

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3000

To postpone the extension of normal trade relations to the products of
Laos.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 18, 2004

Mr. COLEMAN (for himself and Mr. FEINGOLD) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To postpone the extension of normal trade relations to the
products of Laos.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Laotian Democracy
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The Lao People’s Democratic Republic is
9 an authoritarian, Communist, one-party state.

1 (2) The Government of Laos has a poor human
2 rights record, particularly with regard to its treat-
3 ment of minorities.

4 (3) The United States Central Intelligence
5 Agency trained and armed approximately 60,000
6 Hmong guerrillas to disrupt Viet Cong supply lines
7 and rescue downed pilots during the Vietnam war.

8 (4) In 1975, the Kingdom of Laos was over-
9 thrown by the Communist Pathet Lao regime, and
10 tens of thousands of Laotians, including the Hmong,
11 were killed or died at the hands of Communist forces
12 while attempting to flee the Lao Communist regime,
13 and many others perished in reeducation and labor
14 camps.

15 (5) Tens of thousands of Hmong became refu-
16 gees, eventually resettling in the United States,
17 where they now reside as American citizens and lead
18 constructive lives as members of our communities.

19 (6) Remnants of former Hmong insurgent
20 groups and their families who once fought with the
21 Central Intelligence Agency and the Royal Lao Gov-
22 ernment still remain in remote areas of Laos, includ-
23 ing Xaisomboun Special Zone and the Luang
24 Prabang Province.

1 (7) In August 2003 the United Nations Com-
2 mittee to Eliminate Racial Discrimination strongly
3 criticized the Lao People’s Democratic Republic for
4 failing to honor its obligations, expressed its grave
5 concerns regarding reports of human rights viola-
6 tions, including brutalities inflicted on the Hmong,
7 and deplored the measures taken by the Lao au-
8 thorities to prevent any reporting of the situation of
9 the Hmong.

10 (8) In October 2003, Amnesty International
11 issued a statement detailing its concern about the
12 use of starvation by the Lao Government as a
13 “weapon of war against civilians” in Laos and the
14 deteriorating situation facing thousands of family
15 members of ethnic minority groups.

16 (9) The Department of State reported in its
17 most recent Country Report on Human Rights Prac-
18 tices for Laos that the “Government’s human rights
19 record remained poor,” and highlighted press re-
20 ports that one group of Hmong in Xaisomboun Spe-
21 cial Zone, mostly women and children, was being
22 systematically hunted down and attacked by govern-
23 ment air and ground forces and that it was at the
24 point of starvation.

1 (10) International organizations, the Depart-
2 ment of State, and Members of Congress have re-
3 ceived reports of mistreatment over the past 6
4 months of Hmong in Laos emerging from remote
5 areas of Laos, including the Xaisomboun Special
6 Zone, the Luang Prabang-Xieng Khouang border
7 area.

8 (11) The Lao Government has not allowed inde-
9 pendent organizations to monitor the treatment of
10 the Hmong emerging from remote areas of Laos.

11 (12) In September 2004, Amnesty International
12 issued a statement expressing its horror at recent
13 reports that Lao soldiers murdered 5 Hmong chil-
14 dren, raping 4 girls, who were foraging for food
15 close to their camp, and called it a war crime.

16 (13) The United States has an obligation to de-
17 fend human rights of all people, including in par-
18 ticular those whose daily lives are endangered as a
19 result of their support for the United States.

20 (14) The Lao People's Democratic Republic has
21 failed to substantially improve the status of human
22 rights for its citizens.

1 **SEC. 3. POSTPONEMENT OF EXTENSION OF NORMAL**
2 **TRADE RELATIONS TO LAOS.**

3 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the
4 United States Trade Representative may not enter into
5 a trade agreement obligating reciprocal most-favored-na-
6 tion treatment between the Lao People's Democratic Re-
7 public and the United States.

○