

administration and the Congress to consider first investing in America in the jobs that we need here at home. It is great that we are able to help out other countries, but we have to help them become self-empowered so they can determine their own destinies as well.

I had a chance last year to visit Central America, and I saw what the power of our country could do if we were to just expand programs that invested in microenterprise programs that would allow women, in particular, low-income skilled people to begin to invest in their own businesses, not taking away jobs from Californians or the rest of the country, but investing in their own human capital and keeping those people there instead of bringing them to this country.

I am not against bringing people in, but let us be fair and truthful what we want to do. First, we need to prioritize our own homeland, and that is investing here in America.

What baffles me most is the Bush administration has negotiated agreements to allow for foreign temporary workers in the U.S., when unemployment is in some places above 10 percent. The worker rights provisions in the Chilean and Singapore agreements will be disastrous if also applied to future trade agreements, and I speak in particular to the Central American free trade agreement which is coming shortly.

Many of those countries do not have labor provisions for their workers. They would like to take away the rights of health care workers right now in countries like El Salvador and Guatemala, and I hear over and over again the problems faced by many people there who would like to unionize. They are harassed and intimidated. That is not right, and I think the American public needs to know what negotiations are going on between our country and others to foster trade.

Again, I think jobs are important. I think it is very important to underscore that, yes, as Americans we know it is important to sustain other countries, but let us make sure that our principles are clear.

Last year, I and other Members of this House voted on the Jordan Free Trade Agreement, which I believe was a little bit better than what we are seeing is going to come before this House later this week, but I think we have to remember one of the reasons it got a lot of support was we had protections for workers' rights and for the environment. Those two major issues are lacking in this upcoming Chile and Singapore agreements.

I would underscore the need here is about jobs, jobs in America and making sure that we do not undercut our workforce or the workforce of those foreign countries, because many of them will not have the same protections as we as workers have in this country, and I point that out because we hear too often about the abuses

with young children, no labor provisions to protect children abroad. I would ask my colleagues to oppose these agreements.

#### U.S.-CHILE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, on June 6, 2003, the United States and Chile signed a historic and comprehensive free trade agreement designed to reduce barriers and facilitate trade and investment between both countries. Negotiations had begun back in December 2000, and 14 negotiating rounds were held. In the final round, 230 negotiators worked 9 straight days to come up with an agreement that contains more than 800 pages of text and annexes.

The result of all this hard work is a state-of-the-art trade pact that includes groundbreaking provisions which have never been negotiated as part of a free trade agreement. For example, the agreement includes new anticorruption rules in government contracting, and commitments to make end-user piracy of copyrighted works a criminal offense. Also included are new customs procedures which will increase transparency, efficiency, and timeliness of customs clearance procedures while maintaining strong border security.

Chile has agreed to new regulatory transparency commitments that will govern the interaction of service regulators with private parties, increasing public access to rulemaking procedures. In addition, the dispute settlement process will become more transparent with more public hearings, access to legal submissions, and the rights of third parties to submit views.

But beyond the precedent-setting features of the agreement, there is a bottom-line reality. Right now most of Chile's products enter the United States duty free under the GSP, or generalized system of preferences. In contrast, our exports to Chile face a uniform tariff of 6 percent. Once the U.S.-Chile free trade agreement enters into force, Chile's 6 percent tariff will be removed immediately from more than 85 percent of U.S. exports. Tariffs on the remaining products will be phased out over 4 to 12 years.

This is a good agreement which covers a particularly wide range of products and services. Not only does it address the liberalization of merchandise trade; it also includes groundbreaking areas such as e-commerce, express delivery services, strong copyright and trade protections, and across-the-board liberalization of trade in services.

In short, there is something for everyone to like in this agreement. But as with other trade agreements, there

is also something for everyone to question. The three areas that are often addressed by Members who have not had an opportunity to focus on the agreement, and we heard from a couple of them this morning, are: labor, the environment, and immigration. For instance, some Members who are not familiar with Chile and its labor laws question whether the labor provisions in this agreement are strong enough. The facts are that Chile has recently rewritten most of its Pinochet-era labor laws, reaffirming its obligation as a member of the international labor organization, and committed in this agreement to a key binding obligation not to fail to effectively enforce its labor laws through a sustained or recurring course of action or inaction. Labor protections within Chile and within this agreement are strong and sound.

And because it is a free trade agreement, other Members question whether it preserves environmental protections, but this free trade agreement includes provisions requiring parties to establish high levels of environmental protection and to not weaken or reduce environmental laws to attract trade or investment. It provides for dispute settlement and for environmental cooperation between the parties.

And last, some Members have questioned the impact this agreement may have on our immigration policy and whether it will open the door to a new wave of immigrants. The answer is no. It is true that in order to facilitate trade and services this agreement does allow for temporary entry of business professionals into Chile and into the United States. The number of professionals allowed entry into Chile is unlimited, while the number of Chilean professionals in the United States is 1,400. But I want to point out that the implementing legislation ensures that Chile professional category comes under the existing H-1B umbrella as H-1B1.

Further, the legislation clarifies that the Chile H-1B professional category is capped and these individuals will count under the overall H-1B program cap. The same fees can be charged for entry, and the agreement permits the U.S. to require attestations modeled after core elements of the Labor Condition Application of the current H-1B visa program.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good agreement with a good trading partner that will be good for our businesses and workers. I plan to vote for the U.S.-Chile trade agreement, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

#### COLUMNIST BLOWS CIA AGENT'S COVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 4 minutes.