

House about moving these regulations along.

Now that they have been reviewed by OMB, for the rule to come into effect, it must now be published in the Federal Register. The rule was first proposed in January 2017. We have been waiting for it to be finished for 2½ years. I hope that President Trump now makes that happen as soon as possible.

The proposed rule would raise the minimum investment amounts required under the program. It also makes sure that investments are directed to rural areas and truly high-unemployment areas, as Congress intended when EB-5 was created in 1990.

Considering those points of where EB-5 ought to be concentrated and now looking at how they have been diverted from the original intent of Congress is the very best reason for these rules to be put in place—to get us back to square one, the original intent of the law.

Since the 1990s, rampant and abusive gerrymandering of the EB-5 Program's targeted employment areas has undermined that congressional intent, which was to direct it toward high-unemployment areas and rural areas. Instead of channeling investment to rural and high-unemployment areas, EB-5 has become a source of cheap foreign capital for big-city, big-moneyed interests. The targeted employment area reforms in the proposed rule would take a first step toward refocusing EB-5 investment in the way that Congress originally intended in that 1990s legislation.

In addition to channeling investment away from the areas of our country that need it the most, this is what has happened. The EB-5 Program has been plagued with other forms of fraud and abuse, and this has been going on for years and years. There are examples of EB-5 fraud from all over the country, and I am going to give just a few examples as a reminder to the President why these rules need to be put into the Federal Registry right away.

In Chicago, a businessman defrauded 290 investors of \$150 million in funds that were supposed to be used for construction of a hotel and conference center near O'Hare Airport.

In Palm Beach, FL, a real estate developer and real estate attorney teamed up to defraud 60 Chinese and Iranian EB-5 investors of \$50 million. Instead of that money being used to fund the construction of a proposed hotel, it was instead used to pay personal taxes and purchase a 151-foot yacht.

In Wisconsin, a businessman used over half of the \$7.6 million in funds he had solicited from investors to pay for personal expenses, including Green Bay Packers tickets and the purchase of a Cadillac Escalade.

I could go on all day.

In May of 2017, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services conducted an internal fraud assessment and found 19 cases of national security concerns

within the EB-5 Program. Those are national security concerns. The No. 1 responsibility of the Federal Government is to protect the American people, and that involves national security. These cases related to terrorism, espionage, and information and technology transfer.

Unfortunately, multiple bipartisan efforts in the Congress to modify the EB-5 Program have been consistently stymied by powerful special interest groups and big-moneyed interests. Because I have been in the middle of those battles—and they are bipartisan battles—over the years, I know exactly where these big-moneyed interests are coming from and the special interest groups that keep this program from being reformed.

Now we have an opportunity for one person—the President of the United States—through regulation, to reform this program in a way that would be very helpful. So that makes the publication of the EB-5 reform rules even more important. I applaud President Trump and the administration for getting the proposed rule to this point, but now it is time for the President and his team to finish the process and make sure the final rule goes into effect as soon as possible.

Iowans and all Americans who live in rural and high-unemployment areas deserve to have the investment that Congress intended when the EB-5 Program was created almost 30 years ago. President Trump and his administration now have a chance to finally address some of the very serious flaws in this program that have hurt rural America. We have been waiting for these reforms for over 2 years. It is time for this final rule to be published, and it needs to happen right now, if not sooner.

TREATIES

Mr. President, I rise today for the purpose of expressing my support for the passage of the resolutions of advice and consent that the Senate is considering this week with respect to the protocols to our tax treaties with Spain, Switzerland, Japan, and Luxembourg.

Tax treaties are a very integral part of the architecture of our tax system. For example, these treaties would help define the rules of the road for cross-border investment and trade for U.S. individuals and companies doing business in one of our treaty partner countries, like Spain, as an example, and for individuals and companies in those countries doing business in the United States.

The protocols before us today provide important updates to the tax treaties with these four countries. In general, several of them lower withholding taxes and include provisions to prevent double taxation. Several provide mechanisms for resolving disputes in a timely manner through mandatory binding arbitration. In addition, they provide important updates to the exchange of information provisions in the underlying treaties.

I am aware of the concerns that have been raised regarding the standard

used to provide for such exchange of information. The standard provided for in these protocols is that relevant information shall be exchanged between the United States and its treaty partners. That relevant standard has been used throughout our treaty network for decades and is also the standard used in U.S. domestic tax laws.

This issue was raised last month in the Foreign Relations Committee, and an amendment was offered to the resolution regarding the protocol with Spain that would have required a narrower standard. That amendment was appropriately defeated. If the issue is raised again as an amendment here on the floor, I will urge my colleagues to vote no on the amendment.

These four protocols have been awaiting action by the Senate for many years. In some cases, it has been nearly a decade. It is important that the Senate fulfill its constitutional duty to provide its advice and consent on tax treaties and protocols. It is also important that our treaty partners know that the United States really values these agreements and negotiates these treaties and protocols in good faith, with the expectation that they will be implemented without lengthy delays.

Our actions on these protocols are also timely, given the international effort to address the effects of digitalization on the international tax system.

For the past several months, representatives from the Treasury Department have been actively engaged in negotiations at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. These talks are focused on finding a multilateral agreement to these issues and avoiding the regrettable unilateral approach that some countries have taken—most notably, France. Ultimately, if these negotiations are successful, there could be a need for the United States to update its bilateral income tax treaties.

It is important that the Senate take action on the pending protocols and send a strong signal to our treaty partners that the international tax agreements are a priority for our country.

In addition to moving forward on these four protocols, we have three new income tax treaties with Chile, Hungary, and Poland that are awaiting action by the Foreign Relations Committee. I urge Chairman RISCH and Ranking Member MENENDEZ to use the wave of momentum that is building this week to move forward on those three new treaties and send them to the floor of the Senate as soon as possible.

I thank the chairman and ranking member for moving these protocols to the floor. These treaties were reported favorably by the committee by voice vote without amendment, and their consideration is long overdue.

I thank Leader MCCONNELL and Minority Leader SCHUMER for their efforts to bring these protocols up for consideration on the floor this week.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote yes on these resolutions of advice and consent.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

EXECUTIVE SESSION—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to engage in a colloquy with my colleagues.

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

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise today to speak about a very important issue not only for my home State but for our country, and that is the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, also referred to as the USMCA.

This is the agreement that would replace NAFTA. It will increase exports, expand consumer choice, raise wages, and boost innovation not just for our country but also for two of our strongest trading partners, Canada and Mexico, as well.

In the United States the U.S. International Trade Commission's analysis found that the USMCA will raise GDP by nearly \$63 billion and create more than 176,000 jobs. The implementation of this agreement will also benefit my State, as it will secure and expand market access for our ag producers, and that is true for all of our ag-producing States across the country. It will help to grow our manufacturing base, as well, for our manufacturing States, such as Ohio. I see that my good friend and colleague from Ohio has just joined us. It will provide important support and help for the technology sector and energy sector. All of our different industry sectors stand to benefit from this agreement.

Access to foreign markets is critical for American agriculture and for our producers, who have maintained an ag trade surplus for more than 50 years. We produce far more than we can consume in this country, and we need access to markets in Canada, Mexico, and beyond.

My State of North Dakota is the ninth largest producer of ag goods, exporting and shipping \$4.5 billion worth of ag products around the globe, for example, in 2017.

Farmers and ranchers depend on free and fair trade to sell the highest quality, lowest cost food supply, not just in our country but in the world. We produce the highest quality, lowest

cost food supply. That benefits every single American every single day, and it benefits many other people around the globe if we are able to export to these other countries.

According to the International Trade Commission report, the USMCA will increase U.S. ag and food exports to Canada and Mexico by \$2.2 billion. This agreement secures existing market access, makes ag trade fairer, increases access to the Canadian market, and supports innovation in agriculture, which is why it is critical that Congress consider and pass this agreement as soon as possible.

Passage of the USMCA will help to secure market access in Canada to U.S. farmers and ranchers as the agreement maintains all existing zero-tariff provisions on ag products. Canada and Mexico are crucial markets for U.S. agriculture and the USMCA gives the certainty that these markets will continue to remain open for business.

I have more, but some of my colleagues are here. So I will turn to them, starting with my colleague from Indiana, somebody who has been active in business for many years. He built a business from scratch, from nothing to, I believe, more than 1,000 employees. He is certainly somebody who understands the importance of business and understands the importance of markets and access to those markets, and trade and export. So I turn at this point to the good Senator from Indiana for some of his thoughts on this important issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Madam President, it is true. I am a mainstream entrepreneur, and I have been involved with business my entire life, including the farm markets. I started a turkey farm back in 1979 from scratch, and I was involved in it for 32 years. I sold my share of it to my partner's kids and grandkids. My wife has had a business in downtown Jasper, my hometown, for years.

I have been an entrepreneur. I have dealt with how hard the marketplace is even when things are going well.

I stand to make the point on behalf of Hoosier farmers and businesses and to express my strong opinion that we need to get the USMCA across the finish line.

This agreement is vital to secure our hard-fought market access for American agriculture. At a time when agriculture could never have more challenges, from chronically low prices to the increasing concentration among farmer-suppliers with big corporations, this is one piece of uncertainty we need to eliminate.

In stressing the importance of the USMCA, I would state that despite the fact NAFTA had its faults, it was quite successful in securing markets for farmers. The USMCA is better. It provides stronger access to Canadian markets for U.S. milk, wheat, poultry, and egg products. It ensures that Hoosier wine and spirit makers are treated fair-

ly on Canadian shelves. And it secures the Mexican market for Indiana pork, cheese, and grain.

The USMCA improves on NAFTA in other areas of the economy as well. It adds modern rules for digital trade and stronger protections for American intellectual property. We know how important that is with regard to dealing with the Chinese.

It contains new rules of origin that ensure more manufacturing is conducted in North America and has brand-new rules to bring more of that production back to the United States.

When President Trump ran for office, he ran on a few simple things, and negotiating a NAFTA improvement was one of his core promises to the American public. At the time, Congress had two requests: Follow the guidelines from the trade promotion authority and move quickly—move quickly—to minimize uncertainty. President Trump upheld his end of the bargain. He has delivered an agreement that is better than the original NAFTA in nearly every respect.

This week Congress is ready to vote, and yet we can't. Why? Because House Democrats will not bring it to the floor. Don't believe me? Look at this letter, dated July 8, from several House Democrats.

They say in plain English: Do not send this agreement to the Congress. Do not send this agreement to the Congress.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter dated July 8, 2019, to Robert Lighthizer.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 8, 2019.

Hon. ROBERT LIGHTHIZER,
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative,
Washington, DC.

DEAR AMBASSADOR LIGHTHIZER: We appreciate all the work you have done with the New Democrat Coalition and the rest of the Democratic caucus to resolve the outstanding issues that must be addressed for a successful, bipartisan passage of the updated North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

These conversations have been frank, productive and engaged in in good faith by all parties, and we are therefore optimistic that these limited concerns can be addressed in a timely manner. While we appreciate your willingness to listen, we have not seen any meaningful progress or tangible proposals from you to address these concerns. It has been clear from the outset that such proposals are necessary for a successful resolution.

The New Democrat Coalition was integral in the development and passage of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (TPA). It is our belief, as legislators intimately involved with the law under which the new NAFTA was negotiated, that moving forward with implementing legislation absent the agreement of Democratic leadership would almost certainly be taken as a failure to fulfill the consultation requirements of TPA. We were troubled that you sent up the draft Statement of Administrative Action on May 30