

and with reasonable medical benefits, that U.S. employee has lost his or her job and we are offered a product made by a foreigner who is paid a sub-standard wage and who is provided no medical benefits. As an extra benefit, we residents of earth are subjected to increased pollutants added to the planet.

Before NAFTA was adopted, we were told that a secondary benefit of the agreement would be an easing of the immigration problem along our southern border. Have you noticed how no one makes that argument anymore? That's because there has not been an easing of the immigration problem. The theory was that the people entering the United States through Mexico came to the United States solely to seek employment, and that if they could get that employment in Mexico, they would not need to cross our border. Well, what happened? The theory did not prove true. Why not? I submit that the unemployment problem in Mexico is of such a magnitude that the number of jobs added as a result of NAFTA didn't put a dent in the number of people who want to come to the United States. The result has been we lost all those jobs and we still have an immigration problem.

Mr. Speaker, I do not make these statements to be critical of Mexico. Over the decades, in many ways Mexico has been a better neighbor to the United States than the United States has been to Mexico. The root of our immigration problem stems from the different speeds at which our economies have developed. The time will come in the not to distant future, when the Mexican national economy will be as strong and vibrant as ours, and we will be in balance. At that point, free trade will be mutually beneficial for both nations, as it currently is for the United States and Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a few moments to talk about my congressional district, American Samoa, and what is happening to us, and the other U.S. territories, in the name of free trade.

I represent the people of the U.S. Territory of American Samoa. We are removed from all major surface and air transportation routes and our annual per capita income is \$3,000.

In American Samoa, the largest industry is the processing of canned tuna, most of which is sold in the United States. This has been a staple of the American Samoan economy for the past 30 years. In recent years, however, I have witnessed the repeal of the possessions tax credit—IRC Sec. 936—the implementation of NAFTA, the implementation of tariff reductions under GATT, and the weakening of the dolphin safe label. Each of these actions will make American Samoa less competitive than foreign nations, and there has been nothing on the other side of the ledger to assist American Samoa or the other U.S. territories.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about first- and second-class citizens residing in the 50 States. I am increasingly concerned that we will soon have third-class citizens residing in our territories. There are nearly 4 million of us, and it is past the time for this growing problem to be addressed. This is a major concern to me, and if the past is any indication of what we can expect from future trade agreements, H.R. 2621 will hurt, not help the United States as a whole, and American Samoa in particular.

Mr. Speaker, unlike you, I do not have the privilege of voting on this legislation, even though if it is enacted into law it will more than likely have a direct impact on my congress-

sional district. I wish I had this privilege, for I would certainly vote no, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, November 9, 1997

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my strong support for House passage of S. 714, as amended. This bill, much of which was approved by the House earlier in the session, contains several provisions of great importance to America's veterans. Foremost among these is a 4-year extension of the Native American Veteran Housing Loan Pilot Program, created in 1992, which authorizes the Veterans' Administration to make direct home loans to native American veterans living on Indian trust lands. This program eliminated many of the barriers so often encountered by native Americans seeking financing for homeownership, and a 4-year extension will allow the program's success to continue, to the benefit of increasing numbers of native American veterans.

As a veteran, I certainly recognize the indispensable contributions that America's veterans have made in selfless dedication to their country. The Native American Veteran Housing Loan Pilot Program is one significant way in which Congress can express its gratitude for the exceptional service demonstrated by native American veterans, and indeed by all of our Nation's military personnel. With the approach of Veterans' Day, when we remember the millions who have served this country as members of the Armed Forces, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation, and I applaud the Veterans Affairs Committee for its recognition of the continuing importance of this program.

VISA WAIVER PILOT PROGRAM

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report on H.R. 2267, the Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill.

One of the provisions included in the bill is a 6-month extension of the State Department's Visa Waiver Pilot Program [VWPP]. This is the mechanism by which our country allows visitors from approximately 26 nations to enter the United States without visas. Passports are sufficient for entry.

And this is a good program. Obtaining visas is a time-consuming endeavor, from applications, screening, approval, and to issuance. We do not need to require visas of every visitor from abroad, and the Visa Waiver Pilot Program has been a tremendous success for years in expediting foreign visitors, whether for employment, tourism, family, or business purposes.

I have been working closely with Congressmen BARNEY FRANK, JAY KIM, and others with

the leadership of the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee, particularly Chairman LAMAR SMITH and ranking Democrat MEL WATT, to resolve a problem—specifically whether Portugal and the Republic of Korea should be included in the visa waiver program. They have exerted tremendous time and energy and effort to identify and resolve problems in the program and we are committed to working together in the months ahead to adjust the program so that citizens of these countries can travel to the United States with only a passport.

Mr. Speaker, during the hearings and committee consideration of the visa waiver program, concerns were raised by some Members and the State and Justice Departments. I do not believe those concerns are insurmountable, and we are working with those agencies to address security and other concerns. We all feel that the current waiver criteria should be reformed, and I will be working in the months ahead with my colleagues to craft a visa waiver system that expands visitor opportunities.

As you know, tourism is the dominant industry in Hawaii, and it is crucially important that we have a visa waiver system for tourists that allows a maximum number of visitors to enter the United States. Thousands of Hawaiian families and individuals are dependent on tourism and on the number of visitors using hotels, restaurants, transportation facilities, and retail businesses. A strong case has been made that citizens of Korea, one of our strongest allies in the world, should be given the waiver consideration that we have afforded 26 other nations.

The 6 months extension of the existing Visa Waiver Pilot Program is a prudent decision, and reflects a good-faith effort being made to address constructively the issues facing the future of the program. I look forward to working with Chairman SMITH, the members of the House Judiciary Committee, and those seeking an expansion of the program to develop an effective and workable program addressing all concerns.

EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE REPUBLICAN FAST TRACK PROPOSAL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have always been a protrade, proenvironment, and prolabor Democrat. I do not appreciate being placed in a position where I must oppose a free trade bill, in this case H.R. 2621, the Republican fast track trade proposal. I must oppose this particular proposal because it does not include the elementary steps that might have made it acceptable. We could achieve the very same results that H.R. 2621 seeks with a more balanced bill that does not sacrifice the interests of workers here and abroad and environmental quality as well.

I believe strongly in free trade. For those who do not, I would simply say that we have no choice today except to compete in world markets if we are to continue to create high-paying, private sector jobs and to sustain economic growth. However, there are good and ample precedents on how to move to broader,