

Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). It represents an opportunity to expand our trading relationships, to promote the spread of democracy and to reinforce the stability of the entire Central American region. In reviewing the specific provisions of this trade agreement, as well as the promise of expanding democratic influences in the region, my colleagues and I must consider what is best for our constituents, for American workers, and for workers and their families in the Central American nations affected by this agreement. I know there is opposition here in the House to this agreement, much of it from members of my own party. I respectfully disagree with them because I see the enormous positive mutual benefits of this agreement, and because I am convinced that rejecting DR-CAFTA would hurt our nation and our workers, as well as the people in these Central American nations. And I am convinced that rejecting DR-CAFTA will leave our hemisphere less secure.

Certainly for my constituents and my home state of Washington, this agreement will mean more and better paying jobs. Washington continues to be the most trade-dependent State per capita in the country, with more than one in four jobs dependent on trade. And CAFTA markets are becoming more important to producers in my State. Since 2000, trade with these countries has grown more than 250 percent, with Washington State exports exceeding \$110 million last year. Reducing tariff barriers in these countries will significantly boost the attractiveness of Washington State exports to these countries, which includes high tech products, machinery, agriculture, and paper products.

But the benefits of DR-CAFTA do not accrue solely to the workers in my State. There will be positive benefits for working people all across America. While these six nations alone—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic—may not be huge markets, the DR-CAFTA countries make up America's 12th-largest export market worldwide, importing about \$15 billion in U.S. goods and services last year. Together, these countries represent a larger U.S. export market than Russia, India and Indonesia combined. Because of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, these nations already have preferential treatment in our markets; it is time for us to gain the same benefits in their markets. According to an analysis conducted by the Progressive Policy Institute, textile firms, high-tech companies, and many service industries stand to gain immediate benefits from the approval of the agreement.

The benefits for workers from these Central American countries will be more pronounced. Competition from Chinese and Indian garment manufacturers is already intense and is growing. There are provinces in China and India that have greater populations than all six CAFTA nations combined. Currently, the temporary duty-free treatment CAFTA nations enjoy under CBI—nations that use U.S. textiles in their garment production—is keeping these Central American countries competitive. Without CAFTA, this treatment will expire, likely devastating the garment industry in Central America, potentially throwing half a million people out of work. With CAFTA, exports of garments from Central America, using American-made materials, is expected to increase, building jobs on both sides.

The economic arguments for the agreement are strong. But in my opinion, CAFTA is more

critical for promoting regional stability. Over the last 20 years, these nations have struggled out of chaos and civil war to establish fragile democracies, developing critical institutions designed to safeguard freedom and to promote the rule of law. But the ultimate success of these governments is predicated upon economic security. I believe that CAFTA will help to do just that, spurring U.S. investment and promoting the growth of a middle class in each of these nations.

The failure of CAFTA would mean just the opposite, in my judgment. Competition—particularly from China and other Asian nations—is fierce and growing. Without CAFTA, the largest manufacturing sector in Central America may fail, leading to a significant rise in unemployment, economic stagnation, and potentially civil unrest. It is certainly in our nation's best strategic interests to assure that this does not happen. With greater economic stability promoted through increased trade and investment, I believe that the nascent institutions of democracy in these nations will thrive and flourish. I am not alone in believing that freer trade will help the workers in Central America. Former President Jimmy Carter and former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias—whose dedication to the people of Central America and to alleviating the plight of the poor is unquestioned—strongly support the agreement. In the words of President Arias, "CAFTA would allow Central America to thrive by exporting goods through trade rather than exporting people through migration. Opportunities would open for consumers to acquire better and cheaper goods; for small and medium businesses to expand and diversify; for more private investment, access to new technologies and educational opportunities; for a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the job market; and for higher economic growth, government revenue and increased social spending."

I also understand the concerns of those of my colleagues here in the House who have joined together with our friends in organized labor in opposition to this agreement. I share their mistrust and disdain for the domestic labor policies implemented by the administration that negotiated this agreement. In the end, however, I believe that our shared cause will be furthered, not hindered, by the labor provisions of this agreement.

The editorial board of The News Tribune in Tacoma, the largest newspaper in my congressional district, summarized the view I have held in a recent editorial in support of the agreement. The editorial said: "CAFTA is probably the single best thing this country could do for those workers (in Central America). If markets were to expand for Central American goods, Central American labor would be worth more, paid more and treated better. Workers would gain more leverage and find it easier to unionize. . . ."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this agreement is good for the country, good for the state of Washington, good for workers in all the participating countries, and good for the security of the Western Hemisphere. I intend to support the agreement. I would like to thank the gentleman again for yielding to me.

A TRIBUTE TO GENERAL
GREGORY "SPEEDY" MARTIN

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to pay tribute to United States Air Force General Gregory S. "Speedy" Martin for his 35 years of distinguished and honorable service in the United States Air Force and to our Nation.

General Martin has had a distinguished career, beginning with his graduation from the Air Force Academy in 1970 with a commission as a second lieutenant. While at the academy, he became the National Collegiate Parachuting Champion; but jumping out of planes only begins to define his courage. He became a fighter pilot and flew 161 combat missions in Vietnam. He served as the mission commander for Operation Linebacker I and Operation Linebacker II during the Vietnam conflict and secured the release of American POWs.

Prior to serving as Commander of AFMC, General Martin served as Commander of United States Air Forces in Europe and Commander of Allied Forces Northern Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany. During Operation Enduring Freedom he directed airdrop support for American forces assisting Afghanistan refugees. During Operation Iraqi Freedom he provided deployment support, combat airdrop operations, and all air delivered sustainment support. In Europe, General Martin was awarded the Order of the Sword, the highest tribute the Air Force enlisted corps can pay to a commander.

As Commander of AFMC, General Martin led the development of a new Air Force Science and Technology vision which will guide critical research and development work to ensure the U.S. Air Force remains superior on the battlefields of tomorrow. He strengthened, unified, and streamlined the Air Force Program Executive Office to ensure more effective acquisition support for current and future Air Force weapon systems. General Martin created the Continuous Process Improvement initiatives in the air logistic centers which allowed AFMC to return \$570 million in savings last year to the Department of Defense to support the Global War on Terror. General Martin has often referred to his assignment at AFMC as "The most satisfying assignment in my career."

He received numerous military awards for his service including: the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 11 oak leaf clusters, and the NATO Meritorious Service Medal. Allied nations also recognized General Martin for his service by bestowing on him the following awards: the Medal of Commander of Order and Valor, Cameroon; the Medal of Merit—Gold, The Netherlands; the Legion of Honor, France; and the Cross of Merit, First Class, of the Minister of Defense, Czech Republic. General Martin is also a command pilot with over 4,600 flight hours in various aircraft, including the F-4, F-15, C-20 and C-21 and is a master parachutist.

I have known General Martin since he took command of AFMC in August 2003. I have received briefings from him and can assure you he is an authoritative and powerful speaker. General Martin is a man who is honest, provides a straight assessment and has the highest degree of ethics. His service honors the Air Force and our country. In providing an assessment of the need to transform the Air Force acquisition process, in classic style, he declared, in a delivery that would shame Jack Nicholson, the problem is: "some people can't handle the truth."

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2361,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss funding for veterans' healthcare. As the son, grandson, and brother of veterans, I understand just how important this funding is to our brave men and women who have answered the call of duty to serve their country. Since coming to Congress, it has been one of my greatest pleasures to be able to provide our veterans with the care and the treatment they deserve.

Since 1995, Congress has increased spending on veterans by more than 59 percent—an average increase of 6.9 percent per year. During this Congress alone we have increased the death benefits and life insurance coverage of our Armed Services personnel. We have also provided funding for specialty mental health care for the first time ever, increased funding for the treatment of conditions like Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and doubled funding for mental health care issues. This is indeed a record to which we can all be proud.

I was also proud to cosponsor H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act, in the 108th Congress. With the agreement of the House and Senate, another version of this bill was passed and signed by President Bush in order to allow certain military retirees to receive both their longevity retired pay and veterans disability compensation. As Speaker of the House J. DENNIS HASTERT noted, "Congressman HENSARLING's strong support for our nation's veterans and concurrent receipt legislation was critical to ensuring that we achieved the most significant, positive step forward for veterans in our nation's history."

Unfortunately, sometimes Congress can fall short. For instance, the Fiscal Year 2004 Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, fell \$1.8 billion short of what was agreed to in that year's budget resolution. This inadequate level for funding for veterans healthcare greatly concerned me, and that is why I voted against the bill. When thousands of veterans were waiting 6 months or longer for healthcare, I did not believe that it was the time to skimp on needed resources.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House of Representatives voted on the Fiscal Year 2006 Department of the Interior, Environment, and

Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Included as part of this legislation was \$1.5 billion in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs to cover an anticipated budgetary shortfall for the current fiscal year. I am very pleased that the House of Representatives has approved the funding necessary to ensure that they receive the medical care they deserve. However, because the underlying legislation to which we attached this important provision violated the budget we agree to abide by earlier this year, I found myself in the difficult position of having to vote against this legislation.

There were a number of alternative methods that could have been used to alleviate this problem—methods that would not have violated the budget. Most notably, we could have amended H.R. 3130, which was approved unanimously by the House of Representatives on June 30, 2005, to provide the necessary funding levels. This broadly supported measure would have demonstrated our firm commitment to our veterans, and it is unfortunate this alternative was not utilized.

Mr. Speaker, in the end the greatest threat to adequately funding the needs of our veterans is Congress' seemingly inherent inability to control runaway wasteful spending in our budget. Each and every time we spend another dollar on wasteful measures like bullet-proof vests for K-9s, bridges to nowhere, or an underground cafeteria in the Carlsbad Caverns, is a dollar that is not available for our veterans.

One of Congress's most solemn obligations is to care for our veterans. I remain committed to funding 100 percent of the benefits veterans have earned through their service and sacrifice to our country. I will continue to work with Members of Congress to explore ways to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs gets the money they need within the rules of our budget agreement. I will not however, support legislation to grow the budget of another department, such as this bill would have done with the Department of the Interior, at the expense of our veteran's and our children's future.

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, the Cooperative Development Program, CDP, of USAID serves an important role in America's international development assistance. For a modest annual investment, credit unions and cooperatives can have a greater opportunity to flourish through the work of the World Council of Credit Unions and other non-governmental cooperative development organizations.

In a world where three billion people live on less than \$2 a day, access to safe and sound financial services is essential to helping people build better lives for themselves. The World Council of Credit Unions, WOCCU, works to strengthen credit unions implementing technical assistance programs to improve credit union performance so that these non-for-profit cooperative financial institutions can offer an array of client-responsive services, extend their geographic coverage, and harness technology.

Created by the vision of the U.S. credit union movement, WOCCU has been implementing their technical assistance programs for over 30 years. Prior to WOCCU's formation in 1970, the Credit Union National Association, CUNA, had an international division called CUNA Global Projects dedicated to overseas credit union activities. Today, CUNA and their state league system, representing 86 million credit union members in the U.S., work with WOCCU to promote credit union growth in developing countries.

Through the current funding cycle of USAID's CDP, WOCCU will spend the next 4 years working with credit unions around the world and focused in Afghanistan, Kenya, the Philippines, Ecuador and Nicaragua to build networks—expanding low-cost transaction services for members, including remittances; creating enabling environments; training credit union managers and board members; and extending credit union operations to difficult operating environments, including HIV/AIDS-affected communities, conflict-prone zones and poverty-entrenched rural areas.

Credit unions and cooperatives provide hope for economic prosperity through grassroots businesses that provide jobs, income, basic education and democratic experience. I will continue to support the USAID Cooperative Development Program to sustain overseas cooperative development in developing countries and emerging democracies.

MEDICAID IS IMPORTANT FOR
PEOPLE AND CHILDREN WITH
SERIOUS ILLNESSES

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 40th anniversary of Medicaid on July 30, I want to underscore the importance of Medicaid to children and adults with serious illnesses. Medicaid is a public health insurance program that helps 52 million low-income and disabled Americans, including 540,000 Virginians, stay healthy. Nationally, half of Medicaid enrollees are children.

Medicaid is particularly important to people with serious illnesses. Medicaid can be the only way to pay for care.

Many people with serious illnesses must turn to Medicaid for several reasons. Many insurance policies have a lifetime upper limit of \$1 or \$2 million. Approximately 51 percent or 87.5 million people with employer-based insurance have a lifetime cap, according to a 2004 Kaiser Family Foundation survey. Many private insurance plans impose pre-existing condition and other exclusions and refuse to insure people with serious illnesses and disabilities. Many working Americans do not have job-based health insurance because their employers do not offer it. The cost of individual health insurance policies is often out of reach. And most Americans are too young for Medicare.

A serious, chronic illness can be emotionally and financially devastating. While we have made great strides in treating cancer today, everyone fears cancer. In 2004, 1.4 million new cases of cancer were diagnosed. In 2005, 34,000 Virginians will have cancer, says the