

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 719, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 719, an act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell (for Cochran) amendment No. 2689, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2690 (to amendment No. 2689), to change the enactment date.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I am reminded of that famous line from "Cool Hand Luke": "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

What we have here in Congress is a failure to legislate, a failure to exert congressional authority. What we have here is a failure to use our leverage. What we have here is a failure to use the power of the purse.

Conservatives across America are unhappy, and rightly so. We were told that when we took over Congress, when Republicans were elected to Congress, that things would be different: that if voters put us in charge, we would right the ship, we would stop the deficits. And here we are with another continuing resolution.

What is a continuing resolution? It is a continuation of the deficit spending of the past. It is a continuation of the waste. It is a continuation of the duplication. What is a continuing resolution? It is a steaming pile of the same old, same old.

Let me be clear: A continuing resolution is not a good thing. It is more of the status quo. It is a warmed-over version of yesterday's failures. It is an abdication of congressional authority. It is an abdication of congressional power.

Let's at least be honest. With a continuing resolution, no waste will be cut, no spending will be cut, no regulations will be stopped, and the debt will continue to mount.

We are told that we cannot win, that we need 60 votes to defund anything, but perhaps there is an alternate future where courage steps up and saves the day.

All spending is set to expire automatically. This is the perfect time to turn the tables, to tell the other side that they will need 60 votes to affirmatively spend any money. See, it doesn't have to be 60 votes to stop things. All spending will expire, and only those programs for which we can get 60 votes should go forward.

What would that mean? That would mean an elimination of waste, an elimination of duplication, an elimination of bad things that we spend money on.

If we had the courage, we could use the Senate's supermajority rules to stop wasteful spending. If we had the courage, we could force the other side to come up with 60 votes to fund things like Planned Parenthood. The budget is loaded with nonsense and waste.

Some will say our job is to govern, to preside. But to preside over what? To preside over a mountain of new debt? To be the same as the other side—to continue to add debt after debt? Our debt will consume us if we continue to preside over the status quo. It is as if we are on the Titanic and just simply reshuffling the chairs. A continuing resolution continues the wasteful spending of money.

I can go on and on about what we are wasting money on. I will tell of a few.

We spent \$300,000 last year studying whether Japanese quail are more sexually promiscuous on cocaine. I think we could poll the audience and save money. These things should never have had money spent on them, but if we do a continuing resolution, it will continue.

We spent several hundred thousand dollars studying whether we can relieve stress in Vietnamese villagers by having them watch American television reruns. I don't know about you, but I don't want one penny of taxpayer dollars going to this ridiculous stuff. If we continue, if we pass a continuing resolution, no reform will occur.

We spent \$800,000 in the last couple of years developing a televised cricket league for Afghanistan—\$800,000. Do you know how many people have a television in Afghanistan? One in 10,000 people. And I don't care if they all have TVs, it is ridiculous that our money, which we don't even have—we have to borrow it from China to send it to Afghanistan. If we pass a continuing resolution, we are agreeing to continue this nonsense.

We spent \$150,000 last year on yoga classes for Federal employees. So not only do we pay them nearly 1.5 times as much as private-sector employees, we give them yoga classes. If we pass a continuing resolution, this goes on and on. Nothing will change. The status quo will continue, and we will continue to spend ourselves into oblivion.

We spent \$250,000 last year inviting 24 kids from Pakistan to go to space camp in Alabama. We borrow money from China to send it to Pakistan.

It is crazy, it is ridiculous, and it should stop. We have the power to stop

it. Congress has the power to spend money or not spend money, and yet we roll over and we say: It must continue; we don't have the votes to stop it. Nonsense. The other side doesn't have the votes to continue the spending if we would stand up and challenge them.

We spent \$500,000 last year or the year before developing a menu for when we colonize Mars. We sent a bunch of college students to Hawaii to study this. We paid \$5,000 apiece. They got 2 weeks all expenses paid in Hawaii. And do you know what a bunch of college kids came up with? Pizza. This is where your money is going.

I could go on, hundreds and hundreds of programs. If we do not exert the power of the purse, this continues.

We should attach to all 12 individual spending bills—not glommed together—we should attach hundreds of instructions, thousands of instructions. Now, some of the media have said: Well, those would be riders on appropriations bills. Exactly. That is the power of the purse. If you object to the President writing regulations without our authority, Congress should defund the regulations. Congress should instruct him on ObamaCare, on what we object to. Congress should instruct him that we don't want money spent on Planned Parenthood. Hundreds and hundreds of instructions should be written into every bill and passed and sent to him.

Would we win all of these battles? Do we have the power to win every battle and defund everything we want? No. But do you know what we start out with? Our negotiating position right now is, we start out with defunding nothing. Why don't we start out with a negotiating position that we defund everything that is objectionable? All the wasteful spending, all the duplicative spending, let's defund it all. If there has to be a negotiation, let's start from defunding it all and see where we get, but it would take courage because we would have to let spending expire. If we are not willing to let the spending expire and start anew, we have no leverage. The power of the purse is there only if you have courage. We must have the courage of convictions to say enough is enough, that the debt is a greater threat to us than letting spending expire.

Now, several will report on this speech and say: Oh, he wants to shut down government. No, I don't. I just want to exert the power of the purse, and that means spending must expire. I am all for renewing the spending, but let's renew only the spending that makes sense. We have the power of the purse if we choose to exert it. Look at the mountain of debt. Look at the debt that continues to be added up. We have not been doing our job.

The way we are supposed to spend money in Congress is 12 individual appropriations bills. They have passed out of committee. Why aren't they presented on the floor? The Democrats have filibustered the only one presented. Let's present every one of

them, and let the public know—let everyone in America know—that it is Democrats filibustering the spending bills. It is Democrats who desire to shut down government. It is Democrats who desire not to have any restrictions on where the money is spent. It is Democrats who are saying: We don't want to end wasteful spending. We don't want to end any spending. We don't want any controls over spending. We want to continue the status quo. But we should not be complicit with them.

We have allowed this to go on for too long. It threatens the very heart of the Republic. It threatens our very foundation to continue to borrow \$1 million a minute. It is time that we stood up. It is time that we took a stand and said enough is enough.

When is the last time we did it in the appropriate fashion? When is the last time Congress passed each of the individual appropriations bills with instructions on how to spend the money? It was 2005, a decade ago. It has been a decade. In the last decade we have added nearly \$10 trillion in new debt. It is time to take a stand.

I, for one, have had enough. I have had enough. I am not going to vote for a continuing resolution. A continuing resolution is simply a continuation of the mounting debt. I, for one, will not do it. A continuing resolution is retreat. It is announcing your defeat in advance.

What we should do is take a stand. We should say to the other side: In the Senate, it requires a supermajority. What does that mean? It means 60 votes to pass spending. What would happen? Spending that is controversial, like Planned Parenthood, would fall away. They can ask for private donations. Good luck on that. You wouldn't find things being funded that are controversial. What would happen is there would no longer be funding for wasteful and duplicative projects.

We listed these a couple years ago. I think we had \$7 billion worth of just duplication. Did we fix it? No. Every year the President—even this President—puts forward \$10, \$15, \$20 billion worth of programs that could be eliminated. Do they ever get eliminated? No, because Congress is dysfunctional and we continue to pass a continuing resolution, which means we do nothing to exert the power of the purse.

Congress is a shadow of what it once was. Madison said that we would have coequal branches and we would pit ambition against ambition. We no longer do that. Congress is a withering shadow. It is a shadow of what it once was. Congress has no power, exerts no power, and we walk and we live in the shadow of a Presidency that is growing larger and larger and larger.

The President is not afraid. He says he has his pen and his phone. So he is writing and creating law. One of our philosophers we look to is Montesquieu, and Montesquieu said when the Executive begins to legislate,

a form of tyranny will ensue. That is what we have now; we have Executive tyranny. It is not just this President, though. It has been going on for a while, probably for 100 years. We have been allowing more and more power to accumulate in the hands of the Presidency.

What we need is a bipartisan taking back of that power. We need Congress to stand up on its own two feet and say: Enough is enough. We are reclaiming the power of the purse, and we are going to do whatever is necessary to get rid of the wasteful spending, the duplicative spending, the offensive spending, and we are going to do what the American people want and that is to spend only what comes in.

But I will tell you, I, for one, will oppose this continuing resolution. I recommend that everybody in America call their Congressmen and say: We are tired of the mounting debt. We want you to stand up. We want you to stand up and say enough is enough. Let the funding expire, and make the other side come up with 60 votes to spend the money.

It is time we took a stand. I hope we will.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

REMEMBERING FRANCES OLDHAM KELSEY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in August this country lost a hero, a woman most have not heard of, but her story is legendary. Frances Oldham Kelsey passed away in August at the age of 101. She was a woman of tremendous courage and conviction. She was a trailblazing scientist. She earned her Ph.D. and then her medical degree from the University of Chicago while raising daughters. She did things that women of her generation were usually not allowed to do or certainly rarely encouraged to do.

As she began her professional life, it was the early 1960s and a horrific scourge was afflicting Europe and other countries around the world. Thousands of babies were dying in the womb, thousands more were born with severe birth defects—including deformed arms and legs that, as history will tell us, resembled flippers—missing organs, missing limbs.

The United States was largely spared from these terrible effects because of Dr. Frances Oldham Kelsey. As a medical officer at the FDA, Dr. Kelsey was charged with investigating and approving the drug called Kevadon, better

known in history by its generic name, thalidomide. The pharmaceutical company Merrell was expecting a speedy approval. After all, the drug was used around the world as a sedative and as a treatment for morning sickness. The drug had made a windfall for its German manufacturer, and Merrell was hoping for the same in our country. But Dr. Kelsey, who at that time was a woman in very much a man's world at the FDA, a woman who was not all that experienced, was willing to show her courage and demand further investigation before she would approve this drug.

With few studies providing the safety of Kevadon—thalidomide—she rejected the application. Merrell protested, drug companies were outraged, and a number of other employees at the FDA disagreed. She asked for, though, and reviewed more data, and again she rejected the application. Again, Merrell protested. Again, other people were outraged by this woman's decision. Merrell's executives called her a petty and nitpicking bureaucrat.

It is always easy to pick on a bureaucrat—a nameless, faceless bureaucrat, or a named bureaucrat with a face. It is easy to pick on bureaucrats. People here do it all the time.

They called her office, and they peppered her with letters. They went over her head to her FDA bosses. Dr. Kelsey again—imagine a young woman without sort of the support that a more experienced, older, and, particularly in those days, male researcher might have had. She held her ground. She continued to reject the application. Meanwhile, the horrible toll was mounting in places around the world where thalidomide was sold.

In late 1961, the German manufacturer pulled the drug, and health departments around the world began to issue warnings. In March 1962, Merrell, the drug company, seeing the handwriting on the wall, finally withdrew its thalidomide application.

That might have been the end of the story, but staffers for Senator Estes Kefauver, a Democrat from Tennessee who had long been battling pharmaceutical companies to strengthen our country's drug oversight, gave the Washington Post a tip. The Senator's staff wanted the country to know about this woman, Dr. Kelsey, wanted people to know about the heroine who had spared our children from the terrible consequences of this drug. They wanted them to know that Big Pharma—Senator Kefauver wanted them to know that Big Pharma, the big drug companies, had fought her every step of the way, putting pressure on the FDA, going over her head, sending her letters, perhaps indirectly threatening her. Fortunately, she stood her ground against a very powerful combatant, for want of a better term.

In no small part because of Dr. Kelsey and her persistence, we have the Kefauver Harris Amendment of 1962, which strengthened drug approval

standards. We have a branch of the FDA dedicated to testing and investigating new drugs. Who became the head of it? Dr. Kelsey. Over a 45-year career, she helped to rewrite our drug and medical testing regulations, she strengthened patient protections, and she cracked down on medical conflicts of interest. Her rigorous standards were not only instrumental in improving drug safety in the United States, they also set the world standard for drug safety. The United States is known all over the world as having the gold standard to protect the public by rigorous testing and rigorous examination to protect the public against drugs that can do damage.

Everybody thought thalidomide was harmless except Dr. Kelsey. Because she had the authority at the FDA to do it right and then was able to expand that authority working with Congress, uncounted lives, innumerable lives—we don't know how many lives were saved and how many people have been protected against harmful drugs. She had a 45-year career. She made a huge difference. Her accomplishments are heroic. She has received many honors.

But we should remember that for all of Dr. Kelsey's recognition, there are thousands more Federal employees working with little appreciation and sometimes not very high pay. I am sure Dr. Kelsey could have been making more money practicing medicine, but look at the lives she saved and look at the difference she made. Expand that to so many government workers, so many people who do their jobs.

Members of Congress—well-paid, well-dressed, getting good taxpayer benefits—love to attack the bureaucracy, love to call bureaucrats names, love to nitpick agencies, when, in fact, so many of them are making a huge difference in keeping the air we breathe, the water we drink, the drugs we take, the consumer products we use—keeping them safe. That is something those Federal employees should be proud of. They protect Americans from pollution and predatory lenders and faulty products and infectious diseases and dangerous drugs.

We have made so much progress over the past century because of Americans like Frances Kelsey, but unfortunately too many people in this town seem to have amnesia and are trying to turn back the clock.

I sit on the banking committee. We had a hearing today. I sit in the banking committee at least once a week for a couple of hours. I listen to my Republican colleagues who seem to have forgotten that the economy sort of imploded—almost imploded in 2008 and 2009. They seem to want to go back to those days of deregulation, not holding Wall Street accountable—the same kinds of things—the deregulation, the weakening of the FDA, the weakening of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the weakening of the Department of Agriculture standards, and all of the things that we do, where this

country works better because we have government—call them bureaucrats—we have government bureaucrats who are working to protect the public interest.

So we should honor Dr. Kelsey not with awards but with action to protect her legacy. Yet people right now in this Congress—I heard a long speech last night from the junior Senator from Texas, not ever to be confused with the senior Senator from Texas—I heard him again threaten government shutdowns. When government shuts down, food is less protected and water is likely going to be less clean, and all of the things that happen when government is not doing its job.

I hope my colleagues join me in honoring Dr. Kelsey's legacy and remembering the work that heroic public servants in our Federal workforce do for this country.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. President, I want to read a brief letter. I was at my 45th high school class reunion. Some of us in this body might have reached an age close to that; most of you have not. At my 45th reunion, I met a woman who was there visiting someone else. She was much younger. She handed me this letter.

She said: Senator BROWN, I want to thank you for a couple of things. Thanks for the Affordable Care Act.

She has a photography business.

She said: Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, I was able to pursue my dream and open my business. I am diabetic. I was unable to self-insure due to my preexisting condition. I was forced to work low-wage jobs just so I could get insurance. Now, because of the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare—I can thrive as an entrepreneur. Thank you.

I hear those stories. I meet people. Now 600,000 Ohioans have health insurance who did not have it prior to the Affordable Care Act, and 100,000 additional Ohioans who are not much older than these pages sitting here, who are 19, 20, maybe 25, have insurance on their parents' health plan. One million—that is in Ohio alone—1 million seniors in Ohio have no copay, no deductible, and get free preventive care tests for osteoporosis, tests for diabetes, and physical exams.

More than 100,000 seniors have saved an average of \$700 on their prescription drugs because of the Affordable Care Act. A family like this—the parents of a child who has juvenile arthritis or diabetes or whatever a child might be afflicted with can get insurance in spite of the child's preexisting condition.

When I hear in the Republican debates they all saying “Repeal ObamaCare,” it would be nice if one sort of gutsy reporter would say, “Well, what about all those millions of seniors who now get free preventive care? What about those millions of people who have consumer protections so they cannot be denied coverage because they have a sick child? What about those people who got so sick that their medical care was very expensive and

the insurance company cancelled their care? They cannot do that anymore. What about those people?” I just wish we would hear that question one time.

We honor Dr. Kelsey today, and we think about when government does things right in partnership with the private sector to make this country a better place to live.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

WORLD TRADE CENTER HEALTH PROGRAM AND VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, we just passed the 14th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. Americans all across the country honored the memory of 2,977 lives lost. There were moments of silence. There were testimonials from friends and family of the victims. There were statements, speeches, and posts online by my colleagues in Congress vowing to “never forget.” But the victims of September 11 are not just the men and women who were killed on that horrible day; the terror attacks on that day in 2001 are still claiming American lives. This includes the heroes who ran into the towers to save whom they could, who worked on the piles so that Americans might rebuild, and who would not abandon their community in a time of terrifying confusion and intense grief. Many of them are now sick because of their work at Ground Zero, and many are dying.

In 2010, after years of delay, we finally established the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation programs to provide our first responders, the survivors, and their families with the health care and benefits they very desperately needed. Tomorrow, at midnight, the bill authorizing this funding will expire.

More than 33,000 first responders and survivors have an illness or injury caused by the attacks or their aftermath. More than 1,700 have passed away from 9/11-related illnesses. More police officers have died since 9/11 from 9/11-related diseases than died on 9/11 itself. Since the 14th anniversary of the attacks earlier this month, another six 9/11 first responders have died. Think about that. In just a few short weeks, 6 more of our 9/11 heroes have died: John P. McKee, Roy McLaughlin, Reginald Umphrey, Kevin Kelly, Thomas Zayas, and Paul McCabe. They were married, and they had kids. Their average age was just a few years older than mine—53. They will all miss birthday parties

and graduations. They will miss evening dinners and holidays. They leave behind mortgages, car payments, and college-tuition payments. These 9/11 illnesses not only rob families of their loved ones, but they leave them to face expenses without, in many cases, the family's primary breadwinner.

Two weeks ago, hundreds of first responders from all over the country traveled to Washington to lobby Congress not to let their health care program expire. If Congress doesn't act now, how many more first responders and their families are going to suffer medically and financially because we didn't do our job and reauthorize this program?

Let me tell you about just one responder, Ken George from Long Island. Ken was 37 on September 11, 2001. He was working for the New York City Highway Department, and after the attacks he went to do search and rescue work. He was there for a couple of weeks. Almost right away, Ken developed a cough, then asthma, and then the asthma led to restricted airway disease. Doctors found crushed glass from Ground Zero in his lungs. He was forced to retire in 2006 because his medical ailments became too burdensome, and now, as he put it, he is "financially hurting like you wouldn't believe."

We are not talking about statistics. We are not talking about data points on a chart. We are talking about a 51-year-old man with a wife and three kids, with crushed glass in his lungs because he chose to do the right thing. He chose to answer the call of duty, and he chose to search for survivors after 9/11. On top of everything else he is dealing with, Ken now has to worry if he will get the health treatments he needs and if his family will have the basic financial support they need.

The health program officially expires tomorrow at midnight, but these illnesses—Ken's and thousands of others'—never expire, and neither should their health care.

We must reauthorize and make permanent the World Trade Center Health Program and Victim Compensation Fund. The participants in the health program live in every single State. They live in 429 of the 435 congressional districts. Every Senator in this Chamber has constituents who are sick and dying and are in this program.

A majority of this body has already signed on as cosponsors of this legislation, including many after our day of action a couple weeks ago. So let's finish this job. Let's give our 9/11 heroes the care and compensation they deserve and so desperately need. Let's truly never forget. The clock is ticking. Let's do our job.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12 noon, recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to say a few words about the latest developments in international trade.

As most of my colleagues know, this week officials from the Obama administration are meeting in Atlanta with representatives from our negotiating partners in the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP. Many reports indicate that our trade negotiators are hoping to conclude talks and finalize a deal over the next few days.

Now, as the Presiding Officer is aware, I was an original author of the legislation that renewed trade promotion authority, or TPA, earlier this year. I fought extremely hard to renew TPA because I believe it is an absolutely essential tool to ensure we get the very best trade agreements possible. For years I have been one of the most outspoken proponents in Congress for full engagement in the various trade agreements that have been under negotiation, including the TPP.

A strong Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement could greatly enhance our Nation's ability to compete in an increasingly global marketplace and result in a healthier economy and more high-paying jobs that come with increased U.S. trade. After all, when we are talking about the 12 countries currently taking part in these negotiations, we are talking about 40 percent of the global economy. As a group, TPP countries represent the largest market for our goods and services exports. Trade with these countries already supports an estimated 4 million U.S. jobs, and, with a good trade agreement in place, I believe it can do even better.

The Asia-Pacific region, where this agreement is focused, is one of the most economically vibrant and fastest growing areas in the world. According to the International Monetary Fund, the world economy will grow by more than \$20 trillion over the next 5 years, and nearly half of that growth will be in Asia. Unfortunately, our share of exports to the Asia-Pacific has been on the decline, as exports to the region lag behind overall U.S. export growth. One reason U.S. companies have lost so much market share in this very impor-

tant part of the world is that many countries in the region maintain steep barriers to U.S. exports while they have been negotiating to remove many of the same types of barriers for other countries, most notably for places such as China and the European Union.

On average, Southeast Asian countries impose tariffs that are five times higher than the average U.S. tariff. In addition, their duties on U.S. agricultural products often reach triple digits. There are also numerous other barriers, such as regulatory restrictions, that impede access for U.S. exporters in many of these countries. These obstacles, and increased global competition, have made it increasingly difficult for U.S. companies to remain competitive in Asia.

Put simply, a strong TPP Agreement is the best tool we could have to increase the growth of U.S. exports to the Asia-Pacific region.

There are also important strategic and security reasons to support a strong TPP Agreement. We have all seen in recent years how the economies of our Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiating partners have been shaped by China's expanding economic influence. I think we would all prefer that the United States remain the world leader in trade. If we want to maintain and expand our influence in the Asia-Pacific, it is essential that we more fully engage in that region. A strong TPP Agreement will facilitate that engagement and help ensure that trade patterns develop under a U.S. model, operating under U.S. rules and applying U.S. standards.

A strong TPP Agreement can help us create high-paying jobs through increased exports, as well as help secure our strategic and economic position in the Asia-Pacific region. But to do all of that, we need a strong agreement. That is why I have been pushing the Obama administration to negotiate wisely in order to reach a TPP Agreement that advances our Nation's interests and provides significant benefits for American workers and job creators.

Despite these obvious advantages to concluding a TPP Agreement, I think it is critically important that the administration take the time necessary to get the agreement right. A number of key issues are outstanding, and how they are resolved will go a long way to determining whether I can support the final agreement.

Our country has a long history of negotiating and reaching high-standard trade agreements. While they haven't all been perfect, our existing trade agreements have, in my view, advanced our interests in foreign markets and strengthened our own economy.

There are a number of reasons why, historically, our trade negotiators have fought long and hard to get gold-standard agreements. The most obvious reason is that anything less is unlikely to pass through Congress. If the administration is serious about not only getting an agreement but getting an