

Rest assured, I recognize these concerns, and I believe this is a step toward finding a solution and not an easy one to resolve but certainly a major step forward.

In Montana we know the value of preserving our environment while optimizing the use of our natural resources. At the same time, we cannot afford to compete with shoddy worker and environmental rights.

This measure brings that message to the world recognizing that trade and environmental policies are mutually supportive: That we should seek to protect and preserve the environment and enhance the international options of doing so, while optimizing the use of the world's resources. And, it promotes respect for worker rights and supports efforts to crack down on the exploitative child labor.

This bill is different from past fast-track legislation because it is the first to ever seek provisions that aim to ensure that parties to the agreements not weaken or reduce the protections afforded in their domestic environmental and labor laws as an encouragement for trade. It is a first, and major development. It also works to establish rules to prevent frivolous investor claims that contravene the public good.

I have a few words about part two of this package, the Trade Adjustment Assistance program or TAA. This is a program with a simple but admirable objective: to assist workers injured by imports to adjust and find new jobs. Many Montana workers are now employed and many firms still in business thanks to TAA.

Take for example the 221 employees who lost their jobs as a result of the suspension of operations at the ASARCO lead bullion facility in East Helena. It was a bitter blow to that community when that announcement was made. Due to the decline in the mining and mineral processing industries in the Western U.S., these workers faced few prospects for re-employment in a similar sector.

Thanks to income support provided by trade adjustment assistance, and NAFTA-TAA, 50 percent of these workers are involved in or did seek training—many at the Helena College of Technology and a few at heavy equipment operating school.

They are learning everything from trucking to computer technology. Now nearly 42 percent have found full-time employment. Workers at Plum Creek Timber in Seeley Lake are similarly taking advantage of this program.

TAA is often seen as the last resort, but it also provides a chance for companies to retool. This is especially true of TAA for firms, a related program that provides assistance to over 10 small companies in Montana to help them readjust and effectively compete with imports.

With TAA for firms, Montola Growers is researching new markets for its safflower oil, Tele-Tech Corporation is designing new products and print ads

for its sophisticated electronic devices, Thirteen Mile Lamb and Wool Company is designing new garments for manufacture by contract knitters, and Pyramid Lumber is improving its mill efficiency.

Without TAA for firms, we would see closed signs on many business doors. Unfortunately, more worthy projects exist than funding to support them. For that reason, I support significantly increased funding in order for this program to continue and expand its good work.

Additionally, this trade adjustment assistance bill includes a new provision that will offer up to \$10,000 in cash assistance to Montana farmers and ranchers injured by imports. Let me be clear, this is a real opportunity to retool and reform a family farming operation, to make it competitive and sound, for generations to come. Like trade adjustment assistance for firms, this program is a means to keep an operation in business and keep our Montana families on their land.

One final item tucked neatly away in the TAA title is a provision to protect Montana sugarbeet growers from unfair trade practices. We all recall the black eye that stuffed molasses gave the industry, and we can not afford to suffer from such blatant circumvention again. This provision allows the Secretary of Agriculture to monitor imports of sugar to ensure that they do not circumvent the existing quota.

If they do, the Secretary will report to the President who can then "snap-back" the offending commodity into the appropriate tariff line. This should send a clear message that America will no longer tolerate efforts to manipulate the trading system to the disadvantage of our sugar producers.

The trade package before us today will help Montana move toward a greater role in the global economy. I hope my colleagues will feel the same about their own constituencies and lend their support to this important matter.

Mr. President, I thank you for listening. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for a period not to exceed 5 minutes each.

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

#### CARTER, MISSION TO CUBA

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, many of us have anticipated the trip of former President Carter to Cuba with a mixed sense of hope and concern. We had hoped that he would use this unique opportunity to help bring ideas of freedom and democracy to the repressed people of Cuba, just 90 miles off our shores.

However, it was amazing and disappointing for many of us to learn of Mr. Carter's visit to a Cuban biotechnology facility and his acceptance, at face value, of the assurances of communist Cuban officials there that the facility is engaged solely in medical and humanitarian pursuits.

More distressing is that former President Jimmy Carter was accorded the same privilege and courtesy extended to former Presidents who have requested top-secret intelligence briefings and situation reports on global areas of interest of the United States.

In the post-9/11 world, it is important that we as a united country protect the safety and security of our people.

Instead, what we have in Mr. Carter's visit to this biotech facility is a former President—who himself was once responsible for our foreign policy and the safety of the American people—dismissing the concerns of his own government, revealing information to which he was privy in top-secret briefings, and buying wholesale the assertions of the dictator Fidel Castro and his minions.

The words and actions of Mr. Carter at this facility are a breach of trust, and it is made even worse, in that the individual involved in that breach is one in whom the American people once placed the ultimate trust and responsibility of the Presidency.

Rather than spending his time with Fidel Castro and his henchman, I would suggest the name of at least one person Mr. Carter would be better advised to get to know.

Just a few short days ago I joined the Congressional Cuba Political Prisoner Initiative. As part of this initiative, I have decided to sponsor or "adopt," if you will, a Cuban political prisoner named Francisco Chaviano Gonzales, and to advocate on his behalf, and on behalf of the thousands of others being held in Cuba in clear abuses of their basic human rights.

Francisco Chaviano is president of the National Council for Civil Rights, an organization dedicated to promoting democratic practices, racial equality and human rights. He was arrested after government agents broke into his home and confiscated documents revealing human rights abuses in Cuba—specifically, information about the Castro government's sinking of a tugboat that claimed the lives of 41 men, women, and children who were attempting to escape to freedom.

Chaviano was arrested and detained in prison for 1 year, and although a civilian, he was tried by military tribunal and sentenced to 15 years in prison.