

treated fairly and consistently under our tax laws, I hope that you will join me in supporting the Former Insurance Agents Tax Equity Act of 2003.

HONORING GLENN RANDALL

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to rise today and recognize Glenn Randall, an outstanding young cross-country skier from Collbran, Colorado. Despite unlikely odds, Glenn won the right to compete in the Junior World Championships in February. His dedication to the sport, and his determination, is truly a credit to this young athlete.

Glenn developed asthma at the age of three, but set his mind on racing with an inhaler. After competing in five- and ten-kilometer races, Glenn decided to enter the 30K United States Cross Country Championships. His parents, both avid cross-country skiers themselves, wondered whether their son could handle the exertion.

Glenn, who is sixteen and a high school sophomore, placed twenty-first overall and second among juniors, earning him a place on the American team for the World Championships and making him the youngest member of the U.S. team. Unlike many elite skiers, Glenn still attends a public school, squeezing in training around school hours, while also participating in high school cross-country and track.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to recognize Glenn Randall for his dedication and hard work before this body of Congress and this nation. The determination of this young man to exceed all expectations and overcome all obstacles is an inspiration to his peers as well as his elders. Glenn, who has achieved so much at a young age, has great things ahead of him, and it is my distinct pleasure to wish him the best of luck.

PNTR TO RUSSIA

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2003

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, today Mr. RANGEL, Mr. PITTS, Mr. CARDIN and myself introduced a bill that would grant permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) to Russia and "graduate" Russia from the application of the so-called Jackson-Vanik amendment. The legislation would provide a historic update in U.S.-Russia trade relations. It would strengthen U.S.-Russian relations and reinforce progress Russia has made in many areas. Additionally, the legislation would ensure that Congress continues to play an active role—with the Administration and with Russia—in confronting trade disputes and negotiating the terms of Russia's WTO accession.

It is useful to recall at the outset that the Jackson-Vanik amendment was itself an amendment to Title IV of the Trade Act of 1974, a trade statute. In particular, Title IV

created a framework for conducting trade relations with non-market economies. The Jackson-Vanik amendment, which has been an effective tool for raising freedom of emigration and human rights concerns, is a key element of Title IV; however, the underlying purpose and function of the statute were and remain the conduct of trade relations.

Accordingly, PNTR legislation must address fundamental trade issues. Consistent congressional practice is to grant PNTR to a country that is subject to Jackson-Vanik only at the time of the country's WTO accession, or when negotiations on accession were effectively completed. In this way, Congress' vote on PNTR has served as a way to signal approval for the country's WTO accession agreement. Under this approach, Congress was able to exercise its constitutional prerogative to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and the American people benefitted from the Administration negotiating the strongest possible agreement.

This precedent has led to an important series of successful accessions to the WTO, including most notably for China, on terms that reinforced the WTO rules-based system, and brought great benefits to the people of the United States as well as other WTO countries.

In the case of Russia, WTO accession terms are still being negotiated. I believe it is appropriate to depart from that precedent and grant Russia PNTR now, so long as Congress retains a strong and effective tool to ensure that U.S. interests are fully addressed in those negotiations. And, there are many critical issues that still need to be addressed—Russian commitments to open its auto market, commitments in the services and other sectors, ongoing problems with pricing in the industrial energy sector, intellectual property protection, to name just a few. Moreover, several recent actions by Russia—including last year's poultry ban and potential new restrictions on beef and pork—have renewed concerns in Congress about Russia's commitment to opening its market to U.S. exports and service providers and to adopting market-oriented reforms.

This legislation ensures that Congress will continue to play an active role in addressing trade problems as they emerge and in obtaining a strong WTO accession agreement from Russia. While giving up the precedent of using the PNTR vote as a proxy for approval of WTO accession, the legislation allows Congress to consider a resolution directly addressing the terms of agreement between the U.S. and Russia on Russia's WTO accession. While in its form, this resolution would be non-binding on the Executive, it would provide Congress with an important tool to assure itself of a continuing role in the formation of the terms of Russia's WTO accession and thereby implement Congress' constitutional responsibility of oversight over trade matters.

There are two sides to the PNTR coin—the trade issues and the "Jackson-Vanik" issues. The Jackson-Vanik amendment was an historic piece of legislation, aimed at addressing a serious problem in the former Soviet Union. It set forth important criteria related to freedom of emigration necessary for certain countries to obtain normal trade relations with the United States. Even from its inception, however, the Jackson-Vanik amendment was not only concerned with freedom of emigration, but also reflected the American commitment to

human rights and freedom of religion. This fact is evident not only in the preamble of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, but also in the operation of U.S. relations with the former Soviet countries for nearly thirty years.

I think it is appropriate, then, that as we consider graduating Russia from the Jackson-Vanik amendment, that we place a strong emphasis on freedom of emigration, religious freedom, and human rights issues. These were the issues at the core of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, and continue to be relevant when considering "graduation," particularly for Russia, which was and is in many ways the primary focus of the Jackson-Vanik amendment.

I am glad that we were able to craft a bill that addresses these vital issues in a responsible way, rather than giving them "check-the-box" cursory treatment. The presence of Members of the Helsinki Commission on the bill, who have a long history of dealing with human rights and religious freedoms, demonstrates that we have given these issues the careful treatment they deserve.

Earlier this week, Senator LUGAR, the distinguished Senator from Indiana and a key participant in consideration of our relations with other nations, introduced a Russia PNTR bill. This bill did not address the issue of assuring a continuing congressional role in the resolution of vital elements of an agreement on Russia's WTO accession. I believe that Congress has a substantial role to play in overseeing negotiations of Russia WTO accession agreement to ensure that it provides the strongest benefits for U.S. workers, farmers and businesses, and therefore we are introducing this legislation today.

WHAT IF A PENSION SHIFT HIT
LAWMAKERS, TOO?

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2003

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with you an article which appeared in the March 9th New York Times. It is not acceptable to me that millions of older American workers could lose the pensions they were promised by their companies because of a conversion to a cash balance pension. My experience in working with IBM employees in Vermont has shown me that these cash balance schemes are extremely unfair and could cut the expected retirement benefits of older workers by up to 50 percent.

Every member of Congress enjoys a defined benefit pension plan. We can figure out exactly how much we will receive when we retire by computing the years we have served, our salaries and the age at which we retire. A study I recently requested from the Congressional Research Service, CRS, shows very clearly that if members in Congress were in cash balance plan they would receive substantially less in pensions than in the defined benefit plan we currently enjoy.

President Bush has proposed regulations that would legalize age discrimination in cash balance pension conversion. These proposed regulations would give the green light to Fortune 500 companies to raid the pension benefits of millions of older workers. It seems to me