VOTE ''NO'' ON THE U.S.-PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Mr. HARE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to encourage all of my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the Peru Free Trade Agreement. I just lost the third of four clothing factories in my district on Friday; hardworking men and women thrown out of work not because they couldn't do the job, but because they couldn't compete.

We have a responsibility as Members, whether you are Republican or Democrat, from whatever State you come from, to stand up for the American workers. I can't go back to my district and I will not go back to my district and try to explain to my workers who are losing their jobs, if you will just wait until we pass another trade deal that this President is not going to enforce.

I urge all of my colleagues to please vote ''no'' on the Peru Free Trade Agreement when it comes up. We can do much better, we owe it to our workers, and we will do much better.

□ 1930

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MEDICAL IMAGING SERVICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and ask my colleagues to support legislation reversing the dangerous cuts made to medical imaging services by the last Congress.

The incorporation of imaging technology into medical practice has transformed physician practice, patient care, and improved health outcomes for millions of Americans.

Unfortunately, the Deficit Reduction Act last Congress slashed funding for imaging services. These dangerous cuts mean that women will have difficulty getting a mammogram. Doctors will begin to phase out imaging services because the reimbursement rate will cause them to lose money.

While these cuts may have saved the government money, it has increased the health risks of our Nation's citizens. Patients throughout the United States depend on medical imaging because it often detects critical illnesses at their most curable stage when they are less costly to treat. Better, less invasive care often means easier recoveries and greater patient comfort are additional reasons why drastic cuts to medical imaging do not serve the patient well.

Medical imaging is an overall cost-saver for patients and the health care system in general because it results in fewer complications, earlier detection, shorter hospital stays, and better pain management.

Our goal should be keeping our workers healthy and on the job by helping them avoid surgery, long recuperation and disability. For this reason, significant cuts to medical imaging are not the solution. That is why I ask your support and need it for H.R. 1293, Access to Medical Care Imaging Act of 2007. My legislation would suspend for 2 years drastic cuts to critical diagnostic imaging services provided in physicians' offices and imaging centers.

The cuts were agreed to with little public debate by the U.S. House of Representatives, yet they account for more than one-third of the Medicare cuts in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Furthermore, as was directly pointed out by Members on both sides of the aisle during the Energy and Health Subcommittee hearing on July 18 last year, the policy was not recommended to Congress by MedPAC or CMS, and there has been no analysis of the impact of the cuts on seniors' access to imaging services.

Unfortunately, despite broad bipartisan support in Congress to delay the DRA policy, the DRA imaging cuts went into effect in January of this year. My legislation would place a 2-year hold on the implementation of the cuts and require a comprehensive GAO study on patient access and service issues relating to the availability and quality of imaging services in physician offices and imaging clinics with special attention to seniors living in rural and medically underserved areas.

Please join over 150 of my colleagues and become a cosponsor of H.R. 1293. People have to understand sometimes the cuts that we make around here are not in the best interest certainly of our constituents. Spending most of my life as a nurse, preventive care is better than letting it go. That is why our health care costs are so high. We need to do a better job of making sure that our constituents are served.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OPPOSE PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, on the eve of the Ways and Means Committee markup on the Peru free trade agreement, I rise tonight in strong opposition to the Peru free trade agreement.

I am extremely disappointed there will be no formal committee hearing on the Peru free trade agreement. The last hearing for the Peru free trade agreement in the Ways and Means Committee was held in 2006.

Given that the administration and leadership announced proposed changes to the trade model in May, I believe it is critical to have a full hearing on the Peru trade agreement. The diversity of viewpoints on the Peru FTA have not been significantly heard by Members. Many of the newly elected freshmen Members campaigned on a platform of ensuring a significant change of course from the Bush trade policy.

The Peru free trade agreement is based on the same flawed NAFTA and CAFTA model that has been so devastating to industries across the Nation.

When I campaigned for my seat 5 years ago, the cornerstone of my campaign was fixing our broken trade policies. I have seen firsthand what they have done to the State of Maine. I firmly believe in order to address our trade imbalance, we have to change the trade model. The Peru FTA is the same old model with a little lipstick.

There is overwhelming opposition to the agreement by unions, consumers, small business, and environmental groups. They are all asking Congress to oppose the Peru FTA.

Who supports this deal? Big Business does. When Tom Donahue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, states that he is ''encouraged by assurances that the labor provisions cannot be read to require compliance with ILO conventions,'' we should be very skeptical.

While we have all heard that the Peru agreement text improves labor and environmental standards, we fail to hear that they are added upon the old NAFTA and CAFTA text. The bottom line: this is another Bush NAFTA expansion.

Key unions are worried about the labor provisions. The new provisions require countries to adopt, maintain, and enforce only the terms of the ILO declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work. The new FTA language does not require signatories to meet the ILO conventions. These are the binding standards; the declarations are nonbinding. It is highly likely that changes in the environment and labor provisions will have no real effect on the ground.

We all know that the Bush administration has a long record of not enforcing the standards of past trade deals.