

standard operating procedure. As Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel reminded us just last month, for more than 30 years Iran has been hostile to America and her allies. In fact, Iran first killed Americans back in the early 1980s and has subsequently killed Americans mainly through proxies since that time until the present time. This is the same regime that has continued to target the United States since 1979. It is the same regime that has been on the State Department's terrorism blacklist since 1984 following an Iran-backed terrorist attack that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of American servicemen, including many from my State. Given this track record, does anybody really wonder what Iran would do with a nuclear weapon?

As these important negotiations continue for the next months, there remain a lot of question marks about Iran's true intentions and about whether the deal—once it is done—the Obama administration is finalizing will essentially cement Iran's status as a nuclear threshold nation.

I remember Prime Minister Netanyahu speaking to a joint meeting of the Congress. He said the framework he has seen doesn't prevent Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon. What he said is that essentially the framework paves the way or paves the path to a nuclear weapon, which, of course, would represent a tremendous change in American policy.

Our policy has been—the administration's policy has been, as stated, no nukes for Iran, none. But at least according to the framework that has been leaked, there appears to be more of the nature of a pathway toward a nuclear weapon as opposed to a prohibition. I look forward to continuing the discussion in the coming days, but Iran is only one issue we will be turning to as the Senate continues to work on bipartisan legislation to get work done for the American people.

We will be working on the very important issue of trade. Trade is important to my State, and it is important to the United States. Anytime we can open new markets to the things we grow in our agricultural sector or the livestock we raise—the beef, pork, poultry sector—anytime we can create and open new markets to the things we manufacture and we make in the United States, it strikes me it is a good thing, because while we occupy only 5 percent of the world's territory, we constitute 20 percent of the purchasing power in the world. That means 95 percent of the population—80 percent of the purchasing power in the world—lies beyond our shores. It just makes sense to me that we would want to open our markets, our goods that we make and grow and raise to markets overseas; in this case, primarily to Asia. But once we take up the Trans-Pacific Partnership, once it is negotiated, then at some future point we will turn to Europe and the so-called TTIP negotiation.

Last night, I am glad to report that the Finance Committee reported out the trade promotion authority piece of this legislation. This is something that has been a little bit misunderstood and, frankly, it is a little confusing. People have asked, Why in the world would you want to give the President authority to negotiate this Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiation? The simple answer is this trade promotion authority is not just for President Obama and his administration—he is only going to be there for the next 20 months. This will last for 6 years and go into the next Presidential administration.

The fact is, you can't negotiate something as complex as a trade deal like the Trans-Pacific Partnership with 535 negotiators; in other words, all the Members of the Senate and all the Members of the House. But what this does provide is that once a deal is reached, it has to be laid before the Congress and it has to be laid before the American people so they can read it and understand it.

After about 6 months, then there will be a debate in the Senate, and we will have an up-or-down vote. If we do not think it serves the interests of the United States, of our citizens and of our country, we can vote it down. But conversely, if we think this does improve trade and the economic prospects, jobs and wages for the American people, then we can vote to approve it. This bill will open American goods and services to global markets, which is good for our economy, good for jobs, and good for better wages, something that has been under a lot of negative pressure over the last few years.

To sum up this week, we passed legislation that will help thousands of victims of modern-day slavery—typically, a girl between the ages of 12 and 14—who are routinely sex trafficked in our own backyards. This will provide real resources. It will not only help rescue them but begin to help them heal and to begin the path to restoration.

I think this should be a proud accomplishment for the Senate. But the bottom line is, we still have a lot of work to do, and I look forward to more accomplishments with my colleagues and for the new spirit of bipartisanship to continue as we tackle real problems for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I come to the floor to discuss the importance of trade and the Nebraskans who depend upon it. Since 1989, U.S. agricultural exports have nearly quadrupled in value. This is a direct result of our trade agreements, which have opened foreign markets to our goods. In 2014 alone, the value of U.S. agriculture exports was \$152.5 billion, yielding a trade surplus of more than \$43 billion.

This surplus is the result of hard work by millions of American farmers and ranchers.

My home State of Nebraska is leading the way in progress as a top producer and exporter of agriculture and manufacturing products. In 2013, Nebraska exported \$7.3 billion in products tied to agriculture and the processing industries. By trading internationally, we are creating jobs and long-term income here at home. From farms and ranches to food processing, transportation, and manufacturing industries, countless parts of our economy rely on flow of goods across our Nation and around the world.

Nebraska's Governor, director of agriculture, and 22 Nebraska agriculture stakeholders echoed the necessity of these trade agreements, urging congressional leaders to quickly pass important legislation for these agreements to materialize. This point was reinforced in a recent Omaha World-Herald Editorial, which noted that Nebraska producers operate on a global scale and therefore understand the economic benefit of robust free-trade agreements.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that every \$1 billion of U.S. agricultural exports generates \$1.3 billion in economic activity and supports the full-time work of approximately 6,600 Americans throughout the economy. Simply put, international trade is an essential component of opening foreign markets to U.S. agriculture and food products. The best avenues we have to open new markets, increase that productivity, and create jobs are through strong, fair, and inclusive free-trade agreements.

With more than 95 percent of the world's population located outside the United States, economic growth and job creation depend on trade opportunities that allow our U.S. companies and our producers to tap into new markets to sell more American products.

As we debate, the world's population continues to grow. In more and more countries, we see a growing middle class with a mounting appetite. What do they want to eat? They want high-quality meat, produce, and food products from the United States of America. What a tremendous opportunity for American producers to capture new markets and reach more consumers worldwide, but these new markets cannot be developed unless the United States is at the table and at the table negotiating for comprehensive free-trade agreements that ensure producers and exporters receive that fair deal.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Senate must first pass trade promotion authority or the TPA. TPA effectively combines Congress's authority to regulate foreign commerce alongside the President's authority to negotiate treaties. It reinforces the role of Congress to set negotiation priorities, and it requires the President to consult extensively with legislators throughout

this entire negotiation process. Under TPA, Congress retains its authority to review and determine whether the proposed trade agreement will be implemented through an up-or-down vote.

TPA has been granted to every President since Gerald Ford. This longstanding and proven partnership between the legislative and executive branches is essential to finalizing those free-trade agreements that create countless opportunities for American enterprise. TPA will allow us to actually complete the trade negotiations that are currently underway. America is on the brink of some very ambitious and progrowth deals. It will also provide our negotiators with the credibility they need in order to conclude those trade agreements. Our trading partners must be certain the United States is serious about its trade priorities and that we are serious about our commitments. To get the best deal, there is no doubt our trade negotiators need this vital negotiating tool.

Furthermore, as this administration negotiates the two largest regional trade agreements in history, we must position ourselves to extract the best deals possible. The Trans-Pacific Partnership or the TPP includes countries such as Japan, Vietnam, and Malaysia, which have great, tremendous opportunities for our exports. This agreement will give us greater access to the fastest growing economic region in the world. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is between the European Union and the United States, which together account for nearly half of global GDP.

I support the negotiations for each of these regional trade agreements. Both agreements hold enormous potential for continued progress in agricultural exports, and they will create jobs here at home. The United States has negotiated free-trade agreements with 20 countries over the past three decades. These trading partners only represent 10 percent of the global economy, but they consume nearly half of the U.S. exports. Economic growth and American job creation would only expand under TPP, where negotiating countries represent the fastest growing economies in the world.

That said, it is critical trade agreements eliminate barriers and level the playing field for American businesses. Fair, two-way market access that eliminates tariffs is essential to any comprehensive trade agreement.

We are in the 21st century, and our trade agreements should reflect 21st century principles. TPA is critical to providing our trade representatives with the necessary tools to finalize these pending negotiations, while also ensuring that the unsung heroes of the American dinner table—our farmers, our ranchers, our food processors—receive the greatest benefit.

Nebraska's farmers and ranchers are global leaders and the very best at producing safe, high-quality food to feed the world. It is imperative that foreign

markets are open, balanced, and that they provide a level playing field for all of our U.S. products. One of best ways we can do this is by expanding free trade and authorizing TPA.

I encourage my colleagues to support this very important legislation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to H.R. 1191 is agreed to.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 1140

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 1140, which is the text of the substitute amendment to S. 615, which was reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Tennessee [Mr. CORKER], for himself and Mr. CARDIN, proposes an amendment numbered 1140.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I am thrilled to be here on the floor with my partner, Senator BEN CARDIN, who is the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. We had an outstanding week last week in our Foreign Relations Committee in passing out this bill that is now before us on a 19-to-0 vote. I thank all of the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which obviously includes Senator CARDIN, Senator RISCH, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator RUBIO, Senator Kaine, Senator JOHNSON, Senator COONS, Senator FLAKE, Senator UDALL, Senator GARDNER, Senator BOXER, Senator PERDUE, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator ISAKSON, Senator MURPHY, Senator PAUL, Senator BARRASSO, and Senator MARKEY.

Also, before we get into discussing the text, I wish to thank Senator BOB MENENDEZ and Senator MARK KIRK, who have been all things Iran. From the very beginning, these two Senators

have led this body to put in place sanctions—crushing sanctions—that have led us to this place. I cannot thank them enough for their leadership in dealing with the issue of Iran.

Last year, we did a significant amount of work on creating some kind of review process relative to a final agreement that might be worked out with Iran. I thank Senator LINDSEY, GRAHAM who has been a stalwart in ensuring that Congress play a role in the ultimate final deal that may or may not occur. Senator GRAHAM has been steadfast in wanting congressional review. Senator JOHN MCCAIN has joined in that effort and has been outstanding to work with, as well as Senator JIM RISCH and Senator MARCO RUBIO, who have also pushed for this type of legislation.

When we began this process, there were some original—or when we moved to the process we are now in, there were some original supporters of this current bipartisan bill who really caused us to have the leverage, if you will, to move to the place where we are today. Again, Senator MENENDEZ certainly was one of those who led us in that effort; Senator GRAHAM; Senator TIM Kaine, who came here as a former Governor of Virginia and who has been so focused on Congress playing its appropriate role. Obviously, Senator MCCAIN, as he has been a leader from the beginning, Senator JOE DONNELLY, Senator MARCO RUBIO, Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP, Senator KELLY AYOTTE, Senator BILL NELSON, Senator JIM RISCH, and Senator ANGUS KING have played a role in creating the leverage, if you will, to get us where we are today.

As Senator CARDIN knows, we now have 62 cosponsors of this legislation that is now before us, obviously from both parties. So I think this is quite an accomplishment.

Obviously, we have a tremendous amount of work in front of us with this bill now on the floor. I know Senator CARDIN and I hope that people will come to the floor and begin offering their amendments, begin debating, begin discussing. Obviously, we won't be taking up any amendments, per the order that is before us, until Tuesday, but we hope people will begin bringing their ideas and amendments to the floor and certainly begin discussing the important issue of Iran.

Let me speak a little bit about what this bill does. First of all, I think everyone knows the administration is part of the P5+1. It is today negotiating an agreement to try to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. I think all of us know there was a political agreement that was achieved the first part of April that was more of a verbal agreement about how the P5+1 and Iran might interact in a manner that hopefully would keep Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

One of the things that I think everyone in this body knows and many people on the outside may not is that Congress has played a substantial and