

Peru Trade Promotion Agreement Implementation Act, we have taken a long-overdue step to strengthen our relationship with Peru, a close friend and important ally in Latin America. This agreement will result in new economic opportunities for U.S. farmers, manufacturers, and service providers, and I am pleased that the Senate has finally voted in favor of its implementation.

None of this would have been possible without the leadership of two of our United States Trade Representatives, Susan Schwab and her predecessor, Rob Portman. I want to thank Ambassador Portman for his hard work at the negotiating table that resulted in a solid agreement that will level the playing field for U.S. producers and exporters. And, I want to thank Ambassador Schwab for her dedication and perseverance that culminated in the May 10 bipartisan trade compromise, which set the stage for today's successful vote. Also meriting special mention for their tireless efforts are the Assistant United States Trade Representative for the Americas, Everett Eissenstat, and his predecessor, Regina Vargo.

Here in the Senate, I want to begin by thanking the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator MAX BAUCUS. He is a true leader on trade and on the committee. And he is supported by a strong staff. That starts with the Democratic staff director on the Finance Committee, Russ Sullivan, and the deputy staff director, Bill Dauster, who were critical to the process. I also want to thank his chief international trade counsel, Demetrios Marantis, as well as the other members of the Democratic trade staff, Amber Cottle, Janis Lazda, Chelsea Thomas, Darci Vetter, and Hun Quach, and two individuals serving on detail to Senator BAUCUS, Russ Ugone and Ayesha Khanna.

Of course, I am grateful for the outstanding effort of my staff as well. First, my chief counsel and staff director, Kolan Davis, merits special mention. His legislative expertise has been instrumental in moving countless bills and this is no exception. I also want to thank my chief international trade counsel, Stephen Schaefer, as well as David Johanson, David Ross, and Claudia Bridgeford Poteet. And, I want to thank John Kalitka, who is on detail to my office from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Finally, I want to thank Polly Craighill and Margaret Roth-Warren of the Office of the Senate Legislative Counsel for their hard work on this legislation. As always, Polly's patience and expertise have been invaluable in producing a top-notch bill. Margaret is a relatively recent addition to the office and already she is proving herself a very strong asset to our legislative team.

Today's vote is long overdue. The May 10 compromise was expected to pave the way for quick consideration of all four of our pending free trade agreements, as well as the renewal of trade

promotion authority. That hasn't happened as quickly as I would have liked. Still, today's vote is a critical first step, and I hope we can use this vote to build momentum toward implementing the next agreement in line, which is our trade agreement with Colombia. We should move the Colombia trade agreement as soon as possible, and I will work hard toward that outcome in the 110th Congress.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today the Senate voted to approve H.R. 3688, the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement Implementation Act. In July of 2006, I opposed this agreement when it came before the Senate Finance Committee because it lacked enforceable labor standards—standards that Peru's President Alejandro Toledo indicated a willingness to support. What a difference a year makes. As a result of a landmark bipartisan agreement reached in May of this year, and for the first time ever in a free trade agreement, our agreement with Peru encompasses meaningful and enforceable labor and environmental protections.

The labor chapter of the agreement requires both the United States and Peru to adopt and maintain domestic laws to implement the five core standards incorporated in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: (1) the right to organize; (2) the right to bargain collectively; (3) prohibitions on forced labor; (4) protections for child labor; and (5) freedom from employment discrimination. The environmental chapter requires both the United States and Peru to adopt and maintain domestic laws to implement the obligations in seven multilateral environmental agreements to which both the United States and Peru are parties. I have long championed the inclusion of enforceable labor and environmental standards in free trade agreements, and I supported the agreement today because of these chapters. It is imperative that our trading partners be held to high labor and environmental standards, and I would not stand in support of this agreement had these provisions not been included.

The Peru Free Trade Agreement is a landmark achievement that makes these provisions fully enforceable—subjecting these provisions to the same dispute resolution system that applies to the commercial provisions of the agreement. I urge the President, along with the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, to hold Peru's government accountable to these provisions. By ensuring that these standards are fully enforced, the President can solidify this agreement with Peru as a model for dealing with future trading partners.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morn-

ing business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

LIHEAP

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, winter is fast approaching. The Senator from Minnesota was out there with his snow blower and shovel already this weekend. We had from 6 to 10 inches of snow in some portions of the State, 6 inches in the metro area. It was minus 2 when I woke up one day in the Twin Cities, in St. Paul. I traveled around the State. I think it was around minus 8, minus 9, and that is not getting cold yet. In that weather, we actually button the top button but no more.

The reality for many families is cold weather has a lot of people deeply concerned about their ability to keep the heat on. Most of us look forward to the coming of the holiday season as a time we get together with loved ones. For many Americans, this holiday season comes at a time when the cost of energy is skyrocketing. It is raising the level of anxiety as to whether they are going to be able to pay these ever-rising heating costs.

I will never forget a hearing I held for the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. I actually did a hearing on the issue of energy costs in my home State last year. I got a chance to listen firsthand to folks who, last year, were impacted by rising energy costs. They bear down on young and old alike.

I had the opportunity to meet Deidre Jackson, a single mother, working professional, and college student who saw her heating bill go through the roof. Meanwhile, Lucille Olson told a story familiar to many seniors of the struggle balancing the high cost of health care, prescription drugs, with heating bills that represented 30 percent of her monthly income. Unfortunately, for many seniors, this is not a balancing act that is easily maintained. Stories abound of grandmothers and grandfathers having to choose between food, medicine, clothing, and heat. This should not happen in America in the 21st century.

It is for stories such as these that we have the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program—LIHEAP—to provide heating and cooling assistance for folks who are struggling to get by. To many Americans, LIHEAP is a real lifeline. More than 70 percent of families receiving LIHEAP assistance have