

I thank my colleague and friend and fellow Texan, Representative TED POE of Houston, for serving as the chief House sponsor for this legislation. I also express my gratitude to the House leadership team and Chairman GOODLATTE of the House Judiciary Committee for their important work on this issue.

This legislation, as we said before, will provide victims of sexual exploitation, slavery, and human trafficking in the United States with an avenue to find healing and restoration. Most importantly, the victims, who are often children, will have access to additional resources to ensure that they get the shelter and the services they need. I am thankful that Members from both Chambers and from both sides of the aisle were able to recognize the urgency of the matter and get the job done.

While this bill represents a step forward, there is more we need to do and more we will do to continue to fight the scourge of human trafficking. In the coming years, we will look back on this moment as a time when our country finally began to get serious about this problem and heard the voices of the thousands of American victims in our own backyard.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this Chamber has now turned its consideration to trade promotion authority, or TPA. I am a supporter of this legislation because my State is the largest exporting State in the country, and I think our economy and the number of jobs that are created in Texas are reflective of our strong commitment to international trade.

We simply find the point inarguable that to open new markets to the products that our agricultural sectors grow, our ranchers raise, and our manufacturers make seems to be such an obvious thing to do. That is why I am a big supporter of this legislation.

It is not something that just helps businesses; it helps consumers, too. Reducing the protections for domestically produced goods helps consumers most dramatically. It helps with their cost of living and helps make their daily or weekly or monthly paycheck go a little bit further.

Earlier this week, the Wall Street Journal reported that U.S. exports to trade-pact countries were growing at a far higher rate than exports to nontrade-pact countries. So if we get this TPA passed and the United States enters into one of these agreements under negotiation, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we could see American exports to the region skyrocket. This region in particular involves 11 other countries and makes up about 40 percent of the world's economy, and, of course, it would be a ready-market for U.S. products, from beef to electronics.

The reason why trade promotion authority is so important is because it

makes no sense—in fact, I think it is almost impossible—to negotiate a trade deal with 535 Members of Congress. Congress gives the President the authority within very firm and clear directives on how the President's U.S. trade administration should negotiate this. Frankly, I think this is one area where we have bipartisan agreement that this is good. So why wouldn't we work together in the best interests of the American people and our economy?

Trade doesn't just help businesses, as I have said; trade and TPA also help the consumer by driving down prices they pay every day at the drugstore, the grocery store, the hardware store—you name it. This legislation is good for American exporters and good for American consumers. Put simply, trade is good for America.

Let me reiterate that this bill is not filled with partisan rhetoric. It is actually a very simple trade tool that will give Congress the authority to examine any upcoming trade deal the President is trying to cut and make sure the American people get a fair shake.

I have heard several of our colleagues say they have gone down to a room to look at what has so far been negotiated on the Trans-Pacific Partnership. That is a good thing, but the fact is that negotiations aren't complete. That is not the whole deal; it is just a start.

Many of the provisions in the TPA are just commonsense proposals. For example, if passed, TPA would give Congress the authority to access the full text of the trade agreement. Of course, it is hard to get more straightforward than that. It would also make sure there is greater transparency and accountability in the negotiation process, with regular briefings by the administration to Congress and Members allowed to actually attend the negotiations.

In short, this trade legislation will provide Congress the needed oversight of the trade negotiations and will act as a safeguard for American interests to make sure our markets and our goods and services remain competitive in the global marketplace.

Finally, I would like to say that this is a reminder of how the Senate should function—as a deliberative body that votes regularly on a bipartisan basis to do something important to help hard-working American families. We vote.

I hope we will have a series of votes later this afternoon. I think having an open amendment process, as the majority leader has promised, is something that has been found to be a welcome development not just for the majority but also for the minority, which I know wants to participate in the process and thus represent their constituents to the best of their ability. Although some of my colleagues from across the aisle do not support this legislation, I hope they don't block it and prevent those of us who are interested in passing a good trade promotion authority piece of legislation from working productively.

I would encourage all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to offer their amendments so that the Senate can debate them and vote on them. That is our job as the elected representatives of the American people.

I see TPA as a real opportunity to help American workers earn higher wages and send more American-made products around the world. I encourage our colleagues to support this bill and in doing so to lend support to the hard-working Americans who increasingly rely on trade to support their families.

I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

CLARIFYING THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BORDER PATROL AGENT PAY REFORM ACT OF 2014

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2252, which has been received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2252) to clarify the effective date of certain provisions of the Border Patrol Agent Pay Reform Act of 2014, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 2252) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the reauthorization of trade adjustment assistance, which is included in the bill we are now considering. I urge my colleagues to oppose any attempt to curtail this vital program.

Trade adjustment assistance—better known as TAA—plays an essential role in helping hard-working Americans who through no fault of their own lose their jobs as the result of what is often unfair foreign competition. TAA programs enable displaced workers to acquire the new skills, the new training necessary to prepare for jobs in other industries.

I am proud to have authored the bipartisan legislation with Senator RON

WYDEN to reauthorize TAA that is included in the bill before us. Our legislation forms the basis of the TAA provisions that are included in this bill.

Maine workers have been hit particularly hard by mill closures and shuttered factories. In the last 15 years, Maine has lost 38 percent of its manufacturing jobs, nearly 31,000 jobs in total. While not all of those job losses are due to increased and unfair foreign competition, there is no doubt that workers in the manufacturing sector in Maine have been harmed by the outsourcing of their good-paying jobs to countries with much lower wages and environmental standards.

This last year was particularly difficult for workers in Maine's pulp and paper industry. In just the past year alone, the communities of Lincoln, East Millinocket, and Bucksport have all experienced devastating job losses due to the closures of paper mills. Those mills have been the financial anchors of those small towns, providing good jobs for generations of families. The second- and third-order economic effects on other businesses and their employees in those small communities are also significant.

In times of such great upheaval, laid-off employees need the time, the support, and the resources to learn the skills that will enable them to seek and secure new employment opportunities. These are skilled Americans who are eager to get back to work and who, with the right training, support, and opportunity, can find new jobs in in-demand fields.

Just this spring, I visited the Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor. I had the opportunity to talk with a group of students who are former employees of the Verso paper mill in Bucksport, which closed down last year completely unexpectedly. It was a huge and terrible surprise to the workers and to the community and surrounding area. But because of trade adjustment assistance, these former workers with whom I talked are now enrolled in a fine-furniture making program and are learning new skills for new jobs.

I was so impressed with their determination and their attitude. It is very difficult, if you have not been in school for decades, to enroll in a whole new field of study, but that is exactly what these laid-off workers were doing. Their determination to start new careers after years of working at the mill in Bucksport was inspiring. Each of them was enrolled thanks to the support provided by the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program. Without that program, they would not have had the funding, the support, and the resources necessary to enable them to do a mid-life career change.

Similarly, last year in Lincoln, ME, I met a woman who had spent many years working at the local tissue mill. This mill had a cycle of ups and downs over the years. When it was closed for a time years ago, this woman was thrown out of work, but her story had

a happy ending. Through TAA, she was able to learn new skills and find employment as a nursing home administrator, where she has been happily employed for a decade. It took a lot of courage for this woman who had been employed as a mill worker for many years to go into an entirely new career field, but she did so. She encouraged her fellow workers to recognize that through the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, they too could find new skills, retrain in an area completely different from the work they had been doing, and have a happy ending.

Her story was inspiring. Because of TAA, for 10 years she has been providing for her family and contributing to her community. What a great return on investment. It would not have been possible without TAA. There are many more success stories like this one.

I thank Secretary Perez for expediting the TAA assistance these workers who are newly displaced have needed.

I would also note that since Maine is the State with the oldest median age in the Nation, this woman really picked a very good field in which to enroll. As a nursing home administrator, her skills are going to be in demand as we see the changing demographics not only of the State of Maine but of our Nation.

TAA programs have made a tremendous difference in the lives of those I have described, in the lives of those working in trade-affected industries in Maine, such as pulp and paper manufacturing, textile, and shoe production.

In fiscal year 2013 alone, more than 700 Mainers have benefited from the TAA programs, and more than 70 percent of the TAA participants in Maine have found employment within 3 months of completing their retraining programs made possible by TAA. Even more encouraging, of these participants who found employment, more than 90 percent were still employed in their new jobs 6 months later. Without TAA, it is very unlikely that would have happened.

Assisting American workers who are negatively affected by international trade—particularly when they are competing with workers with lower wages in countries with lower wages and lower environmental standards or none at all—is vitally important and the right thing to do.

In Maine, the effects of free-trade agreements have been decidedly mixed. While some past agreements have brought benefits to my State in the form of lowered tariffs on Maine products such as potatoes, lobster, and wild blueberries, jobs in many other industries have suffered terrible losses as a result of unfair foreign competition.

Our workers are the best in the world, and they can compete when there is a level playing field, but oftentimes they are competing against industries in developing countries that are paying lower wages, that don't have to comply with any kind of environmental standards, and that are

often subsidized by those governments—and that is not fair.

The least we can do is to reauthorize the trade adjustment programs which are successfully helping to retrain and reemploy American workers. That is a commonsense way we can help workers recover from the blows inflicted by some unfair trade agreements, so these Americans can start new jobs and new lives with fresh skills.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support the reauthorization of trade adjustment assistance and to oppose any amendments to end these vital programs.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1314, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1314) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

Pending:

Hatch amendment No. 1221, in the nature of a substitute.

Hatch (for Flake) amendment No. 1243 (to amendment No. 1221), to strike the extension of the trade adjustment assistance program.

Hatch (for Inhofe/Coons) modified amendment No. 1312 (to amendment No. 1221), to amend the African Growth and Opportunity Act to require the development of a plan for each sub-Saharan African country for negotiating and entering into free trade agreements.

Hatch (for McCain) amendment No. 1226 (to amendment No. 1221), to repeal a duplicative inspection and grading program.

Stabenow (for Portman) amendment No. 1299 (to amendment No. 1221), to make it a principal negotiating objective of the United States to address currency manipulation in trade agreements.

Brown amendment No. 1251 (to amendment No. 1221), to require the approval of Congress before additional countries may join the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

Wyden (for Shaheen) amendment No. 1227 (to amendment No. 1221), to make trade agreements work for small businesses.

Wyden (for Warren) amendment No. 1327 (to amendment No. 1221), to prohibit the application of the trade authorities procedures to an implementing bill submitted with respect to a trade agreement that includes investor-state dispute settlement.