

Mr. Speaker, the tragic events of September 11 have compelled this great country of ours to join efforts and resources in healing the wounds and rebuilding lives. Our love for America was never more evident than in the days and months subsequent to September 11. Flags are flown daily even embroidered on clothing. We cannot stop showing our love for our country.

Yet expressing our deep affections for our country and what we have had to endure, must include ALL Americans. It must not be exclusionary, but rather include all races, creeds, gender, and sexual orientation.

When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence he stated that, "We hold these truths to be self evident that all Men Are created Equal." Women, African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Jewish Americans have been too often historically, culturally, and prospectively excluded from inclusion in that declaration.

President Abraham Lincoln stated so eloquently in his Gettysburg Address, "Our Nation must struggle . . . in order to create a more perfect union". The problem with our struggle today is our judiciary system's inability to effectively address violent acts of hate crime in our society. It is particularly difficult because there is no current law that makes a hate crime a federal offense. We need Hate Crimes legislation to "create a more perfect union."

Early in 1987, a public controversy developed between William Bradford Reynolds, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, and prominent civil rights advocates. Reynolds stated that racial violence was not increasing, basing his assertion on informal surveys of Federal prosecutors and the number of civil rights complaints being filed with the Justice Department. Civil rights advocates asserted the contrary, that racial violence was in fact increasing, basing their assertions on data supplied by the Justice Department's own Community Relations Service, which reportedly indicated a rise from 99 racial incidents in 1980 to 276 in 1986.

This controversy ultimately led to the passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act, enacted April 23, 1990. This law required the FBI to collect, compile, and publish statistics on hate motivated crime. Since then, Federal legislation has moved beyond data collection on the incidence of hate crime activity, to include new provisions requiring stiffer penalties for bias-motivated criminal activity. Also, it has designated a new category of individuals, to include those with disabilities.

According to the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, a hate crime is defined as acts which individuals are victimized because of their "race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity." In this statute, hate crimes are those in which "the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.

But despite our historical progress and despite our laws, how far have we really come? Just when we thought that our Nation had built a foundation for peace and harmony, three attackers in a small town in Texas, shattered the illusion with an atrocity beyond imagination. The so-called "dragging" murder DEFIES

the very fabric of the moral code that all Americans innately support. The moment that Mr. Byrd's tormentors chained his body against the cold, lifeless metal of their truck, they became something savage, something inhuman, and the very embodiment of hate criminals.

African-Americans have historically been the most frequent targets of hate violence in the United States, and they are among its principal victims today in many states. From lynching to cross-burning, and church-burnings, antiblack violence has been, and still remains, the prototypical hate crime—an action intended not simply to injure individuals but to intimidate an entire group of people. Hate crimes against African-Americans impact upon the entire society not only for the hurt they cause, but for the tragic history they recall and perpetuate.

In March of 1997, Leonard Clark, a 13-year-old African-American teenager was riding his bicycle home one day in Chicago, when he was accosted and brutally beaten by three white teenagers. The perpetrators have been charged with attempted murder, aggravated battery and Hate Crimes under Illinois state law. However, the irony in this case is that one of the key witnesses to the beating remains missing. A federal hate crimes law would allow for the F.B.I.'s full involvement in this case, thereby increasing the chances of capture, and thus, justice.

In my Congressional District in Houston in 1995, Fred Mangione, a homosexual, was stabbed to death, and his companion was brutally assaulted. The two men who were charged with Mangione's murder, claimed to be members of the "German Peace Corps," which has been characterized in media reports as a neo-Nazi organization based in California. This crime did not meet the State of Texas' threshold for trial as a capital offense, because the murder did not occur during the commission of a rape or robbery.

In recent years, attacks upon gays and lesbians are increasing in number and in severity. During 1995, 2,212 attacks on lesbians and gay men were documented—an 8% increase of the previous year.

There have also been numerous attacks against Jews, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Fortunately, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act would protect these groups from targeted attacks because they are members of these groups.

Examination of hate crimes statistics sadly reveals that Mr. Byrd's murder was not an isolated incident. The FBI releases the totals each year for hate crimes reported by state and local law enforcement agencies around the country based on race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity. These national totals have fluctuated—6,918 in 1992, 7,587 in 1993, 5,852 in 1994, 7,947 in 1995, and 8,759 bias-motivated criminal incidents reported in 1996. Of the 8,759 incidents, 5,396 were motivated by racial bias; 1,401 by religious bias; 1,016 by sexual-orientation bias; and 940 by ethnicity/national origin bias.

A Hate Crimes Prevention Act would send a message that perpetrators of serious, violent hate crimes will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Hate crimes that cause death or bodily injury because of prejudice should be investigated federally, regardless of whether the victim was exercising a federally protected right.

It is time for the Congress to act. Violence based on prejudice is a matter of national con-

cern. Federal prosecutors should be empowered to punish if the states are unable or unwilling to do so.

OPPOSING FAST TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMMONS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I joined a number of my colleagues from the House and leaders of the most influential environmental groups in the United States to express opposition to so-called Fast Track, granting the President Trade Promotion Authority. The presence of this coalition highlighted quite impressively the solidarity of the environmental community on this critical vote.

Another thing that underscores the solidarity of the environmental community against the Thomas bill is the stern warning issued by the League of Conservation Voters that it will likely score this vote. The LCV takes its scoring seriously and to ensure balance in its ratings only scores environmental votes for which there is absolute unanimity in the environmental community. The League of Conservation Voters has never before scored a trade vote. That means the environmental community has never been so focused on and so unanimously supportive of and so involved in a trade vote in this country's history.

Why is there such urgency in the environmental community in opposition to the Thomas Fast Track proposal? Because this bill would do nothing, would do nothing to prevent countries from lowering their environmental standards to gain unfair trade advantages. It would do nothing to require that the environmental provisions be included in the core text of our trade agreements, because it would do nothing to ensure that the environmental provisions in future trade agreements are enforceable by sanctions.

Instead, it would transfer the burden to consumers and to regulators to prove that the science underlying domestic regulation is beyond dispute, resulting in a downwards harmonization of our environmental laws, a rollback of environmental laws, a weakening of environmental regulation. It would encourage Western companies to build manufacturing plants in countries with the least stringent environmental laws, and, as a result, cost skilled American workers good-paying jobs.

It would allow future trade agreements to include provisions like NAFTA's chapter 11, encouraging so-called regulatory tax claims by foreign companies and threatening hard-won democratically enacted laws and regulations that protect our natural resources.

This investor-state relationship cast by chapter 11 of the North American

Free Trade Agreement exemplifies the greatest imaginable abuse of our democratic principles. It allows private corporations to sue a sovereign government and overturn domestic health and safety laws.

Think about that for a minute. A country can pass a law that that country's democratically elected legislative body contends, believes, will in fact help the environment and promote public health. A company in another country, a privately owned large corporation in another country, can go to court and sue the government, the democratically elected government, even force that democratically elected government to repeal its environmental law to weaken its public health regulations.

U.S. Trade Representative Bob Zoellick, a Bush appointee, is committed to including those same anti-consumer, anti-environmental, anti-public health, anti-combat-bioterrorism provisions in Fast Track. Under this provision, not only can laws be overturned, but taxpayers of the subject nation can be liable for damages if a NAFTA tribunal rules that a law or regulation causes an unfair barrier to free trade.

That sounds pretty outrageous. It makes one incredulous. It sounds like it could not happen, but it actually happened. When Canada passed a law to promote clean air in automobile emissions, Canada's public health community said this is important to fight cancer in Canada. A U.S. company sued Canada in a NAFTA tribunal. The U.S. company won the case against Canada, which had passed a public law protecting the public health. Canada had to repeal its public health law. Canada had to pay this American company \$13 million.

Sometimes it will be against Canada and a democratic law there, sometimes it will be against the United States and a public law here, sometimes against Mexico, France, Germany or wherever.

I am joined today by my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR). The three of us worked many years ago in opposition to NAFTA, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) in those days, as he has continued to, has led the opposition to these agreements.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

Mr. STRICKLAND. I would like to say to my friend from Ohio that as I am standing here listening to what you are saying, it causes me to think there are some in this Chamber who are willing to relinquish their responsibilities to protect the ability of this country to make sovereign decisions in the best interests of the people that we were elected to represent.

I mean, to think that we in this body as representatives of the people could come together in a deliberative process, make a decision that we collectively feel is in the best interests of the

health and safety of our Nation, and then to have entered into an agreement that would allow a for-profit foreign corporation to bring suit against our government based on their objections to what we think is best for the United States of America, it seems to me if we were to allow that we are relinquishing our constitutional responsibilities.

Who are we responsible for representing and protecting, some foreign national company, a multinational company with no particular allegiance to any country, any democratic principles, any form of government, but whose bottom line is in fact profit? It just seems almost unbelievable to me that we would ever allow that to happen. It is an unconscionable thing. It is difficult to even contemplate that this government would ever permit that.

What the gentleman says, I assume, is an accurate interpretation of what the circumstances would be.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Even people that support Trade Promotion Authority acknowledge that that is what that provision does. When it was put into NAFTA in 1993, when this Congress in a very narrow vote passed NAFTA in November of that year, people did not quite understand that provision.

That provision was sold to the Congress and to the American public. Even though the three of us all voted against NAFTA that are talking this evening, this afternoon, that provision was sold to protect American investors in Mexico where the government might appropriate or take their properties.

But in fact it is clear that the way that has worked is time after time after time corporations have sued foreign governments, in this case Canada, Mexico, the United States, a corporation in one of the three countries has sued a government in one of the other two, and each time, in almost every case, the government has lost, the government which passed these laws to protect in most cases the public health, sometimes the environment, sometimes consumer protection law, but laws that were passed by those governments were repealed. It is almost so unbelievable that you cannot believe that this Congress would do it.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I was just thinking very recently, in fact, just a few days ago, we were able to get an amendment in the defense bill that would require that any steel used in the military apparatus that would be purchased with funds in that bill would have to be American-made steel.

I remember as we were discussing and debating that possibility, there were those who said, well, this would be acceptable, because there is an exemption for these kinds of decisions that relate specifically to national security. But what the gentleman is saying, I believe, is that in most cases there could be a decision made by this House of Representatives, the Senate of the United States, legislation signed into law by the President, and if it was interpreted to be in violation of these

trade agreements as providing perhaps protections to our citizens that under the international trade laws would be deemed inappropriate or inconsistent with those laws, that there could actually be legal action taken against our government by a foreign corporation to try to force a change in the domestic law of this land. Is that a correct interpretation?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. The correct interpretation in this case, it is very possible that a steel company in Mexico or Canada might sue the U.S. Government for passing a provision like that, saying that is an unfair trade practice, and might be able to get the NAFTA tribunal, the three-judge panel, to overturn U.S. law.

□ 1800

One of the reasons they do that and one of the reasons these three-judge panels have decided against public health laws, against environmental protections passed by a majority of this House and Senate and signed by the President, or consumer protection or any of those laws, is because of the nature of those three-judge tribunals, those panels. They are made up of trade lawyers, not public health experts, not consumer protection experts, not environmental experts. They are made up of trade lawyers.

They meet behind closed doors. They do not accept petitions or testimony from third parties, and they then can turn around and repeal a sovereign nation, as we are, as Mexico is, as Canada is. They can repeal a sovereign nation's public health and environmental laws.

So when we have these panels made up of trade lawyers who typically sit in downtown offices and rule on trade issues and decide the arcane minutia of trade issues but do not have any real expertise or any real interest in environment or public health issues and policy and laws, we lose time after time after time. We have lost public health laws and environmental laws repeatedly in the World Trade Organization with those same secret panels making those decisions. We do not know anything about the proceedings and, all of a sudden, it is in the paper. We get a notice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR).

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, to follow up on this very good discussion on sovereignty here, it gets to not only the question of multinational corporations, foreign corporations in the example that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) gave, but there is also a taking away of local units of government's power and State units of government's power.

For instance, we have a particular problem in my State of Michigan with trash, garbage, coming in from Canada. Toronto has decided that it is much easier, more economical, less hassle, to bury all of their waste in Wayne County, Michigan, which is the county the City of Detroit is located in. So they

haul their garbage across the Ambassador Bridge, the Bluewater Bridge in my area up in Port Huron. We have a couple hundred trucks a day that come across there with garbage, and God knows what is inside these facilities, and they take it to a dump, and they dump it there.

Now, let us assume that we try to overturn the basic law of this country which says that garbage companies are free to move garbage anywhere they want to vis-a-vis the Interstate Commerce Clause of the Constitution. There was a court ruling that was made in 1992, I believe, on the Fort Gratiot landfill case which went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

If we decided in this institution or the State of Michigan decided in their legislature to say, no, you cannot do that, you cannot bring your garbage and make Michigan a dumping ground, that company or those companies, those trash haulers, those garbage companies could go to court and say, well, wait a minute. This is an impediment on free trade. This is an impediment of moving commerce. And those kinds of panels that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) just alluded to could make the decision that what we do here or what they do in the State of Michigan is irrelevant, because it impedes trade.

Now, there are hundreds of U.S. laws on the environment, as the gentleman pointed out, on food safety, on anti-trust, on just laws that deal with people expressing themselves at the local level about a policy on human rights that they may object to, which may be taking place in a regime that is persecuting its people abroad that could be struck down as a result of empowering international panels and taking away the power from this institution, local and State governments.

So this is real serious stuff, and it goes way beyond just dollars and cents in trade. We are talking, as the gentleman pointed out, about food safety, health care, human rights, antitrust, labor law. You name it. It is all kind of wrapped up here.

If I could make one other point and then yield back to those who have the time, that is the broader issue here of relinquishing our power as a Nation and as a State and as governments. But the more internal debate to that is what this institution, this U.S. House of Representatives is doing in terms of receding from the powers that the Constitution gives us in Article I, Section 8, which is the power to deal with trade laws. We are handing that over to the executive branch. It is very, very disturbing, the change in the balance of power switching over to the executive branch and to corporate America, basically, here. That is what is going on.

This may seem a little arcane to people, a little not too clear because of its legalistic implications and language, but I can assure my colleagues that it gets right back down to whether or not we are going to have garbage buried in

our backyard or out our window, or whether or not we are going to be able to go to the supermarket and get food that we are assured is going to be safe for us to feed our families.

I mean, it gets down to some really basic things here. We are trying to bring the argument and trying to make the American people see that under the cloak or the disguise of this legalese debate we are having here on "fast track," that it is going to affect everybody in this country in a dramatic way.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for raising the issue.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, none of the three of us is a lawyer; and we are explaining, in a sense, a legal procedure here that really is pretty simple. It is a question of increasing corporate powers by turning over our sovereignty, turning over our ability to make democratic determinations, whether it is where a community puts its trash, whether it is a food safety law, whether it is a clean air regulation, whether it is a public health program. We are saying in these agreements that we will cede power from a democratic government to a private corporation.

Mr. Speaker, when we come to this institution, we have seen this kind of corporate power in this institution. There is not much doubt that corporations wield huge amounts of power when we try to pass strong food safety laws, we try to pass good public health laws, clean air laws, bioterrorism laws, protections for our food supply, labor standards, minimum wage. Whenever we try to pass a bill like that, it is always met with huge resistance from the largest corporations in the country, the largest corporations in the world. So we, in many cases, overcome that resistance and do what is right for the public.

I wear this lapel pin which symbolizes a lot of things to me. It is a canary in a birdcage. One hundred years ago the miners used to take a canary down in the mines in a birdcage, and if the canary died, the miners they had to get out of the mine. It was the only protection they had. The government did nothing to help them.

In these 100 years, when 100 years ago the average child born in this country could live to be about 47 in terms of the average, in those 100 years this institution has passed minimum wage laws, safe drinking water, pure food laws, Medicare, Social Security, clean air laws, worker protections, mine safety. We have done all of those things against great resistance from the wealthiest, most privileged people in society. We have been able to do that in this institution.

Now, even when we do that, we are going to see corporations in one country try to overturn the laws we have done. So we passed them with great difficulty against huge campaign contribution dollars and lobbying and all of the special interest groups that fight

progressive, good government that helps the public, and then these groups turn around now, these big companies, and they sue democratic governments to stop, to overturn their environmental laws and weaken their food safety laws and hurt their labor laws and try to devastate so many of the protections that we have been able to accomplish as a society, with people pushing their Congress to do the right thing.

Now some faceless bureaucrats on a trade panel, a NAFTA tribunal can, out of the public light, in a back room, simply wipe away those kinds of environmental laws.

Mr. BONIOR. And then, Mr. Speaker, go to the lowest standard, go to the lowest standard. That is what they are after. They want to take us back to where we were when people used to take canaries down in a birdcage. They go to the lowest standard, and the lowest standard is often in the developing world.

It is in countries that are trying to develop a body of law but cannot get there because of the international corporate pressure not to go there, to keep wages low, to keep standards low. They cannot get there because labor unions cannot form because of that same kind of pressure. They cannot get to our standard.

So because they cannot get to our standards because of institutional pressures within their own country, these corporate entities now have bonded together with them and are trying to bring down our standard here.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), we are joined by three other Democrats, and they are the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL); the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE); and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

Let me yield to the gentleman from Ohio, and then the rest can join in.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. But I think it is important for those who are listening to us to understand why we are here tonight, and it is because we are going to be called upon tomorrow to cast a vote, and we are going to cast a vote that will protect the sovereignty of our Nation, or we will cast a vote that potentially will turn over all the decision-making that is important to all of the multiple millions of people that we collectively represent to this three-panel assemblage.

Now, I would like to ask the gentlewoman from Texas, and I think I know the answer, but which American citizens are able to vote and select any of those three persons that would be in a position to make decisions regarding the health and safety and security of this Nation? Is any American citizen ever going to be in a position to cast a vote to select these persons who are going to be making decisions for all Americans?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, before the gentlewoman from Texas answers, here is an additional question. Is anybody even going to know the names of the people that sit on that panel?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, obviously, absolutely not. And as the gentleman makes that point, the people's House, the representatives that come to the people's House, are themselves barred from even speaking on behalf of the people for having any oversight into this kind of legislative initiative. So I see no opportunity for the people to speak about this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to further the point of the distinguished gentleman, because I think it is a very valid point. I rise to suggest to my colleagues in a bipartisan manner that a far better approach would have been if we had accepted both the offer and the interest some years back of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY). I do not come to the floor to quote or to put words in the gentleman's mouth at all, but I do remember some years back when these discussions were coming about and there was some interest to be able to hear the vital points that labor had to offer about how we can truly have the working people's trade bill. I believe that he had some very meritorious points that would have allowed us, even to this point, to come together with a bill that would have answered many of the concerns that are totally ignored in H.R. 3005, which is the Thomas bill.

That is, if I can point out, number one, there are no labor standards whatsoever. Right now in my district I have 4,000 people laid off by one of our very vital companies. We may have a total of 10,000. I would venture to say that those constituents are really looking for jobs right here, and their priorities are more about how they are going to survive over the holiday season.

I have taken trade on a case-by-case basis, looking to see opportunities where we could work together. In this instance, I have higher priorities, and that is to be able to assist those individuals in finding jobs, keeping jobs, and providing for their families.

Tomorrow we are going to be asked, rather than dealing with those needs, the unemployment needs of America, to put forward a bill that disallows any type of labor standards so that countries with poor labor standards will maintain those standards; and, in fact, under the present bill that we have, the underlying bill, countries with poor labor standards are not required to have or implement any of the five core standards. So no labor standards whatsoever. That suggests to me that, rather than benefit from jobs being generated, we will lose by jobs being lost to other places, because someone will try invariably to avoid following any labor standards.

Might I also say that, in talking to many corporations, I have heard them saying that we wish we could have

worked in a bipartisan way. We wish we could have had more people at the table. As it relates to the environment, we are finding out that there is no addressing of the environment in the Thomas bill.

□ 1815

There are no legal or technical incentives to make sure we strengthen the environmental laws and regulations.

Then I would like to speak to, as I sort of draw to a close, the idea of the point that the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) made; that is regarding the oversight, the voice of the people, the people's House being able to speak.

With a narrow three-person body, there is no opportunity in the bill that will be on the floor tomorrow for us to have congressional oversight, for there to be an involvement of the people's voice; for the voters who have voted for those in this body and elsewhere to be able to have oversight over whether or not human rights is being protected, whether or not we are using child labor, whether or not we are using slave labor.

And believe me, Mr. Speaker, it exists. In Afghanistan, children are making bricks who are 8 years old and 7 years old. As we went to Bangladesh and other places around the world, there is child labor. We are trying to work against that.

However, the point is if Congress has no oversight, and we have a small body that does not have to listen to us, then who is to say that these violations will not be promoted?

I am going to vote for the Rangel substitute because I believe we have ways of making a difference, but I am ashamed that we would put forward legislation like this that does not answer the question of labor, working with those who believe working people deserve a decent place to work; and does not address the environment, because I am shamed that if I have a minimal amount of a good quality of life here in America, that I would put on others a devil-may-care attitude: Who cares about how you function and how you live?

Finally, I would say that we who have been elected by the people of this great Nation, who cast their vote for us to go to the people's body, are totally blocked and excluded from any oversight to protect the values of the people who we represent, from human rights to the rights of children to the rights of women to the fairness in the judicial system or court system. None of that comes to us now. We just abdicate our responsibilities. I believe that we cannot do that and that we must stand up and be heard.

I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for his untiring work on this issue, bringing to the people the point that none of us coming from our districts disown our business communities. We work with them; and we do a lot for them, I believe, in many,

many different aspects, because they are our communities.

But we cannot disown our values tonight and tomorrow, and we must be able to say that the two of those could have come together if we would have had a process where all of our voices could have been heard.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman of Houston, Texas, who always articulates so well her views on this and so many other things.

When we talked about articulating our values and representing those values, I think about what the President's Trade Representative, Robert Zoellick, has been saying the last month or so.

He has been really saying that those of us, whether it is the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), any of us in this institution, Republicans and Democrats alike, who oppose this trade agreement, he really has questioned our commitment to American values and whether we want to join the antiterrorism movement.

In fact, when one supports the position we have taken against these trade agreements, we in fact are supporting American values, because American values are things like free elections and believing in the Constitution and supporting workers around the world, and building a better environment and more consumer safety and food safety, and all of that.

That is why it is too bad that their campaign in support of this and their arm-twisting, especially in the last 72 hours, has taken on a tone of "you are either with us or against us; you are either against terrorism or you are for terrorism, or you are against American values or for American values."

We are joined by two other people. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is a freshman member who has devoted her entire career to fighting for social justice. The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) raised some very important constitutional questions of sovereignty that we touched on and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) touched on earlier, all four of us.

He has really attracted a lot of interest in his views of the Constitution and why this Trade Promotion Authority really does undercut our constitutional provisions and sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. It is an honor to be here tonight to talk about this very important issue, one that hits home directly for me.

As a former State Senator in California, back in 1995 I had the dubious distinction of representing a district where it was found that 72 Thai women workers were held hostage, slave labor here in our own country, 72 women.

Some had been there for 7 years. Some were not paid overtime. Some were not even paid minimum wage.

My whole opinion on this matter is that if we do not have enough support here in our own borders at times, how can we also, with all honesty and integrity, go out and expect other countries that have records that are much more egregious than ours to meet these standards that we want to set, that the American public wants to set?

I can tell Members firsthand how difficult it is trying to secure rights for workers now, for immigrant workers in our own country, along the border and in East Los Angeles, and the city of El Monte in the San Gabriel Valley, which I represent, that people are even being paid minimum wage, and they are sometimes not allowed to bargain or join a union.

I know in Mexico and other parts of Central America and South America and other parts of the world, people are not allowed to join a union. In fact, they are tortured, they are harassed, they are told why they cannot and that they will be fired and they will lose their jobs and they will go hungry.

These are the kinds of things that the public should know.

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield for a comment, the gentlewoman from California has brought up a very important point. Is it not ironic that the very people we invite to our shores, "Give us your tired, your hungry," come here from countries that we are now transporting jobs to?

We are talking out of both sides of our mouth, and the gentlewoman from California has to deal with it, as many of us on both sides of the aisle have to deal with unemployment problems. It is growing. We are losing our manufacturing base.

It just struck me when the gentlewoman was speaking, that very example, that very anecdotal story the gentlewoman is presenting to America, and her heart and sincerity are in it, that we are talking out of both sides of our mouths and inviting people here and then transporting jobs to their countries. They are needed here first. We know our international responsibilities.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I just want to encourage the public to know that many of us here in Congress do want to have this very serious debate, but we have been left out. In fact, we have been left out all the time. We are losing jobs. In my district, we are looking at unemployment rates of over 9 percent.

I am going to talk about that later on this evening. But the fact of the matter is that the people we are inspiring here in our country to support us, to stick with us, we are telling them one thing and we are doing another. Our actions are showing them that we do not care about the quality of life for our families here.

We have to make a statement, and I am proud to be here to say that we can-

not go home and turn our backs on working families. Working families want to know that we are going to take care not only of the domestic front here but also those relationships that we want to set across the country.

I know that in Tijuana, for example, there is a Hyundai factory along the border there. People tried to organize there, some Mexican workers. They were told not to worry, they will get their opportunity. Women and men were stuck in a situation there that was very unsafe. There were pools of water, electrical lines running, and no safety protections whatsoever. These people were putting their lives at risk to build automobiles that were going to be shipped all over the world and probably right here in our own home States.

I know if people in my district knew the conditions that other people were being forced to work under, they would think twice. And nobody talks about that.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, one interesting thing that my friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS), said, people who are supporting these trade agreements said if we do these trade agreements, it is going to lift up living standards in Mexico and in China, and the Chinese will be freer and democracy will break out, and all of that.

There is no evidence of that in China. In fact, it is every bit as oppressive and repressive a regime as it was 3 or 4 years ago, or 2 years ago when the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL) and I worked against giving China most favored nation trading privileges.

I want to briefly tell a story in line of what the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) told.

About 4 years ago, when Fast Track was defeated in this body, and it has been defeated twice in the last 4 years, and will be again tomorrow, I went down to sort of look at how NAFTA worked. NAFTA had been in effect 4 or 5 years then. I wanted to get a picture of the future, and to put a human face on trade and on NAFTA, and on what we had to look forward to if we passed Fast Track.

I went to a home of a husband and wife, and it was nothing; you could not describe it as anything else but a shack maybe 20 feet by 20 feet, with dirt floors, no running water, no electricity.

The husband worked at General Electric, an American company, and the wife worked at General Electric. They each made 90 cents an hour. There were dirt floors, no running water, no electricity. When it rained, the floor turned to mud. This was just 3 miles from the United States of America. If they had been on our side of the border, they would be making \$15, \$17 an hour, perhaps, with good health care benefits, a retirement package, in all likelihood. But on the Mexican side of the

border they were making 90 cents an hour.

They were almost in the shadow of the factory where they worked. When one looks at one of these shacks or neighborhoods in these so-called colonias, we see ditches separating some of the shacks with some sort of effluent running through them. It could have been industrial waste, human waste, who knows. Children are playing nearby.

The American Medical Association calls the border a pool of infectious diseases. They say it has the worst health conditions probably in the whole western hemisphere.

These workers are working 10 hours a day, 6 days a week and cannot afford to have any kind of a decent lifestyle. They work in these wonderfully modern plants, in many cases; but they do not share in the wealth they create. They create this wealth for General Electric, and they do not share in the wealth they create.

In Ohio, in New Jersey, in California, workers help to create wealth for their employer and share in that wealth. They get something for that. They get a decent living standard. They can send their kids to college, buy a car, or buy a house.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL).

Mr. PASCARELL. I am listening to my brothers and sisters here, and I have listened to folks on both sides of the aisle. I was just as opposed to this when President Clinton was there, and I am an equal opportunity opposer right now.

I want to make very clear to everybody, and particularly to those who stood on this floor and talked about "Buy America," well, we hope there are items that are manufactured in this country that we can buy. We are losing our wherewithal. People earned their identity when they came to this country and worked with their hands to produce products.

This is a critical vote tomorrow, one that between 10 and 20 of us will decide, in the final analysis.

Every poll, and the gentleman from Ohio I think will support what I am going to say, every poll indicates the American people do not want to transfer the powers in the Constitution from the House of Representatives, from the Senate, to the executive branch.

I can cite four or five different ways in which the power of the Congress has been eroded over the past 20 years. This is not the way to do it. So if Members want to buy American, they have to have something to buy. There needs to be something to produce, to be produced.

Then, there are those who want to try to sway, in the final hours, this vote. They say, What we are going to do is make sure that we have trade adjustment assistance; or, in other words, it may not be all that good, but what we will do is we will have some money over here; and, by the way, it is authorized, not appropriated, not appropriated; but they say, we will have

some money over here to help those that are unemployed. It has not worked in the past, and we know how many jobs have been lost under NAFTA.

There are two things, two things, in the final hours of this great debate, with respect to all sides here, two motivating forces of the opposition, or those supporting giving the President this sole power and leaving us out, regardless of what words they put in there: stimulus and national security, stimulus and national security.

They have sent some of the first-line troops out to talk about national security, that this is important: if the President does not have Fast Track, we cannot defend America.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. We have been talking among ourselves in a bipartisan way about the crisis facing the steel industry in this country. The President himself has said that maintaining a domestic steel industry is a national security issue. I believe it is. How can we produce the military hardware we need if we do not have steel that is produced domestically, without having to rely on foreign steel?

□ 1830

These are serious matters. And the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) mentioned transferring our authority, the House and Senate authority, to the executive branch. What really troubles me is then the executive branch transferring that authority to some international body of unelected representatives, so that the American people have no representation, and I think that is what we are facing tomorrow, is the possibility of taking an action which can further erode the sovereignty of this Nation. I think that is a gross mismanagement of the constitutional responsibilities that we took upon ourselves when we stood for an election in this House of Representatives.

Mr. PASCRELL. I might add that there is no real evidence to back up the contention that this is an economic stimulus. In fact, if all of the data are in, whether we are talking about the balance of trade, which is now \$435 billion, no one wants to address that. The relationship between that balance of trade and what goes on in the economy in the United States is profound, is profound.

There is no real evidence that points out what the President's press secretary said on Monday. He said, the President believes that Trade Promotion Authority is the stimulus in and of itself to keep the economy growing.

Well, first of all, Fast Track is necessary for the administration on two fronts, the World Trade Organization and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas, FTAA. They are both

long-term goals that are not going to bring any stimulation to this economy over the next 2 or 3 years. We are only kidding ourselves.

In terms of the WTO, the World Trade Organization, disappointed that this body has progressed to where it should be, within this Fast Track bill there is nothing we can do about that either, nothing. The WTO can be a body that advances the ball on such issues as labor and the environment but only if we force the issue, and I might add, over 25 years we have forced the issue on workers rights and environmental protections to no gain, to no gain. It has been talk, it has been cheap, and it has been profuse, but it has not brought a change about in our trade policies whatsoever.

The high American standards that are commonplace worldwide if we push this issue, we know that other countries do not have the labor standards that we have and environmental standards. We understand that. We understand that. We are not minimizing other nations. What we are saying is we cannot be foolish in the face of what we want to negotiate. Let us have reciprocal trade agreements, and we have had reciprocal trade agreements, where we, on a piece of paper, agree that we are going to respect the rights of other nations to decide their own fate.

Why should we keep our rates low while other nations will not allow our goods in? And, in many cases, the people in those countries cannot afford our goods and services, and we are sacrificing, we are sacrificing the brothers' and sisters' jobs in this country.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Reclaiming my time, during the NAFTA debate in 1993, we stood in this hall, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) and I, for much of the summer doing discussions like this and into the fall and into November. And when the vote was held, one of the things the other side always said was NAFTA will create jobs. It will be an economic stimulus, if you will. It will right our trade imbalance.

Our trade imbalance in 1994 when NAFTA took effect in January of that year was \$182 billion. That meant that we imported \$182 billion more worth of goods than we exported. The NAFTA promoters and the free traders and the hot-shot Harvard economists and the President and the former secretaries of state and the newspaper editors, CEOs, all said this will get fixed.

Do my colleagues know what the trade deficit that was just announced is? \$439 billion. That is billion with a B, and that is a \$250 billion growth in trade deficit. What that means, according to President Bush, Sr., Papa Bush, he said, every billion dollars of trade, either deficit or surplus, represented between 19,000 and 20,000 jobs. So if you have a billion dollar trade deficit, that means you lost 20,000 jobs to overseas. If you have a billion dollar trade surplus, then you gained 19, 20,000 jobs. Well, a \$250 billion trade deficit, it went from \$250 billion worse than it was, means 5 million jobs.

Those are generally industrial jobs. They are well-paying jobs. They are jobs that pay benefits. They are jobs where people pay into Social Security, a fund that, because of Republican tax cuts, is now more in jeopardy than ever before. They pay into Medicare, a fund that is in jeopardy because of Republicans bailing out insurance companies. And look where we are when we pass these kinds of trade policies. It is simply not working when we have those kinds of trade deficits to get worse and worse.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for yielding.

The gentleman's discussion of the imbalance in our trade reminds me of a friend that I had some years ago who frequently played the Ohio lottery. He would put 50 or more dollars every week into the Ohio lottery, and, occasionally, he would win \$10 or \$20 or \$50. And, guess what, he was very free in telling everyone, oh, I hit the lottery. He was happy that he got his \$50, but he seemed to have forgotten that week after week after week he had lost 50 or more dollars.

That is the way we talk about the trade situation here. The administration and those who are for Fast Track will say, oh, since NAFTA we send more agricultural products to Mexico. They do not want to talk about the flood of products that are coming in from Mexico and from other countries.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. As living standards continue to go down in Mexico, I would add.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Absolutely. They want to talk about the modest increase in exports, but they do not want to talk about the multiple thousands of jobs that have been lost as a result of the flooding of imports.

As we go to the shopping malls to buy our holiday gifts, it is very, very difficult, as my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), had said, it is very difficult, impossible to find a television that has been constructed and built in this country. It is very difficult to find many products that are American made, and that is because we are being flooded by cheap imports, built in some cases by slave labor, and in countries that are absolutely opposed to our way of life, to our democratic institutions, and yet we continue to do this.

It is beyond belief that we could be contemplating doing tomorrow what some want to do.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman yield?

Mr. STRICKLAND. I absolutely would yield.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, just to touch briefly and say, on NAFTA and what is happening in Mexico, there is a big discussion about the rain forest and the decimation of the rain forest in

Mexico and South America. There is a big issue regarding timber coming into this country and people from the Mexican side that are saying we are also losing our well-being and our livelihood because we are forced by big corporations to cut down the timber and then send it here and into other parts of the world.

We are talking about erosion of our environment. We are talking about degrading the quality of life for Mexicans as well.

So who is winning? The big corporations, the big factories. The folks that run those operations do not live there. They live in the ivory tower, but they are taking and reaping some of the resources, the natural resources that currently exist in that country.

I can tell my colleagues that Mexico still has a long way to go in terms of providing protections for the working class people there that are suffering every single day and not seeing any kind of return on their work.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Let me shift for a moment to an issue that we have all talked about before, and I would like the last 10 minutes or so to discuss for a moment and that is the issue of food safety. We see in this country 5,000 people a year die from food-borne illness, not nearly all of them from imported fruits and vegetables, but certainly there is a problem in our food inspection in this country, too, but some significant amount comes from that. We see about 800,000 Americans get sick a year. About 1/10th that many get hospitalized from food-borne illnesses.

Yesterday, Dr. Mohammad Akhter, the top public health official in this country, who is the executive director of the American Public Health Association, was talking about Fast Track. And he said that Trade Promotion Authority on which we will vote tomorrow, he said that we can count on the fact that if we pass Trade Promotion Authority and more trade agreements like this we will see more food come across the border and into this country by truck and plane and train and all, more food come into this country that is not inspected. He said we will see more infectious disease outbreaks. We will see more illness, food-borne illness. We will see more deaths. We will see more hospitalizations.

When we consider that when NAFTA passed, 8 percent of fruits and vegetables in this country that we, 8 percent of the imported fruits and vegetables in this country were inspected. Today, it is 1/10th that number. It is .7 percent, 7/10s of 1 percent. That means for every 140 crates of broccoli that come across the border into this country, one crate is inspected. For every 140 crates of peaches, one crate is inspected.

I have stood at the border in Laredo, Nuevo Laredo in the Texas-Mexican border; and I have seen the FDA, the way that they examine broccoli when it comes in. They do not have high-tech equipment there. They cannot get immediate reads on antimicrobial con-

taminants, on pesticide residues, on anything like that. They simply take two bunches of broccoli, slam them down in a steel crate and look for any insects that might come out, dead or alive. If live insects come out they spray the truckload. Other than that, the products move on.

We have not put the kind of equipment at the border to detect antimicrobial contaminants. We have not put at the border facilities and equipment to be able to detect pesticide residues, and we know that there are pesticide residues on there because pesticides that are illegal to use in the United States are still manufactured here and sold to developing countries, put on fields and sent back into the United States.

We are not protecting the American people. We pass Trade Promotion Authority, according to Dr. Akhter, the top public health official in the United States, we are asking for more food-borne illnesses, more deaths and more hospitalizations. And we owe it to this country, to people that go to grocery stores, to all of us that eat at our kitchen table and go to restaurants and eat fresh produce coming in from other countries in the world, we owe it to them to do a much better job on this.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I believe when an American consumer goes to a supermarket to buy food or fresh produce they have a right to know where that food comes from, and I believe we need labelling of country of origin. I believe American consumers, if they are given a choice, will most of the time choose to buy products that are grown and manufactured in our country. But the fact is they do not have a choice because they are deprived of that necessary information, and one of the things they would like to see done is to require that the country of origin be made available to the consumer. Then the consumer can choose. But without that information the consumer is deprived of the opportunity of making the choice to buy the American-produced food or the American-produced product.

Why should we keep that information from the American consumer? It just does not seem reasonable to me that this House would not take action to provide this information so that the American consumer can be informed.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. At the same time, we have the ability to raise standards around the world. We have a choice tomorrow when we vote for or against Trade Promotion Authority, so-called Fast Track, we can continue to dismantle our standards, to weaken our truck safety laws, to weaken our food safety laws, to lower our environmental standards, to dismantle our safety in the workplace standards. We can vote that way or we can cast a vote

against Trade Promotion Authority and begin to lift up food safety standards for ourselves and for the rest of the world and begin to lift up truck safety standards, to begin to lift up environmental standards.

Whether it is pesticides, whether it is environmental laws, we can do better. Why should we say to an American corporation that goes to the Mexican border on the Mexican side, if you are going to produce cars in that country you are going to follow the same laws. In terms of what you dump into the sewers, what you put into the air, whether you pollute the environment, you are going to follow the same laws that you do in the United States. How about when you go into Mexico and build cars? Then you are going to follow the same worker safety protection laws that you do in this country.

It is outrageous that these American companies go there. They brag about how green they are in the United States and how well they treat their workers. They go to a developing country. They do not treat them well at all.

I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I am going to bring up a sore subject some of us may not like, but let me bring it up anyway, because this is it. This is the vote tomorrow, and I am very concerned about members of my own party, to be very honest with you, and I respect all persuasions within my own party, regardless of where they fall on the spectrum.

I have an inner laugh when I hear our party needs to be the party of inclusion. We need to reach out to business. Well, let me tell my colleagues who the people are who have been at my door in the last 2 years.

□ 1845

They have been owners of textile mills, they have been owners of machine shops, they have been owners of cable companies. Owners, entrepreneurs who hire the folks that we are all concerned about, but we should be concerned about those who put the capital up to go into business in the first place.

So I want to make sure to tell my brothers and sisters in my own party that we want to be inclusive. Both parties want to try to be inclusive in whatever way they choose. But do not come back to me and say we are never going to get the support. And I think I have a right to talk about this, talk turkey here tonight. That is how critical this vote is.

We have an erosion of the Constitution of the United States. We have had an erosion of jobs. We have had an erosion of food safety. We do not need a further erosion. We do not wish to deny this. We do not want to stick our heads in the sand and say things will get better. They did not get better with NAFTA, and they are not going to get better with this vehicle if we support it tomorrow.

I want to thank my colleague for getting us together, the gentleman from Ohio, because he has stayed on this case. He has not given it a one-shot deal. The gentleman has worked on it since I have been here, for 5 years, and I commend him.

The American people understand this better than we do; and the American people, in every poll, have indicated they want their jobs protected. They understand we need to trade with other countries. They know that this is a world economy, that we live in a global village. But the folks in my town work in Paterson, New Jersey. They love the world. They have been fighting in wars, and they will defend us. Are we going to defend their jobs?

And if it is textiles and machinery today, what will it be tomorrow? That is the question that every person who is a Member of the House of Representatives must ask themselves tomorrow before they vote. Textiles, cable wire, machinery, leather goods today. What is tomorrow? Or shall it be, whose ox is gored? That is not what America is all about. America is about our being the last hope here on this floor to protect the interests of working families. We are the last vestige of hope.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

Ms. SOLIS. The gentleman just hit a real soft spot for me in my heart. My mother, who is now retired, worked for about 25 years for a big toy maker in my district, standing on her feet most of her 20 years there, and now has some very serious problems with her legs. That company employed over 2,000 people in our community. They left. They went to Mexico, then they went to China.

We now import those same toys. Many of those toys place harm upon our children because they do not meet our consumer safety standards. And nobody is crying out saying, wait a minute, what have we done here. We let go of these jobs, we let go of those pensions, those health and welfare benefits that went with those families and jobs. They went somewhere else, yet the people making those same items do not have any protections and maybe get 10 cents a day for producing products that they end up sending back here that somebody buys for \$20 or \$30. That is wrong.

Mr. PASCRELL. And the answer to the gentlewoman's mother is, well, if your job is extinguished, you will have to go to another job, a service-related job.

I ask the gentleman from Ohio, is that what has happened under NAFTA? Have we seen those service jobs? In fact, what have we seen?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. In Ohio, we are threatened right now with losing 3,000 jobs at LTV Steel. People say, well, the economy will change. If they lose their jobs, they will find another job. They clearly will not find another job close to what they are making.

Before closing, I thank very much my colleagues, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS), for joining me, and also earlier the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR).

Let me sum up with this: we in this country believe in the free market system. We believe in free enterprise, but we also believe in rules. The rules are that we have environmental protections, we have minimum wage laws, we have worker safety protections. We should believe in the same kinds of rules in free trade. We believe in trade, but we think we should have similar kinds of rules.

We should have environmental standards to govern the rules of trade. We should have worker safety standards and labor standards. It has worked in this country to raise our standard of living so we have a huge middle class. Those same kinds of rules could work internationally, in the global economy, if this body tomorrow defeats trade promotion authority and begins to write trade law that lifts people up all over the world. I thank my colleagues for joining me tonight.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the need for Trade Promotion Authority is clear. Approval of TPA, as it is called, is critical to the economic prosperity of our Nation, of Texas, and regions like mine, for the economic security of America, for the future. The President urgently needs this authority. He has made this one of his very few top priorities before Congress adjourns in the next few weeks. He needs it to level the playing field for U.S. companies by removing barriers abroad to American exports. In other words, he wants to be a salesman for American companies, for American jobs, for American farmers.

Every President until 1994 has had this authority. But we have been out of that game, we have been out of that playing field, and it has cost us literally tens of thousands of jobs. No successful business survives without a strong sales force. So why do we think America can succeed over the long haul without giving the President the tools he needs to promote American goods and services in the international marketplace.

In the end, Congress, Members of Congress, will have the ultimate decision on whether any proposed agreement is free and fair, in America's interest. I want that authority. I want the responsibility to look at an agreement to open new markets with an-

other country for our American products and goods. I can determine whether it is good for this Nation, for my district, or not.

America is falling terribly behind. There are more than 130 trade and investment agreements in the world today. One hundred thirty. How many is America a party to? Three. That ranks the United States behind those free enterprise bastions of Cuba and Morocco, although I think we edge out Tunisia by one agreement. That is embarrassing.

Congress has forced the United States to sit on the sidelines. By not granting our President the ability to promote trade, our international competitors are forging ahead. They are successfully completing their own trade agreements that puts U.S. companies at a competitive disadvantage. For example, the European Union has trade and customs agreements with 27 countries and another 15 accords in the pipeline to date.

To explain it another way, and I am not much of a gambler or a golfer, but my friends who golf regularly and make a friendly wager will say that oftentimes that wager is won or lost on the first tee as people decide what the rules are going to be and when they give strokes to each of the competitors. Well, America is not on that first tee when it comes to laying out the rules for trade, so our companies are not getting fair rules and we are not getting fair strokes. We are, in fact, put at a terrible disadvantage.

Everyone knows their own region better, but for Houston this is about jobs and our economic future. We have tens of thousands of new jobs at stake with this legislation. And as I have seen it, perhaps no State or region will benefit more or create more jobs from the passage of TPA than ours. Trade is already a large creator for America and a large creator for Texas. We are the second largest exporter in the country and the fastest growing. The Houston region is the largest and fastest growing export region in Texas, and now nearly two out of every three new jobs that are being created in our region come from international trade. That is good news for employees who have been laid off from Enron, from Continental, from Compaq, and from other very good companies. We need to get them back up on their feet and in new jobs, and trade is the way to do it.

We sell or transfer what the world wants to buy, from agriculture to energy, petrochemicals to computers, construction services to new technologies and insurance. These are our competitive strengths. In fact, these are America's competitive strengths, and with the second largest port in America, great international air routes and airports, and a proximity to growing Latin American markets, Trade Promotion Authority is critical to our economic future. Truly, I do not understand how any Member of Congress who has constituents in the Houston