have provided an additional $2.2 billion for VA medical care by reducing the recently-passed tax cuts for taxpayers with yearly incomes in excess of a million dollars. Both amendments were shut-down by the Rules Committee on a party line vote. I am shocked that the House Republican leadership would make such a choice, but I am not surprised.

Repeatedly, we have seen the Republicans in this body choose to break their promises to millions of Americans so that they can give tax cuts to the already wealthy. They passed a Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill that left millions of children behind by failing to live up to their promise to provide enough funding to ensure that every child would receive a decent education. And now my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have turned their backs on veterans so that they can give their rich friends a slap on the back. I have heard my colleagues from the other side of the aisle speak at length about their deep respect for the service our veterans have performed for our country. But, I must ask if breaking promises to our veterans is the Republican way of showing them that respect. Is it respectful to mouth the words of respect while allowing our veterans to wait months for doctors' appointments and pay more for services?

These amendments offered a very clear choice: would you rather provide enough money to ensure that veterans receive decent healthcare services or would you rather provide massive tax cuts that benefit millionaires? Who really cares about our nation's veterans? Who is really concerned about the people who have honorably served our country? Our veterans can not afford any more empty respect. I ask my colleagues to put the money where their mouths are and make the financial commitment to get veterans and their families the benefits they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this rule, to work to fulfill our obligations to our veterans and to show them our real respect.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF REBECA RANGEL

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rebeca Rangel, a strong willed, intelligent and dedicated individual who I have been fortunate to have on my staff for close to two years.

Rebeca began in my office as a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellow where she worked on a variety of issues, and acted as my liaison to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. While in my office, she impressed me with her maturity and the ability to quickly grasp ideas. This is why when her fellowship ended, I did not hesitate to offer Rebeca the position of Legislative Aide. In this capacity, she dealt with issues on Cuba, banking, housing and Hispanic issues.

Showing her aptitude and insight by constantly challenging and questioning the issues brought before her, Rebeca quickly progressed in my office to the position of Legislative Assistant. With this promotion came additional responsibilities. Rebeca took on education, budget and women's issues. She assumed these responsibilities with style and grace. Working tirelessly on issues that are close to my heart and hers, Rebeca has played a key role in helping me to promote bills such as H. Con. Res. 177, honoring Dolores Huerta Resolution, the Multi-Cultural Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Domestic Violence Courts Assistance Act. Rebeca has also been a tireless worker in my efforts to shed light on the unsolved rapes and killings of young women and girls in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

As Rebeca leaves my office to pursue her Masters degree at Harvard University, I wish her the best of luck. Through the course of these two years, she has been an integral part of my office and I have no doubt that she will accomplish anything she sets her mind to. ''El futuro pertenece a quienes creen en sus propios sueños. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, ''The future belongs to those who believe in their own dreams.''

UNITED STATES-SINGAPORE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, despite serious reservations, I will support the U.S. Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with Chile and Singapore. I support these agreements because I believe Chile and Singapore are valuable economic partners and strategic international allies. I have serious concerns, however, that the agreements also have a number of provisions that, while acceptable in the case of Chile and Singapore, set bad precedents for the future.

Chile and Singapore are important markets for U.S. products and investment. As anchors of trade in Southeast Asia and Latin America, they are advanced economies with political openness and a growing middle class. The FTAs before us today are valuable because they offer a reduction of barriers to trade in financial services with Singapore, which is the largest U.S. export sector in Asia, and strong market access for U.S. goods in Chile.

The agreements have strong intellectual property protections to fight the theft of copyrighted work and bold new measures to challenge digital and online piracy. These measures will help protect the driving force of creativity and innovation that has made entertainment and information technology the fastest growing sectors and the biggest exporting industries in the United States and in California.

At the same time, the agreements unfortunately include provisions that set the wrong tone for the future of U.S. trade policy.

I am concerned, for example, that because the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) model for automatic across the board tariff reductions in agriculture includes tobacco, the FTAs with Chile and Singapore could lead to an increase in cigarette consumption. Similarly, in the area of services, I am concerned that more exceptions should have been made for public utilities in order to safeguard government authority to protect consumers in the event of a crisis.

I am deeply disappointed that the Administration refused to include the U.S.-Jordan FTA standards that require the enforcement of environmental laws and the adoption of labor laws consistent with the five core International Labor Organization (ILO) standards. While laws in Chile and Singapore may already meet these standards, the omission sends a wrong message that the basic principles of international workers rights and environmental protection are slipping from the U.S. trade agenda.

I am also disappointed that the Administration did not use the Chile and Singapore FTAs as an opportunity to explicitly clarify that the investor-to-state provisions of the agreement do not give foreign companies greater rights than U.S. investors have under U.S. law. Even though the definition of expropriation in the Singapore and Chile FTAs is narrower than NAFTA, more changes are necessary to fix this distorted mechanism. Experience tells us that it is being abused to challenge U.S. regulatory and environmental law.

Moreover, I strenuously object to the FTAs' grant of extended monopoly periods to pharmaceutical companies, during which they will face no competition from generic drugs. Many people describe these protections as a simple extension of the Hatch-Waxman legislation that applies to the American market to our trading partners, but this is a serious distortion of the bill I co-authored. Hatch-Waxman was passed to overcome existing regulatory barriers in the U.S. market to the approval of low-cost generic drugs. In exchange for this new authority, the law provided specified periods of exclusive marketing and patent extensions to pharmaceutical companies, allowing them to recoup development costs. The length of any exclusive marking period, during which no generic version could be marketed, was tied to the degree of innovation, I represented by the drug.

As a co-author of Hatch-Waxman, I cannot emphasize enough that this carefully balanced legislation represented a tailored solution to a specific regulatory problem in the United States. By adding these provisions to trade agreements, the USTR is heedlessly extending the exclusive marketing periods of Hatch-Waxman (and, in some cases, even more generous exclusive marketing periods) to other countries whose generic drug markets and health-care regulatory systems may look nothing like those in the United States. Although the impact of these protections may be limited in developed countries like Chile and Singapore it would be devastating in other countries that lack affordable and available life saving medicines and endure dangerous health epidemics.

In voting for this legislation, I want to make it clear that the Chile and Singapore agreements should not be adopted as ''cookie-cutter'' prototypes for other FTA's currently being negotiated. The economic, social, and political diversity of Central America, Morocco, Australia and the other countries slated for inclusion in the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas and the Southern Africa Customs Union are simply too diverse to be forced in the Chile and Singapore mold.

International trade has the potential to raise the standard of living and quality of life for millions of people around the world. To achieve this, however, we must work for progressive,