

that will level the playing field for America's exporters. It will open the new export market for American products, including Montana beef, wheat, and barley, and it will bolster a close ally in a troubled region.

Expanding trade and supporting Colombia are important priorities. That is why the administration should have handled this agreement the right way. Had the administration sought the right answer, it would have worked harder to support my top priority: American workers. Had the administration not rushed forward with the easy answer, we could have had trade adjustment assistance in place before considering this agreement. We need expanded and effective trade adjustment assistance for America's workers. That is clear. That means ensuring that America's service workers—not just its manufacturers and its farmers—receive the help they need.

Service workers make up 80 percent of our workforce. They have helped to build and support the knowledge-based economy that is the engine of America's growth. They work hard. They deserve our support in return.

Expanded and effective trade adjustment assistance must also cover workers whose jobs have been shipped offshore, not just as a result of trade agreements but others as well. It must raise the health care tax credit to make it affordable and accessible, and expanded and effective TAA—trade adjustment assistance—must double the training funds available to our workers.

Were the administration serious about this agreement, it would not have resorted to the easy procedural answers either. In high school civics class, they teach that the Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate foreign commerce. Congress entrusted this power temporarily—and, I might add, importantly, conditionally—to the administration under something called trade promotion authority; that is, Congress did not write a blank check. By submitting the agreement now and against Congress's will, the administration abuses the power Congress granted it. By forcing Congress to consider this agreement now, the administration offends the trust of Congress and violates the compact that is the essence of fast track; that is, trade promotion authority.

When Congress extended trade promotion authority—or, as people call it, fast track—they did so on the condition that the administration would consult with Congress about the text of proposed agreements before it sent them up. Congress set up an informal markup process to apply before the administration formally sent up the legislation. That informal procedure is very important. It was to be conducted, again, before the administration formally sent up its legislative language. The administration has now completely bypassed that process. Now Congress has no opportunity to affect

the language of the proposed agreement. This administration has said: It is my way or the highway.

Procedural checks and balances are the cornerstone of the congressional-executive relationship. It is the cornerstone of trade promotion authority. Democratic and Republican administrations have both respected this cornerstone. But today, this administration shattered this cornerstone. By so doing, they further diminish our trust.

By sending up the implementing bill today; that is, before consultation in the right way, the administration has failed to deliver the right answer for Colombia's workers. Colombia's workers must know that they can safely pursue equality and justice in the workplace, free from the violence that has plagued Colombia in the past.

The Colombian Government has made great strides in this area. The enforceable labor provisions in the United States-Colombia trade agreement are a critical step to ensuring further progress. We must make sure the Colombian Government takes these obligations seriously. They must show that these obligations are not just paper promises.

The normal congressional fast-track process of hearings and formal markups—which the administration has short-circuited—is an important time for Congress to air concerns, exercise its leverage. It allows Congress to ensure that the Colombian Government is committed to prosecuting labor violence. These hearings are important to accomplish that objective. It gives us real leverage to seek commitments from the Colombian Government and the administration to create a work environment in Colombia grounded in law and backed by action. It also allows Congress the chance to help the Colombian Government, through funding provisions included in the implementing bill, to create an environment where those who seek a better life through employment can flourish. Short-circuiting the process and forcing a premature vote on a trade agreement does nothing to help Congress accomplish these goals.

The President's unprecedented handling of the United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement raises extraordinary questions about how we can move this agreement forward. For America's workers, for the relationship between Congress and the President, for the Colombian people, Congress must now find answers. Finding the right answer has never been easy. By submitting this agreement as it did and when it did, the administration has sought the easy answer, but in the end, the administration has simply made it harder to find the right answer.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. 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.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, last week, I tried and failed to introduce an amendment which essentially would set minimum standards, minimum Federal standards for—I see the chairman of the committee has just come in, so if I might wait for a moment and see what he wishes to do. May I note the absence of a quorum for a moment, please.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. 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.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business until the managers of the legislation wish to proceed.

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

MEMPHIS TIGERS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Montana especially.

There is sorrow in our Bluff City on the Mississippi River and across Tennessee today because the noble University of Memphis Tigers lost last night to Kansas in the finals of the NCAA National Championship basketball tournament. But there is also reason for great pride. The ebullient John Calapiari and his team gave Memphis a new source of pride and the sport a season to remember, winning more games than any college basketball team ever has. Years from now, fans will be talking about the magical Douglas-Roberts, the indomitable Dorsey, the ubiquitous Anderson, the reliable Dozier, the explosive Rose, and the super sub Taggart. They have given fans a great year. They have helped unify Tennessee's largest city. They should hold their heads high as we look toward next year.

HOUSING

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, yesterday I made a few remarks about an amendment Senator KYL and I have offered to an Ensign-Cantwell amendment, and today I wish to place in the