

unsafe imports that are on our store shelves. Looking into the eyes of Sara and her children yesterday, looking into the eyes of Sara yesterday, of her friend Sonia, and seeing the look she had about why isn't the government on our side on this—it does matter. We are hearing consumers demand accountability for the unsafe imports that are on our store shelves.

Passing a trade agreement with Peru is not the change Americans demanded last year, that Americans continue to demand now, and that America will continue to demand in the years ahead.

I yield the floor and I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

UNITED STATES-PERU TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3688, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3688) to implement the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 90 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words as to why I am strongly opposed to the Peru Free Trade Agreement. Some of the points I made last night, but I think they need reiteration. The untold story of the economy in the United States is that the middle class is shrinking, poverty is increasing, and the gap between the rich and the poor is growing much wider. I am not going to stand here and tell you trade is the only reason the middle class is shrinking, but I am going to tell you it is a major reason, and it is an issue we have to deal with.

Mr. President, since George W. Bush has been in office, 5 million Americans have slipped out of the middle class and into poverty, 8½ million Americans have lost their health insurance, median household income for working-age families has gone down by nearly \$2,500, over 3 million good-paying manufacturing jobs have been lost, 3 million Americans have lost their pensions, wages and salaries are now at their lowest share of GDP since 1929,

and we are in a situation now where the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans earn far more income than the bottom 50 percent.

In the last number of years, technology has exploded and worker productivity has increased. Yet in the midst of all of that, the middle class is struggling desperately to keep their heads above water, and poverty is increasing.

I think the question this Senate should be spending a lot of time on answering is why that is happening. Why is it that everything being equal, our kids will have, for the first time in the modern history of the United States, a lower standard of living than we do? Why is it that a two-income family today has less disposable income than a one-income family did 30 years ago? In the midst of all this globalization, all of the explosion of technology, all of the increase in worker productivity, there is more and more economic desperation in the United States, and the only people who are doing very well are the wealthiest 1 or 2 percent of the population.

Now, I think there is a real problem when you have unfettered free-trade agreements which essentially allow corporate America to throw American workers out on the street, move to China, move to other low-wage countries, pay people their 50 cents an hour, \$1 an hour, and then bring their products back into this country. One of the great crises we are facing is we are not building manufacturing plants in the United States and putting people to work at good wages with good benefits. Not only are we losing blue-collar jobs, we are losing white-collar information technology jobs. And millions of parents all over this country are wondering what kind of jobs are going to be available for their kids.

The fact is, these free-trade agreements have not worked. I don't know how many times and what people need to understand that. Just take a look at NAFTA. I remember, because I was a Member of the House during that debate, that the supporters of unfettered free trade told us over and over that NAFTA would increase jobs in the United States. But according to the Economic Policy Institute, NAFTA has led to the elimination of over 1 million American jobs.

Now, why would you want to follow a paradigm, a trade policy approach which has failed in the past? If it has failed time and time again, why would you keep doing the same thing? A manager of a baseball team who has losing records year after year gets fired. That is what happens. The team changes its approach.

Right now, we have a huge trade deficit. It is a growing trade deficit. We are losing good-paying jobs. Pressure on wages is to push them down into a race to the bottom. That is a failed trade policy.

Supporters of unfettered free trade told us that NAFTA would signifi-

cantly reduce the flow of illegal immigration into this country because the standard of living in Mexico would increase. Well, guess what. They were wrong. It didn't happen. As a result of NAFTA, severe poverty in Mexico increased. It didn't go down, it increased, and 1.3 million small farmers in that country have been displaced, with real wages for the majority of Mexicans having gone down. All of this has led to a 60-percent annual increase in illegal immigration from Mexico during the first 6 years of NAFTA alone.

What is happening in Mexico and in the United States and in many other countries today because of unfettered free trade is we are seeing a huge increase in the gap between the people on top and everybody else. I will give just one example. In Mexico today, a poor country, a gentleman named Carlos Slim has just surpassed Bill Gates as the wealthiest person in the world, worth over \$60 billion, in a poor country. Incredibly, because of unfettered free trade and near liberal type of economic policy, Mr. Slim is worth more than the poorest 45 million Mexicans combined. One man has more wealth than the bottom 45 percent, which happens to be 45 million Mexicans. That is one of the manifestations of unfettered free trade.

And the situation is the same with China. I remember the debate about China—we have a great market in China. If we open permanent normal trade relations with China, it will create all kinds of jobs. Nobody believes that is true. We have a huge trade deficit with China, a trade deficit that is growing. People today are doing Christmas shopping. When they go to the stores, the products they will find from A to Z are made in China, not made in the United States. I can tell you that in my small State of Vermont, we have lost 25 percent of our manufacturing jobs in the last 6 years—not just due to trade, but trade has played an important role.

All over this country, people are wondering why corporate America is not reinvesting in Pennsylvania or Vermont or the rest of the country. Well, you know why. They are investing billions and billions of dollars in China, hiring people there at pennies an hour, and then they bring their products back into this country. And people are wondering: How do you become a great economy? How do you lead the world? How do you have good jobs for your kids if we are not producing the goods that our people purchase?

You will remember, Mr. President, that 20, 25 years ago, the largest employer in the United States was General Motors. They produced automobiles. They paid people good wages, they had good benefits, and there was a strong union. Today, the largest employer in the United States is Wal-Mart, with low wages, minimal benefits, and vehemently antiunion.

What I also don't understand, in terms of this trade debate, is who the