

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last month Congress dealt with a trade package that centered on trade promotion authority; and those actions, while important, were really just the beginning of a very long process.

Many important provisions of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the TPP, are still unresolved. There is a meeting at the end of this month in Hawaii where the finance ministers of 12 countries come together in an attempt to resolve these final questions.

As I pointed out in my last meeting with the President, while I think trade promotion authority is important and worthy of support, that support does not imply support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Indeed, because of the protections we built into the trade promotion authority, it sets an appropriately high standard for approval. Everybody in America will have several months to examine the proposal if an agreement is reached to see if it measures up before the treaty can even be voted on by Congress.

I am hopeful that we can use this time to clarify and refine areas, for example, the investor state dispute process. While the United States' investor state protections for public health and consumers are stronger than for most countries and are separate from the foreign investor state models that are being used by the United States Chamber of Commerce to promote the interests of Big Tobacco to undercut efforts to discourage smoking, there is still room for us to improve and clarify the American model, and we should do so.

Another important area deals with trade enforcement. Agreements that look good on paper, if they are not enforceable or enforced, are essentially meaningless. It is extremely important for the administration to demonstrate its commitment to enforcement.

We are trying to help with legislation that I have introduced in the House that we have been able to get in part of the Senate package that would create a trade enforcement fund dedicated to help make sure agreements are enforced.

Another step the administration could take immediately is to deal with disturbing actions in Peru that seem to undercut commitments that were made in the existing Peru free trade agreement dealing with illegal logging. It appears that Peru has backtracked on its commitments and that illegally harvested timber is finding its way into international markets and, indeed, into the United States. It would be a simple act for the administration to take that would demonstrate its commitment to strong enforcement by starting with Peru right now.

Another area that I am working on deals with access to medicines. It appears that the TPP draft falls short on

incentives for affordability and consumer protections and the trade promotion authority objective to "ensure that trade agreements foster innovation and promote access to medicines." We need some work here.

The May 10 agreement that was struck in 2007, which I was pleased to participate in, struck the right balance, creating incentives for innovation in pharmaceutical research and access to timely and affordable medicine for developing countries. This was achieved in part by requiring changes to provisions dealing with patent linkage where it looks like TPP is moving in the wrong direction.

The TPP includes new provisions which, while not addressed in the May 10 agreement, are inconsistent with its spirit and its intent of ensuring timely access to affordable medicines in developing countries. For example, with biologic medicines, it appears the United States is seeking both patent linkage and 12 years of data exclusivity for all countries. The former would require a change in U.S. law, and the latter would prevent America from changing our laws to lower the exclusivity period, as has been proposed in the President's own budget proposal. The combination of these two would have enormous cost implications both at home and abroad.

These are examples where I am working to make sure the final agreement measures up to the criteria we have established in the trade promotion authority.

I urge the administration and my colleagues to be clear about our intent and our expectations in order for any final agreement to be worthy of broad support.

BACKPACK BUDDIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of meeting with Doug Erwin. Doug is an extraordinary member of our West Virginia community who started the charitable organization called Backpack Buddies.

In the summer, Backpack Buddies gives meal supplements to children in elementary, middle, and high schools who received free or reduced lunches during the school year. Oftentimes, the meal that they receive at school is the only food that they eat all day.

Doug became concerned about what these children did for food during the summer. That is when Doug started Backpack Buddies.

For the last 3 years, communities in my district in the great State of West Virginia have come together to raise money to provide food to these children so they can get the extra help they need during the summer. Backpack Buddies is serving, now, over 1,600 children in Putnam, Boone, Cabell, and Kanawha Counties this summer.

I would like to thank Doug, the business leaders in our community, and the volunteers who help make Backpack Buddies possible.

WAR ON COAL

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. On a separate issue, Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago, President Obama sent two of his top cronies in his war on coal, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Office of Surface Mining Director Joseph Pizarchik, to my home State of West Virginia.

The apparent purpose of their visit was to seek input for a new Obama regulation that is estimated to kill 80,000 coal jobs, but their rule had already been submitted for final review. They are not interested in hearing from West Virginians about the impact of their policies. Instead, they are checking a box.

It is clear that nothing will stop this President from trying to implement his radical environmental agenda, and I will continue to do everything in my power to fight back on behalf of all West Virginians. That is why, this year, I introduced H.R. 1644, the STREAM Act, which will stop the President's antimining regulations. I also included a provision in the House budget resolution that calls for defunding that regulation, and I will work with the appropriators to make sure it is not funded.

I hope my colleagues in this Chamber will join me in this fight.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, since the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United, we have seen a massive wave of secret spending in our political system. There was over \$100 million in dark, unregulated, and anonymous money spent in the 2014 midterm election cycle; and with the Presidential race right around the corner, that number is expected to balloon to over \$600 million.

While the problem is easy to identify, the solution is far more difficult to achieve. Reluctantly, I have concluded that it is necessary to amend our Constitution to address a long line of case law that began before Citizens United and prevents the Congress from meaningfully regulating campaign expenditures. The constitutional amendment must not only overturn Citizens United, but the Arizona Free Enterprise Club's Freedom Club PAC v. Bennett decision, which struck down an Arizona law that allowed public financing of a candidate if their opponent exceeded certain spending limits.

The amendment is simple. It would allow Congress to set reasonable limits on expenditures and allow States to set up public financing for candidates if they choose to do so.

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I first ran for Congress in 2000, in a campaign that turned out to be the