just like CAFTA. We were reassured then that those would fix everything. We passed them. We are still waiting for those jobs.

Americans need to ask a few questions of us in this body before we commit to something that could have decades of impact.

The Pacific Partnership includes a transnational commission with a living agreement clause to change it. Why would we surrender congressional authority of a two-thirds vote to stand guard against something that could clearly damage our laws and Nation?

Why would we want to isolate China, possibly driving them toward Russia, and create cold war II. The Army Chief of Staff saw a need this week to ease tensions with China. Why would we want to increase them with anti-Chinese trade rhetoric? You think military spending is high now; try it in a cold war or worse. Let’s trade with China instead, not make them our adversary.

Even a partial pruning of commercial links or even a gradual upsurge in Western protectionism toward China would have a profound impact on the world’s well-being. Why would we pursue a path that most likely creates tension that could spill over in other areas with devastating consequences, sending ripples throughout the world?

The current President’s talent for negotiation among nations should be measured by his foreign policy. Have we forgotten the line in the sand, the arming of al Qaeda and other nefarious Syrian rebels to fight Assad, only to watch them become ISIS, and then dismiss them as a JV team, only to see them tear through Iraq, which fell apart after we abandoned it, after we were assured that they could stand on their own if we left early? Now, there is no strategy to fix it. Then there is the Arab Spring, which has morphed into the potential for a nuclear winter with Iran. Let’s not forget Crimea and Ukraine. I can go on.

The question is: Why are we? Like Lucy holding the football, we are told that the President needs the power to negotiate. If we just come and take a kick at it, all will be well.

Much is at stake. National security, American jobs, capital, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, agricultural, and, contrary to economic theorists, even American law. One only has to look at the case of Australia’s law that made generic packaging required on cigarettes. The law was challenged by a cigarette company who went treaty shopping by using its Hong Kong subsidiary and was able to interfere with Australia’s law because of her treaty with Hong Kong.

Perhaps most concerning is all the anti-Chinese rhetoric. China is an enormous trading partner, a holder of large amounts of U.S. Treasury bonds that have kept interest rates low and our purchasing power at the store high. They are not our enemy. Yet the rhetoric coming from the White House and the architects of the TPA bill seem set on anti-Chinese dictums to make their case.

We need China. China needs us. Let’s establish some rules of the road as competitors rather than laying the track for the smashup derby. It will take time, it will be hard, but dialogue and diplomacy are better than tanks and Tomahawks. We can do this without turning it into a foreign policy disaster that gives the President and Congress a chance to make China our enemy.

We can engage without granting TPA, but we have to lead. TPA without leadership is less valuable than leadership without TPA. Among the proposed Pacific Partnership’s 11 other nations, we already have high-standard, free trade agreements with seven of them. We do not have to subject ourselves to this multilateral trade treaty to work with them, and we certainly should not do it fast by granting TPA to a President that has exhibited poor leadership in foreign affairs.

We need the right track, not the fast track.

WORST TRADE AGREEMENT IN A 20-YEAR HISTORY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, the House of Representatives will be asked to grease the skids for the last and worst trade agreement in a 20-year history of job-killing trade agreements. I say “last” because this is a new concept. It is a living trade agreement. Anybody can access to it in the future. All they have to do is say: We pretend—or will pretend—to follow the very weak rules of this trade agreement.

When the President began the negotiations, China was concerned because he talked about the pivot to Asia, confronting China. Now China is saying: Hey, we want in. This is great. We know how to game it. We can take away the last of your manufacturing, and we are not going to let it just go to Japan who is already in the agreement.

The worst, for many reasons, but among them is something called the investor-state dispute resolution process. What is that? It means there will be a special private court set up for corporations to challenge our domestic laws, any and all domestic laws, that they find to be trade restrictive.

Now, the President came to Oregon and said those of us who are critical of this are making things up because we said they can repeal otherwise. Now, the President danced on the head of a rhetorical pin there, a bit duplicitously. He is right. They can’t make us repeal our laws. We can pay to keep them.

Yes, you heard that right. We can pay to keep our laws that protect consumers, and we can pay to protect our laws that protect the environment or labor or Buy America or anything else. We can keep them if we want to pay.

Here are four examples:

Yesterday, the House of Representatives repealed requirements that meat, poultry be labeled as to country of origin. American consumers would kind of like to know. We have got enough problems in our own industry here. We would like to know if this stuff is coming overseas from someplace where maybe the sanitary conditions aren’t quite so good. Well, we lost a trade dispute on that issue.

Now, we could keep the law if we wanted to pay billions of dollars or, no, a Republican rush to repeal the law. It makes a few giant agribusiness companies happy. Of course, it kind of sticks it to the domestic producers who know they are producing a good product. That is one loss.

Brazilian cotton, now, this is a funny one. We provide these bizarre subsidies through our foreign program, and one of them goes to cotton.

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We were found to be subsidizing, therefore, putting Brazil at a disadvantage. For years, we paid Brazil \$147 million a year so we could keep subsidizing our cotton producers. Isn’t that great?

Yeah, we kept our law; we just cost us \$147 million to subsidize the cotton

producers. Last year, we got a settlement out of them. They are going to give us a 3-year grace. We gave them a one-time \$300 million penalty, and they won't challenge it again until 2018.

Now, Mexican trucks—personally involved in this one—they don't have meaningful driver's licenses; they don't have hours of service standards; they don't have drug testing; they don't have alcohol testing, *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*, so we didn't want them ranging around the United States of America. We passed a bill almost unanimously in the House to prevent that.

Mexico went to one of these secret tribunals; they won. The Obama administration caved under threats of billions of dollars of punitive tariffs against the U.S. to allow those Mexican trucks free and permanent access to the highways of the United States of America.

You are right, we can't. You are right, Mr. President—no, you are not right, Mr. President; actually, you are wrong on that one.

One last one, dolphin-safe tuna—now, we just wanted to say the Mexicans go out and slaughter dolphins to catch tuna. They cast the nets over the dolphins who swim on top of the tuna. There are some people who thought: well, hey, it would be good marketing for StarKist and others if we had dolphin-safe tuna, where people don't slaughter dolphins to get the tuna.

Well, Mexico won a trade dispute saying: no, you can't do that, that is trade restricted; you can pay us not to slaughter dolphins, or we can slaughter dolphins, and you can't label those cans as dolphin-safe tuna.

Yeah, the President is sort of, kind of technically right. They can't force us to repeal our laws. They can just blackmail us to repeal our laws in secret tribunals.

Now, the ones I mentioned are under a state-to-state resolution. The TPP that this trade promotion authority facilitates allows corporations special standing to go to a special private secret tribunal, only available to corporations, to challenge our laws.

Just think of the mischief in the future. One will certainly be pharmaceuticals. Most certainly, they will challenge the requirement that we negotiate lower drug prices for our veterans and people on Medicaid, and they will win.

The President is right; we won't have to repeal the subsidies for those drugs or the reduced price. We can just pay the pharmaceutical industry tens of billions of dollars to keep providing affordable drugs to veterans and seniors.

This is a great day for America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

WIMBERLEY, TEXAS, IS MAKING A COMEBACK

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, up until several weeks ago, my State of Texas experienced a drought so severe that water levels were reduced to historic lows while conservation efforts were set to all-time highs. Lakes and reservoirs were bone dry. Wildfires were a constant threat.

In a cruel twist of fate, Texas is now recovering from the worst flooding in recent memory. Rivers overflowed, and dams burst.

In Wimberley, Texas, a town about 40 miles southwest of the Texas capital, water rushed over the banks of the Blanco River with enough force to rip houses off their foundations and carry cars like they were toys. Loved ones were lost. Belongings and memories were washed away.

The last month has been marked by death, destruction, and disbelief. I have met with first responders, toured flood damage, and spoke to the National Guard and regional FEMA officers about response and recovery operations. My office established a response center in town to help with the recovery process.

Although we are still in a period of mourning, the strong Texas spirit of resolve has proven more powerful than Mother Nature's fury. Just this week, a nearby newspaper ran the headline, "Hard hit by flood, Wimberley assures tourists: We're open for business." I personally might add "wide open for business."

Mr. Speaker, this is the Texas way; it is what we do. Today, just a few weeks since the rains eased and the floodwaters subsided, Wimberley is making a comeback. Nearly all of the businesses in downtown Wimberley have reopened.

Cathy Moreman, the executive director of the Wimberley Valley Chamber of Commerce, told my office they have had offers of help from around the country. Locals and visitors alike have come in and out and offered much in help from rescue to cleanup efforts. She said the outpouring of support has been astounding.

Mr. Speaker, this is what I mean when I cite the Texas spirit of resolve. We have and will continue to take care of each other, look out for our neighbors, and together push forward.

I assure you, we will rebound from this tragedy quickly and fully.

May God bless the residents of Wimberley, and may God bless all of Texas.

In God we trust.

KING KAMEHAMEHA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, today, in my home State of Hawaii, we are

celebrating King Kamehameha Day to honor the legacy of King Kamehameha I, who established the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1810.

King Kamehameha knew that for a nation to be vibrant, its citizens must feel safe and secure. He proclaimed the Kanawai Mamalahoe, the Law of the Splintered Paddle, as the law of the land. This law, still enshrined in the Hawaii State Constitution today, protects the unalienable rights of all men and women to be safe and secure in their home.

Kamehameha also knew that, to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of his people, it was imperative to create economic opportunities. He invested resources to maintain viable fish ponds and taro patches, protect freshwater streams, fertile soils, and forestlands; he built schools and trained an entire new generation of leaders.

As we observe Kamehameha Day, it is a true day of aloha for the people of Hawaii. Those who are visiting the Capitol this week may have seen the many fragrant and beautiful flower leis draped on the statue of King Kamehameha in Emancipation Hall.

All this week, in Hawaii, across the State, there will be further lei-draping ceremonies taking place to pay homage to the legacy of Hawaii's first King.

As legislators, we are called upon to embody the servant leadership and the humility of leaders like King Kamehameha I.

IRS RESPONSE LETTER

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the IRS response letter that was sent to me and 51 of my colleagues asking for an investigation of the Clinton Foundation's tax-exempt status.

Now, the IRS responded to us with a letter. It is dated May 21. What we received back, Mr. Speaker, from the IRS was simply a form letter. It was addressed, "Dear Sir or Madam," not even my name. The director of the Exempt Organizations Examinations didn't even take the time to sign the letter.

What we have is this: the IRS has so little respect for Members of Congress who are asking a question, who are seeking clarity on behalf of their constituents, that they respond to a congressional inquiry with a letter that is a form letter, not even signed. Well, you can imagine that we were a little bit surprised by this.

I think it is important to talk about why we were asking for clarity on the Clinton Foundation and their tax-exempt status. We all have 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations that do great work in our communities. Many of these organizations had come to us—their Member of Congress—and said: What do you know about how the Clinton Foundation works? What about