



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2019

No. 186

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 20, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

PAST TIME TO PASS USMCA

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

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, it is time. Actually, it is past time. It is past time for Congress to pass the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

Today, I am pleased to join with my colleague and friend, Senator STEVE DAINES, to draw attention to the USMCA's importance to Montana.

President Trump and his trade negotiators have done a great job negoti-

ating this trade deal. USMCA will secure open access to markets in Mexico and Canada, markets critical to Montana farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and businesses.

USMCA will bring over \$68 billion in new economic growth. USMCA will create 176,000 new American jobs. USMCA helps family farmers and ranchers, which is why 1,000 ag groups from across the country have endorsed it. USMCA increases agricultural exports by \$2 billion a year. USMCA supports American workers.

Speaker, USMCA is a win for Montana and America. But here we are, 355 days, almost a full year, since President Trump signed USMCA, and the deal has gone nowhere in the House.

So, what is the holdup? The Speaker has stalled since the deal was announced. She objected to it. Those objections were addressed, yet here we are.

The Speaker says she is on a path to yes on USMCA. A path to yes, however, isn't a yes. Farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and business owners deserve certainty, not just a path to yes and more delays.

Unfortunately, just yesterday, Politico reported USMCA faces another delay because of House leadership—another delay. The House has 13 days left this year, 13 days to get this deal done. It is up to Congress to act.

Speaker, the needless delays must end. The Trump administration has done its job and negotiated an agreement that works for Montana and our country. It is time for Congress to do its job.

I urge House leaders to give farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and business owners the certainty they need. I urge House leaders to move forward with USMCA to create jobs, increase paychecks, and grow our economy.

Let's consider USMCA. Let's vote on USMCA. Let's ratify USMCA.

WE MUST GET USMCA RIGHT

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement and the need for commonsense change to see that our trade policies with Mexico and Canada better reflect the current economic conditions and the changes that have occurred since the initial act was put together over 25 years ago.

The administration's trade policies, though, currently with these tariff wars, I believe, are not only hurting consumers, but they are hurting our farmers, ranchers, and dairymen and -women. Let's be clear about it: These are hidden taxes that consumers pay and that agriculture pays as well.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, I think, would address these concerns if we get it right.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture, opening new trade opportunities for agriculture is one of my top priorities. My home State of California is the number one agricultural State in the Nation, and nearly half of our ag products are exported abroad, over \$20 billion a year.

I am a farmer, third generation. I understand the importance of our ability to trade and have a fair and level playing field.

Mexico and Canada combined is our largest destination for these products. Maintaining these markets is essential to ensure prosperity for our farmers and the viability of our ag economy.

We have had 25 years of a mostly successful trading relationship with Canada and Mexico since signing the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, but a lot has changed. It has also resulted in, let's be frank, a loss of jobs that has hurt American families here, and we need to address that. This is an opportunity to deal with the flaws that

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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have existed in NAFTA for over 25 years.

Since 2002, Canada has been the United States' top agricultural export market, and Mexico has either been second or third. In 2018, we exported \$143 billion worth of agricultural products to the two countries combined. The amount equaled over a quarter of total U.S. ag exports. That is significant.

The USMCA leaves in place, I think, the key wins for agriculture established under NAFTA. It updates key provisions pertaining to important issues like labor, technology, and the environment. It also provides some new access to Canada's protected dairy market, which I think is important.

The conversations between House Democrats and the administration to hammer out the remaining differences, I think, have been constructive. I disagree with some of the narratives that this has been a delay. We want to get it right. You must get good trade agreements right. Our negotiators are making good progress, including efforts to ensure that enforcement to the agreement is done.

But enforcement of labor standards continues to remain a concern. This is important. Labor in America doesn't want the same impacts that took place under NAFTA, so enforcement of the provisions is critical.

USMCA's labor chapter does reflect a strengthening of standards, including freedom of association and the right to organize in Mexico. We have had numerous delegations meet with our counterparts in Mexico. This spring, Mexico passed landmark labor legislation laying the legal framework for compliance with the United States-Mexico-Canada labor chapter. Now we must ensure that those labor standards are enforced. That is the critical area today.

House Democrats are working in good faith with the administration to put in place assurances that these standards are enforced over the long term.

The same goes for enforcement of environmental and biomedical standards. Commitments need to be made, and they have to be enforceable to make this a successful agreement.

If these issues are addressed, the USMCA would stabilize some trade policies that are otherwise unpredictable with this administration, including serious concerns that President Trump may, as he said, kill NAFTA and reject the deal if we don't pass this. We want to get it done ASAP for sure, but we need to make sure it is done right.

Sound trade policy should not be a partisan issue. I will continue to make sure that we can vote on USMCA as soon as possible. Once again, though, we have to have the assurances. I expect strong passage of an agreement if we can get those assurances, but there must be a way to address this so that we will get to "yes."

Then we can turn our attention to other trade matters. An agreement with China, obviously, is very important and in Europe with the European Union.

Let me say, finally, good trade agreements, I think, mean good-paying jobs. Let me repeat that. Good trade agreements mean good-paying jobs for all Americans. That is obviously what we want to do for our entire economy.

RECOGNIZING AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize American Education Week.

Every year, this week underscores the importance of access to quality education. It honors the teachers, instructors, and educational mentors who make a difference in the lives of our Nation's learners.

Working to ensure access to high-quality and affordable education for all students is of utmost importance. The American education system should be as diverse as our Nation's students, including learners of all ages, of all socioeconomic backgrounds, and from rural America, urban America, and everywhere in between. That includes students who choose to pursue a traditional 4-year college degree as well as those who choose to attend a trade school or an apprenticeship program.

As co-chair of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, I have been pleased to introduce a number of career and technical education bills, alongside my fellow co-chair, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN, which aim to restore rungs on the ladder of opportunity for every American.

Most recently, that includes H.R. 5092, the Counseling for Career Choice Act. H.R. 5092 ensures students have access to quality counseling resources that can help them make more informed decisions about their educational futures and professional career choices. By better equipping these students with the skills to succeed, we are one step closer to closing our Nation's skills gap.

The skills gap is the result of a lack of qualified students in STEM disciplines like nursing, energy, information technology, cybersecurity, and more. Career and technical education is working to empower students by equipping them with employable skills.

To directly address the workforce shortage in cybersecurity, I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 1592, the Cybersecurity Skills Integration Act. This bill would create a pilot program through the Department of Education to award grants to create or expand existing postsecondary CTE programs in cybersecurity competencies.

Career and technical education has support outside of the Education and

Labor Committee as well. I also co-sponsored H.R. 898, the Skills Investment Act of 2019. H.R. 898 enhances Coverdell Education Savings Accounts, which are tax-advantaged savings accounts for educational expenses. American workers can use the accounts to pay for skills-based learning, career training, and workforce development. In addition, both workers and employers receive tax credits for contributions to these accounts.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to addressing the shortage of our skilled workforce, we need to continue increasing educational access for students who are living with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ensures nearly 7 million infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities have access to quality education.

Unfortunately, Congress has fallen short on our commitment to these individuals, and support for students with disabilities has remained underfunded. That is why I was proud to support H.R. 1878, the IDEA Full Funding Act, which would mandate gradual increases in IDEA funding to reach the full funding as promised by Congress when IDEA was passed and to do that by fiscal year 2029.

Lastly, there are many bipartisan bills that support quality education for American learners. I have always believed that we produce the best results for students when we work across the aisle. However, the partisan College Affordability Act, which would reauthorize the Higher Education Act, actually contributes to crippling college costs and widens our Nation's skills gap.

It is my hope that we can offer real solutions like the High-Quality Opportunities in Postsecondary Education Act, or the HOPE Act, which provides institutions with the tools they need to help students prepare for successful careers and successful lives.

This is American Education Week. Let's remember that students deserve better than a one-size-fits-all educational plan.

PASS USMCA BEFORE YEAR-END

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

Mr. ROUDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of resolving the outstanding issues needed to pass the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, before the end of the year.

More than 12 million American jobs, including 1.8 million jobs in California, depend on trade with Canada and Mexico. We simply cannot afford to keep the current rules in place if we are to secure our economic future and create better paying American jobs.

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Addressing contentious issues in a trade deal are always difficult, but I am optimistic that we can come to a productive resolution if the administration continues to engage with House Democrats in good faith.