

Passing H.R. 3005 is a necessary step in continuing to expand exports to foreign markets, including new and emerging marketplaces. W.S. Darley & Company is just one of more than 14,000 Illinois companies that rely on exports and are eager to find new opportunities in the global marketplace. Passing TPA will give U.S. negotiators the credibility they need to make agreements that will create those opportunities.

GRANT TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY TO PRESIDENT

(Mr. OXLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to speak on granting Trade Promotion Authority to the President. Free trade is good for our overall economy; but as chairman of the Committee on Financial Services, I would like to focus this morning on how important trade is to our country's vital financial services sector.

Ambassador Zoellick gave a compelling presentation to our committee just recently on the advantages of trade and services. Note, for example, that our financial services trade surplus was \$8.88 billion last year. That is a surplus. Financial services exports have seen an overall net increase of 273 percent over the last 10 years.

Clearly, we want to encourage continued growth in this vital industry. In my home State of Ohio, Columbus has had the distinction of being one of the fastest growing cities in the country, partly because of its emergence as a financial services center. But U.S. exports of financial services also help to promote the development of capital markets, open economies and democracy across the world.

When the President does not have Trade Promotion Authority, other countries are reluctant to enter into new agreements with the United States, so it is more difficult to get the kind of trade agreements that open up new markets for our financial services companies; and ultimately, that threatens U.S. preeminence in the international financial world.

We cannot afford to lose that standing. It is just one reason why this Congress needs to approve TPA tomorrow.

OPPOSE FAST TRACK TRADE AUTHORITY

(Ms. MCCOLLUM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will vote on a bill offered by the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means which concedes to the executive branch this body's constitutional authority to negotiate trade agreements. My role in Congress is to represent the voices and

values of the working men and women of Minnesota's fourth district, not to abdicate my vote to the President.

I want an opportunity to have input on agreements that promote global trade. Trade agreements are essential to our economic well-being, to our role as a global leader in promoting workers' rights, human rights and healthy environment. This Fast Track trade authority requires no congressional approval prior to the signing of a trade agreement, only consultations. This body may only vote to certify that the administration has failed to consult with Congress.

I was not elected to Congress to be a consultant. We are the House of Representatives, not the House of Consultants. I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 3005.

TIGHTENING BORDER CONTROL

(Mr. GRAVES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, we have taken many good steps since September 11 toward protecting our country. As our focus returns to the domestic issues, let us not overlook one critical piece missing from our Nation's security plan, tightening border control.

Each day, countless travelers freely cross our borders without proving their right to be in our country. Our ability to screen these people, even when this is an option, is severely compromised and must be addressed by bolstering the technology and intelligence capabilities at our ports of entry.

I, along with some of my colleagues, have introduced the Enhanced Border Security Act to strengthen our border security and monitor foreign nationals, particularly those on student visas visiting our country.

Our legislation would allow government law enforcement and intelligence agencies to share background information through a shared database. Additionally, this legislation will track foreign students receiving visas from educational institutions to ensure they are accounted for upon their arrival, during their study, and when their visa expires.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this comprehensive legislation that will help ensure the safety of our Nation.

SUPPORT TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

(Mr. CRANE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I just heard the gentlewoman from Minnesota commenting about Trade Promotion Authority, and there were a couple of comments that she made that I think need clarification.

One of these is the President has trade negotiating authority and has al-

ways had trade negotiating authority. What TPA does is let us participate in the process during the negotiating process, with consultation before, during and after the agreement is reached with another country.

The important thing to keep in mind is we had President Clinton go forward with his executive authority to negotiate that agreement with Jordan. He did bring it back, and we ultimately have the authority to vote it up or vote it down; that authority is retained.

I hope the gentlewoman will look at this, because TPA gives us greater opportunity for involvement in the process than anything that we have done in the past. Please, we need support on both sides of the aisle. It is a bipartisan issue.

FREEZING COPAY FOR VETERANS' PRESCRIPTION COSTS

(Mr. STRICKLAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I think veterans across this country would be upset to learn that at a time when we are giving multi-billion dollar tax breaks to wealthy corporations, we are in fact contemplating increasing the cost of prescription medications available to our veterans by a whooping 250 percent. We are in the process of increasing the copay for our veterans from \$2 per prescription to \$7 per prescription.

Now, many veterans receive 10 or more prescriptions per month. Ten times seven is \$70 a month. This is absolutely outrageous and unacceptable, when we are providing billions of dollars in tax breaks to profitable corporations, we would burden the veterans in our country by increasing the copay for their medications by 250 percent.

This House should support my bill, H.R. 2820, which would freeze the copay for 5 years at its \$2 per prescription level.

THANKING THOSE SERVING AND WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE MILITARY

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it has been quoted as saying that war is hell. We mourn the reported deaths of our soldiers in Afghanistan. We know the risks of combat. We know that wars are fought and won on the battlefield, and it is only on the rarest of occasion that in warfare we do not lose some of our own.

The military accepts these risks, the military and our government. We do not like it, but it is reality. To serve and protect, that is what they do. Duty, honor, country. Our liberty is paid for by the blood of our sons and daughters.