

So as we look at some of the real lives depicted in these photographs, I think Shearine gave us a very powerful message today, where she said: "They," meaning the children in the picture of the classroom—"They have hope for a brighter future and faith that the adults in their lives will work together to make change."

Shearine is right. She has given me an assignment, she has given 99 other Senators an assignment, and a lot of other adults across the country. I believe this is a mission worthy of a great nation, just like every other major undertaking we have confronted and dealt with over many generations of greatness in our country.

When we talk about American exceptionalism and what it means to be an American, part of being an American is making sure every child has the same opportunity to learn and to grow. We can do this. We can do it in a bipartisan fashion. If the United Kingdom can reduce child poverty, the United States can do the same.

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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would point out to our colleagues, that we now have now received the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. It amounts to 5,544 pages, not including the dozens of side-agreements—three times the book I know the Presiding Officer knows, the Bible. It is three times the length of the Bible and several times the length of ObamaCare. It has just been delivered to us with all kinds of promises for good things that might result from its affirmation.

No American has the resources to ensure that his or her interests are being protected in this document. It is so long and the ramifications are so broad that Congress cannot do its job to ensure that the people's interests are safeguarded by such an agreement.

We already have trade deals with all the major TPP countries, except Japan. So I will say with real confidence this is much more than trade. If it was, a bilateral agreement with Japan would fix it. We have agreements with Australia, Chile, Canada, and other countries.

The TPP is about the goal of creating a new global regulatory structure—what I have called a Pacific Union—transferring power from individual Americans and Congress, eroding Congress, to an unaccountable, unelected, international bureaucratic committee.

Because President Obama has been given fast-track powers by this Con-

gress—unwisely I think—Congress cannot amend this deal, we cannot strike one offending provision, apply a filibuster to force a supermajority of 60 votes, as we have to have for most legislation, or to apply a two-thirds treaty vote. Additionally, the White House writes the implementing legislation, which, in turn, necessarily supersedes any existing American law. So this is what we mean by fast-track.

Today I would like to share a few thoughts about one aspect of this agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Commission. There is a particular chapter in this mammoth agreement, chapter 27, titled—innocuously enough—"Administrative and Institutional Provisions," which deals with the creation of a Trans-Pacific Partnership Commission.

Section 27.1 outlines the creation of this Commission and who is a member. The agreement states that "each party shall be responsible for the composition of its delegation." In other words, we are empowering the Trans-Pacific Partnership countries to create a new congress of sorts—a group with delegates that goes and meets and decides important issues that can impact everyday lives of Americans. The American representative in this Commission, which will operate in many ways like the U.N., will not be answerable to voters anywhere. How long will their terms be? How will they be chosen? Will there be any restrictions on lobbying, any requirements of transparency? Can they always meet in secret? Are there any ethics rules? The answer is, it will be whatever the TPP countries decide it will be.

The fact that they negotiated this in secret for months—years, really—indicates that transparency is not a quality they value very highly. It is an entity untethered above and outside the Constitution of the United States. All our government agencies in the United States must answer to the Congress and the President, the Chief Executive. These institutions will not. So we need to be cautious.

All I am saying is, why do we have to do this? Why do we have to create a Commission in which Vietnam or the Sultan of Brunei gets the same vote as the President of the United States?

Section 27.2 lists several powers of the Commission which should be expected in any regulatory body. It is granted the power to oversee the implementation of the TPP and the power to supervise the work of relevant working groups under its jurisdiction. However, then the section states this: Under the rules, the Commission shall "consider any proposal to amend or modify this Agreement," to change the agreement. They get to change the agreement. We can ratify this, but they get to change it whenever they deem appropriate. Also, the Commission shall "seek the advice of non-governmental persons or groups on any matter falling within the Commission's functions" and "take such other action

as the Parties may agree," while considering "input from non-governmental persons or groups of the Parties."

It also says it will consider the findings of international fora to help advise them. I guess one of the fora they will not be considering is a group like the National Federation of Independent Business, small businesses.

None of these terms are defined as to what constitutes a nongovernmental person or group. What is that?

Remember, when the Founders of our country negotiated the Constitution, they worried about every word. They thought about what it would mean and could mean decades, centuries later. They talked about creating a new form of government on this entire continent. They actually believed that could be possible, and it certainly has become reality. Have we given that kind of thought to the power we are delegating to this Commission? How will the agreement be amended or modified?

Just last week, the Secretary of State, Secretary Kerry, was in Kazakhstan. He told the television station in Kazakhstan that he is interested in seeing China and Russia be added to the TPP and that they would consider the Philippines a prime candidate to join in the future. That is an interesting thing to announce, particularly in Kazakhstan. Since it impacts the people of the United States, it might be nice for him to be talking more to the people of the United States.

So this would create a situation in which new countries can be added, it appears, most any different way.

The point is, this global governance authority is open-ended. The agreement states that "the Commission and any subsidiary body established under this Agreement may establish rules of procedures for the conduct of its work."

It even covers climate regulation—a lot about climate regulation. The agreement states that "the Parties acknowledge that transition to a low emissions economy requires collective action." Having been a proud cold warrior, I have never been happy with people who use the word "collective." It makes me nervous.

The TPP is a living agreement. According to the U.S. Trade Representative's own Web site, the living agreement provision is in the TPP: ". . . to enable the updating of the agreement as appropriate to address trade issues that emerge in the future as well as new issues that arise with the expansion of the agreement to include new countries." It says it is to deal with trade issues and new issues. Are those issues nontrade? Are they environmental issues? Are they labor agreements or other kinds of things that are unrelated directly to trade? I think it is clear this would allow that to happen.

Regardless, after the TPP is passed and Congress has blessed the union, the Senate will have no say in how the

Commission is established or the rules by which it is governed. It is untethered to the Congress.

Second, currency manipulation is a serious issue. It is impacting our ability to trade effectively today in a very large way.

Paul Volcker, Chairman of the Federal Reserve during a time when he and President Reagan transformed the American economy from raging inflation and interest rates to a sound economy, said that currency manipulation could wipe out decades of trade negotiations in a matter of minutes. We have seen that happen.

Currency is huge and impacts so many companies. If you read the financial pages, you will see that companies are worried about their bottom line in large part because it will be harder for them to compete with foreign competitors who devalue their currency deliberately in order to gain an advantage in trade. But there is no enforceable currency mechanism in this agreement, although it was fought for in both Houses of Congress and came close, but it is not in it.

On November 5, the Wall Street Journal wrote: “Mexico, Canada and other countries signaled they were open to the [currency] deal when they realized it wouldn’t include binding currency rules that could lead to trade sanctions through the TPP.” This caused Ford Motor Company to immediately reject the TPP the day it was released. Their spokesman argued that they could not support a deal in which currency rules “fell outside of TPP and [failed to] include dispute settlement mechanisms to ensure global rules prohibiting currency manipulation are enforced.”

This is a huge matter. Ford says that when they are selling an American-made automobile or truck in a foreign country, they are losing thousands of dollars as a result of currency manipulation by many of our trading partners. So it is hard to sell an automobile if our foreign competitors have, in effect, a comparative advantage on currency alone of several thousand dollars.

The administration has zero interest in preventing foreign market manipulations and currency manipulations, and thus the TPP will cause massive job losses. It just will. We will be less able to compete.

Let’s be frank. I supported the Korean trade agreement. We have great allies in Japan and Korea and others in the Pacific, but they are tough trading partners—competitors, if you want to know the truth. They are competitors. They are mercantilists. They have a goal. Their goal is to sell as much as possible to foreign countries and particularly to the greatest market in the world, the market they lust to gain even more access to—our market. They want to sell to us. Through a whole lot of different mechanisms, they resist purchasing anything from us. Have we made any progress in lessening the trade deficit to Japan or Korea lately? It is not going to happen because these

barriers are nontariff, currency being one of the most noteworthy.

Foreign workers and governments under the TPP are not inhibited from illegally undercutting American workers through currency manipulation in order to export their unemployment to the United States.

The way this happens is, if you have a business in a foreign country and the world market has slowed down and your exports are slowing down, if you devalue your currency, your product becomes cheaper and can be sold in the United States or other countries at a cheaper price, and you keep your people working and manufacturing those widgets, whereas the country that imported your product lays off its workers because it can’t compete at that price—for the widgets. It is an artificial way to gain market advantage.

In May of this year, I wrote the President and asked him simple questions. This is important, colleagues. I asked him to state whether the TPP would increase or decrease our trade deficit. He refused to answer. I asked him whether the TPP would increase or decrease the number of manufacturing jobs in the United States. He refused to answer. I asked him how the TPP would affect the average hourly wages of the American middle class. He refused to answer. He never wrote back. All that the proponents in the White House have said about this deal is that it would increase production and jobs in the export industries. But exporting is such a small part of American industry production. They don’t mention how many jobs would be lost by the increased imports into our country.

Dan DiMicco, the CEO emeritus of Nucor Steel, which operates steel plants all over the Nation, wrote in his recent book:

The world says one thing about open markets and free trade but does another. Whatever sharp cultural or political or language differences may separate the Japanese from the Chinese, or the Germans from the French, this much they all have in common: they know how to advance and protect their economic interests.

Mr. President, has my time lapsed?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama, there is a 10-minute time limit.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 minutes to wrap up.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. They know how to advance their interests, and we have not been effective in advancing ours.

It is time to take TPP off the fast track, take this off the fast track and get busy defending the interests of the American people.

DiMicco writes:

In principle, any industrial policy would begin by saying the business of creating, making, and building things must be at the heart of any overreaching economic strategy.

This agreement is not just about promoting trade; it is about creating a

framework for a transnational union which supersedes the authority of Congress.

Finally, if it were truly about opening markets to U.S. producers, the United States would simply have negotiated bilateral agreements with the countries we need to talk to.

We are the world’s greatest market for worldwide products that are made, and right now we give open access, incredibly, to foreign imports. Just look at those containerships on the Pacific coast stacked to the top. It is not working for jobs in America, it is not working for wages in America, and it is not working for manufacturing. We have to make things. Moving to a services economy would be failure.

Of course we want trade. Of course we want to purchase items from abroad. I am not saying we shouldn’t. What I am asking is, are we, in negotiating this trade agreement, giving even broader access to our markets without getting enough in return? That is the problem. America must make things. Consumption in America should be for Americans and for export. Our competitors want the opposite, and they have been winning, but they need us more than we need them; thus, we have great power to reverse this course.

Figuratively speaking, some of our politicians will be pushing up daisies if they don’t listen to what the American people are saying. They must listen to the sound, common sense of the people who hold the ultimate power. They expect us to make sure their interests are legitimately defended. I don’t believe this trade agreement does that, and we will talk more about it as time goes by.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

REMEMBERING DOROTHY “DOT” HELMS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I have the sad duty to report to the Senate the passing of the first lady of North Carolina, Dorothy “Dot” Helms. Mrs. Helms was known to many in this body as the ever gracious wife of my illustrious predecessor, Senator Jesse Helms.

In fact, I chose to stand at this desk because it is the desk he stood behind for the many years as he served the United States and the great State of North Carolina in the Senate.

For 66 years Dot Helms was the rock upon which the Helms legacy was built. Long before she met her future husband, Dot Helms was a trailblazer in North Carolina. She was the first woman to graduate from the University of North Carolina school of journalism in 1940, where she rubbed elbows with the likes of fellow Tar Heels, Edward R. Murrow and friend and classmate David Brinkley.

While a reporter for the legendary owner-editor of the Raleigh News and Observer, Joseph Daniels, she met a young man on the sports desk named Jesse Helms, and the rest is history.