

to disenfranchise some of the most vulnerable American voters. In several instances elderly nuns who were not able to vote as a result of Indiana's laws. Although the Supreme Court agreed with Mr. Garre's position, 6-3, the Court left the door open for "as applied" challenges and statutory challenges to laws that burden voters' fundamental right to participate in the electoral process by mandating a photo ID. If confirmed, I hope Mr. Garre will act as he said in his hearing he would to enforce the Voting Rights Act's antidiscrimination provisions against State photo ID laws that deter minority voter participation.

I hope Mr. Garre shares my view that it is vital that we ensure that we have a functioning, independent Justice Department, and that we ensure that this sad era in the history of the Department is not repeated. We have seen what happens when the rule of law plays second fiddle to a President's agenda and the partisan desires of political operatives and it is a disaster for the American people. Both the President and the Nation are best served by a Justice Department that provides sound advice and takes responsible action, without regard to political considerations—not one that develops legalistic loopholes and ideological litmus tests to serve the ends of a particular administration.

Jeff Sedgwick will also have an important role to play in the few months remaining in this administration. The Office of Justice Programs plays a vital role in developing the Nation's capacity to prevent and control crime and compensating and assisting crime victims. Crime, including violent crime, has been on the rise, particularly in rural areas and smaller cities. Many of us think it is in part the consequence of this administration's failure to provide financial assistance to our state and local law enforcement partners. Despite our repeated warnings, the Bush administration has systematically tried to dismantle Federal support for local and state law enforcement that was being provided through our successful Community-Oriented Policing Services, COPS, program, Byrne grants and other programs. Under President Bush, billions have been cut from our state and local law enforcement efforts while we continue writing blank checks for police in Iraq. I hope that Mr. Sedgwick helps us reverse this trend and turn the tide back against crime in rural areas and smaller cities where it has been on the rise.

I congratulate the nominees and their families on their confirmations today.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

ANDEAN TRADE PREFERENCE EXTENSION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 7222, which was received from the House.

The clerk will report the bill by title. The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7222) to extend the Andean Trade Preferences Act, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, President John F. Kennedy said that "if a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

This week, Congress has worked hard on the American economy. No matter how grave our problems today, America remains the world's richest nation. Our domestic challenges are great. But ours remains a land of opportunity and prosperity.

With our own economy in hard times, it is easy to forget the world's poorest. It is easy to forget that more than a billion people around the world live on a dollar a day or less. Concerned about maintaining our own standard of living, we can forget that the wealth of too many consists of little more than the clothes on their backs and the few coins in their pockets.

The legislation that we consider today proves we are not an island—economically or morally. Today's legislation accomplishes four key objectives. It extends the Generalized System of Preferences for 1 year, extends the Andean Trade Preferences Act for 6 months to 1 year, with safeguards to ensure that Bolivia and Ecuador comply with that program's rules, affords the Dominican Republic enhanced access to the U.S. market in a way that benefits U.S. producers, and allows our trade preference program with Africa—known as AGOA—to work better.

I am proud that, by considering and passing this legislation, America again proves that we are still capable of thinking of others. By acting on this bill, Americans underscore that those who do not share our wealth must not be denied hope for a better life. By extending our trade preference programs, Americans reaffirm the fundamental belief that the world's poor are no less human than we are, and they deserve a fair shake for a hard day's work.

America has crafted trade preference programs for those hundreds of millions of poor around the world, not with a handout, but with a leg up. These preference programs offer more than 130 countries a way out of extreme poverty—poverty that is not just morally repugnant, but politically destabilizing. Our GSP and ATPA programs give developing country workers a living, rewards productive investment, and grants better access to America's market.

The benefits of these programs are mutual and create jobs that earn good

wages in Montana and the rest of the country. Retail and transportation jobs in America depend on flower exports from Ecuador and Colombia. We sell American cotton to Andean and Dominican textile buyers who turn it into fabric and apparel. American manufacturers rely on imports from GSP beneficiaries to lower input costs on electrical parts and building materials. And American consumers benefit from lower priced products from diamond rings to tires.

Our preference programs are not perfect. My colleagues and I are concerned that our preference programs may help those who do not need or deserve our help. We are concerned that certain beneficiary countries boast globally competitive industries and wealthy owners. We are concerned that certain beneficiary countries show disdain for America's foreign policies and do not provide adequate protections for the American companies operating in those countries.

Yet I recognize that the good and prosperity of the many cannot be sacrificed to punish the few. The inappropriate actions of a few cannot lead us to inaction that hurts the many and throws entire economies into a spiral of insecurity and poverty.

This legislation on our preference programs is no blank check. Our preference programs require beneficiary countries to protect U.S. investment and intellectual property and to provide workers with internationally recognized worker rights. Our programs provide the administration with the flexibility to work within the program in order to determine whether or not to designate a country a beneficiary country. And when beneficiary countries do not abide by these eligibility criteria, they must be held responsible. I commend the administration for launching an ATPA review of Bolivia to ensure that it continues to abide by the eligibility criteria.

Our preference programs also contain measures to make sure that developing countries that become globally competitive graduate to operate under the same terms as the rest of America's trading partners.

These policies are not perfect. No policy this body passes is static. Every policy requires review and reevaluation to make sure it works how it should, for whom it should. As chairman of the Finance Committee, I am committed with my colleagues to reviewing and reevaluating our trade preference programs to make them work better for Americans and our trading partners.

Let us do things the right way, the American way, and extend our preference programs.

Mr. LEVIN. I ask unanimous consent that a Reid substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.