

by giving China PNTR status, America's competitors in Europe and Asia most certainly will.

Like most Americans, I am deeply concerned about human rights, labor and environmental conditions in China. Some opponents argue that granting PNTR status would somehow remove pressure on China to improve its poor record on these issues. I don't agree.

It is important to remember that China already has the privilege of full access to the U.S. market. Let's get that clear. They already have the privilege of full access to the U.S. market. While Congress has repeatedly criticized China's record on these issues, it has never once revoked China's trade status in an annual review.

Furthermore, granting China PNTR status would not prevent Congress or the administration from continuing to speak out on any and all issues of concern that have been raised, nor would it preclude sanctioning China in the future.

In addition, I regard the expansion of our economic relationship as a far more effective method of influencing change in Chinese behavior than the status quo. If China joins the WTO, the United States will have an unprecedented opportunity to not only export more of our goods and services to China, but also our culture and values. This increased interaction will allow the United States to expose the Chinese people to Western standards of political freedom, human rights, business practices and environmental protection.

No one can predict with any degree of certainty the path China will ultimately choose for itself. But I firmly believe that opening China economically to the rest of the world can only help efforts to open up its political system and improve the lives of its people.

Some argue that China has become a major military rival to America and that increased trade would finance China's military buildup, thereby enhancing China's threat to our national security. I think this logic as inherently wrong.

History has shown that economic integration diminishes military tension and the threat of war, even among historical enemies. The European Union, which brought together two longtime adversaries, France and Germany, is a prime example of this phenomenon.

Nations that trade together share a common interest in remaining at peace and preserving the mutual benefits of free trade. Conversely, rejecting opportunities for economic cooperation would only play into the hands of the old hard-line elements in China who are already hostile to both free trade and the United States.

As the final vote on PNTR approaches, the question that this body must consider is not whether China deserves to enjoy the benefits of WTO membership.

At this point, that is not a decision the U.S. can make wholly on our own,

because China will be able to join the WTO if it has the support of its other major trading partners. Nor does the Senate need to determine whether China needs to improve its record on human rights, labor standards and the environment. It is already clear that these issues need to be addressed.

What the Senate needs to do is to decide whether our Nation will be able to benefit from a hard-fought agreement that unilaterally opens China's markets to American products, and whether the United States should use this trade relationship to advance democratic reform, build a trusting relationship, and address grievances without hostility. In my view, granting China permanent normal trade relations status is the first step in that process.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I express my admiration for the Senator from Ohio. He effectively states his case on matters of great importance to his State and the Nation. He always does that effectively. I greatly admire his views and thought processes.

PAUL COVERDELL NATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2000

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, not too long ago our former colleague, Paul Coverdell, introduced the National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act. It was a bill to further Federal support to State forensic laboratories, those places where DNA evidence is evaluated, where drug evidence is evaluated, where fingerprints, ballistics, and all the other scientific data from carpet fibers, and so forth, are evaluated, and then reported out to the prosecutors around the country so cases can be prosecuted on sound science.

Today we have a crisis in our criminal justice system. We clearly have a bottleneck, of major proportions, in the laboratory arena. There is simply an exploding amount of work. More and more tests are available. People are demanding more and more tests on each case that comes down the pike. We are way behind.

In my view, as a person who spent 15 years of my life prosecuting criminal cases, swift, fair justice is critical for any effective criminal justice system. We need not to see our cases delayed. We need to create a circumstance in which they can be tried as promptly as possible, considering all justice relevant to the cases.

I ran for attorney general of Alabama in 1994. I talked in every speech I made, virtually, on the need to improve case processing. The very idea of a robber or a rapist being arrested and released on bail and tried 2 years later is beyond the pale. It cannot be acceptable. It cannot be the rule in America.

Yet I am told by Dr. Downs of the forensic laboratory in the State of Alabama that they now have delays of as

much as 20 months on scientific evidence. We know Virginia last year, before making remarkable improvements, had almost a year—and other States. Another police officer today told us his State was at least a year in getting routine reports done. This is a kind of bottleneck, a stopgap procedure that undermines the ability of the police and prosecutors to do their jobs.

I was pleased and honored to be able to pick up the Paul Coverdell forensic bill and to reintroduce it as the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Improvement Act of 2000. We have had marvelous bipartisan support on this legislation. Senator MAX CLELAND from Georgia, Paul's colleague, was an original cosponsor of it. He was at our press conference this morning. Senator ZELL MILLER, former Governor of Georgia, who has replaced Paul in the Senate, was also at the press conference today, along with ARLEN SPECTER, a former prosecutor, PAUL WELLSTONE, DICK DURBIN, and others who participated in this announcement.

We need to move this bill. It will be one of the most important acts we can do as a Senate to improve justice in America. It is the kind of thing this Nation ought to do. It ought to be helping States, providing them the latest equipment for their laboratories, the latest techniques on how to evaluate hair fiber or carpet fiber or ballistics or DNA. It ought to be helping them do that and ought not to be taking over their law enforcement processes by taking over their police departments, telling them what kind of cases to prosecute, what kind of sentences to impose and that sort of thing.

A good Federal Government is trying to assist the local States. One of the best ways we could ever do that is to support improvements in the forensic laboratories. I believe strongly that this is a good bill in that regard.

The numbers of cases are stunning. I will share a few of the numbers and statistics that I have. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the Department of Justice, as of December of 1997—it has gotten worse since—69 percent of State crime labs reported DNA backlogs of 6,800 cases and 287,000 offender samples were pending. That is human DNA we are talking about. That is not available in every case, but that is not all they have backlogs on. Every time cocaine is seized and a prosecutor wants to try a cocaine case, the defense lawyer is not going to agree to go to trial. He will not agree to plead guilty until he has a report back from the laboratory saying the powder is, in fact, cocaine. It is almost considered malpractice by many defense lawyers to plead guilty until the chemist's report is back.

This is slowing up cases all over America. The labs have lots of problems in how they are falling behind. I think we need to look at it.

One article reports:

As Spokane, Washington authorities closed in on a suspected serial killer they were

eager to nail enough evidence to make their case stick. So they skipped over the backlogged Washington State Patrol crime lab and shipped some of the evidence to a private laboratory, paying a premium for quicker results. * * * [A] chronic backlog at the State Patrol's seven crime labs, which analyze criminal evidence from police throughout Washington state, has grown so acute that Spokane investigators have feared their manhunt would be stalled.

Suspects have been held in jail for months before trial, waiting for forensic evidence to be completed. Thus potentially innocent persons stay in jail, potentially guilty persons stay out of jail, and victims get no closure while waiting on laboratory reports to be completed.

A newspaper in Alabama, the Decatur Daily, said:

[The] backlog of cases is so bad that final autopsy results and other forensic testing sometimes take up to a year to complete.

Now they are saying it takes even longer than that in Alabama.

It's a frustrating wait for police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges and even suspects. It means delayed justice for families of crime victims.

Another article:

To solve the slaying of Jon Benet Ramsey, Boulder police must rely to a great extent on the results of forensic tests being conducted in crime laboratories. [T]he looming problem for police and prosecutors, according to forensic experts, is whether the evidence is in good condition. Or whether lax procedures * * * resulted in key evidence being hopelessly contaminated.

We need to improve our ability to deal with these issues. This legislation would provide \$768 million over 6 years directly to our 50 State crime labs to allow them to improve what they are doing.

At the press conference today, we were joined by a nonpolitician and a nonlaw enforcement officer, but perhaps without doubt the person in this country and in the world who has done more than any other to explain what goes on in forensic labs. We had Patricia Cornwell, a best-selling author of so many forensic laboratory cases—a best selling author, perhaps the best selling author in America. She worked for a number of years in a laboratory, actually measuring and describing, as they wrote down the description of the knife cuts and bullet wounds in bodies. She worked in data processing.

She has traveled around this country, and she has visited laboratories all over the country. She said at our press conference they are in a deplorable state. She said the backlog around the country is unprecedented. She lives in Richmond, VA. She personally has put \$1.5 million of her own money, matched by the State of Virginia, Governor Gilmore, to create a laboratory in Virginia that meets the standard she believes is required. It is a remarkable thing that she would do that, be that deeply involved.

She is involved and chairman of the board of the foundation that helped create that. She told us how police, de-

fense attorneys, prosecutors, are asking for DNA evidence on cigarettes, on hat bands. They want hair DNA done, hundreds and hundreds of new uses, a Kleenex, perhaps, take the DNA off of that, in addition to the normal objects from which you might expect DNA to be taken. Her view was—and she is quite passionate about this; she has put her own money in it; she understands it deeply—that nothing more could be done to help improve justice in America than to help our laboratories around the country.

We have people on death row who are being charged with capital crimes. We have people who have been charged with rape who are out awaiting trial because they haven't gotten the DNA tests back on semen specimens or blood specimens, and they may well be committing other rapes and other robberies while they are out, if they are guilty. Also, there is evidence to prove they are not guilty if that is the case.

I believe we had a good day today. I believe this Senate and this Congress will listen to the facts about the need for improvement of our forensic laboratories which will respond to the crush of cases that are piling up all over the country and will recognize the leadership that our magnificent and wonderful colleague, Paul Coverdell, gave to this effort and will be proud to vote for the bill named for him, the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act of 2000, and that we can, on a bipartisan basis, move this bill and strike a major blow for justice in America.

I talked with the Attorney General of the United States, Janet Reno, yesterday. She told me this was very consistent with her views. She supports our efforts to improve forensic science capabilities, and she said it is consistent with the Department of Justice's approach to helping State and local law enforcement. I believe the Department of Justice will be supporting this legislation, and we intend to work with everybody who is interested to improve it. At this point, the legislation speaks for itself. It is receiving broad bipartisan support, and I believe we can move it on to passage this year. Nothing we could do would help fight crime more and produce a better quality of justice in our courts over America than passage of this bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators HARKIN, MCCONNELL, BUNNING, and GRAMS be added as original cosponsors of S. 3045, which I introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. I also want to express my appreciation for legal counsel on the Judiciary Committee, Sean Costello, who is with me today, and my chief counsel, Ed Haden, for their support and the extraordinary work they have done in helping to prepare this bill for filing.

SELLING VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES TO CHILDREN

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I see my colleague from Kansas, Senator BROWNBACK, is here. I had the pleasure recently to be at a press conference with him, which he arranged. He had written a letter to a number of businesses, which I joined. Senator TIM HUTCHINSON and JOE LIEBERMAN also signed that letter. We asked them to consider whether or not they ought to continue to sell video games rated "M," for mature audiences, to young people without some control. In fact, Sears and Montgomery Ward said they would not sell them anymore. They didn't want them in their stores. Wasn't that a good response? Kmart and Wal-Mart said they are not going to sell to minors without an adult or parent present. We believe that was a good corporate response.

I appreciate the leadership of the Senator from Kansas and his hearing, subsequent to that press conference, with a lot of the manufacturers of this product. I understand, from what I have seen, he was particularly skillful in raising the issues and holding these producers of this product to account and challenging businesses and corporate leadership to be more responsible because we now have a conclusive statement from the American Medical Association and half a dozen other groups that this kind of violent entertainment and video games have the capability of harming young people and leading them on to violence. That is bad for them and our country.

I thank the Senator from Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

MARKETING VIOLENT ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTS TO CHILDREN

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, for his role in this matter. As a former attorney general, he brought up some excellent points about what these do when you put a child and a video game in a first person shooter role and you reward them for mass killings. You give them points. Particularly at the end, some of these games give a reward which is a particularly grisly killing scene. He pointed out that when you train children in this type of situation, this is harmful to them psychologically, and it is something to which we should be limiting their access.

He also brought a lot of personal insight from his background as an attorney general, and that was really helpful. I hope we are going to be able to draw more attention to parents in the country about these products because it has a harmful effect.

Some of our military actually buy the same products and train our military personnel on the video games. They use it as a simulator. They do it as a way of trying to get people to