

to organize freely, bargain collectively, and live safely is not just good for workers abroad, but it helps workers in the United States as well.

The United States simply cannot compete in a global race to the bottom when it comes to labor standards. Our workers are some of the most highly skilled and productive workers in the world. But they simply cannot compete against countries that make things more cheaply because they don't respect the rights of their workers, have safe workplaces, or pay their workers a living wage. Unfortunately, this agreement will not help us further that goal.

I would like to raise a second significant concern I have about the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. As many of my colleagues know, I have been working on reducing abusive and exploitative child labor around the world for nearly two decades. I first introduced a bill on this issue in 1992. According to the best estimates by the International Labor Organization, ILO, there are 215 million child laborers between the ages of 5 and 17 who are engaged in today's global economy.

Of these 215 million child laborers, 115 million are engaged in hazardous work. These 115 million powerless children are working in mines, in fishing operations and on coffee plantations. It is appalling that this is still occurring in the 21st century. These children are robbed of their childhoods. Many are denied an education and any hope for a brighter future. They will grow up illiterate and exploited, creating a wellspring of future social conflict and strife.

We have made some progress over the years by funding programs for the remediation of child laborers through our contribution to the ILO's International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor, IPEC. In 2000, I successfully amended the Trade and Development Act with a provision directing that no trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences, GSP, be granted to any country that does not live up to its commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. I required that the President submit a yearly report to Congress on the steps being taken by each GSP beneficiary country to carry out its commitments to end abusive and exploitative child labor.

I want to explain clearly to my colleagues what I mean when I refer to abusive and exploitative child labor. It is not children who work part-time after school or on weekends. There is nothing wrong with that. That is not the issue. What I am referring to is the definition set out by ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. This is not just a Western, or a developed-world, standard. It is a global standard that has been ratified by 174 countries. It has been ratified by Colombia. The United States was the third country in the world to ratify this convention.

Unfortunately, the Department of Labor's Findings on the Worst Forms

of Child Labor that was released this month, states up front that Colombia, "has not provided adequate resources to the National Strategy to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Children continue to work in agriculture, including forced coca cultivation, and in mining." The report further finds that children are forced to work in domestic service, are sexually exploited, transport illegal drugs, and even are used by armed militants as child soldiers.

In addition to these shocking practices, eight Colombian products appear in the 2011 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, also released by DOL this month. These products include coffee, sugarcane, and gold.

Unfortunately, the implementing legislation now before the Senate for free trade with Colombia actually would take us, and the world, a step backward when it comes to protecting children. That is right. This free trade agreement with Colombia, which replaces GSP provisions in governing trade between our two countries, will take us backward with respect to abusive and exploitative child labor.

Under GSP, the President now must report to Congress annually regarding Colombia's child labor practices, and if Colombia is not meeting the obligations that it undertook as a signatory to the ILO Convention, if Colombia is not acting to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, then trade sanctions are available to us to require enforcement of internationally recognized standards. That is so that our companies, and our workers, are not subjected to the unfair competition that abusive labor practices allow. Under this new implementing legislation for free trade with Colombia, on the other hand, if it is enacted, neither of those things I just mentioned will be true.

Our trade negotiators should not be weakening protections that we in Congress put in place to ensure that free trade can be consistent with respect for international child labor standards. Supporting abusive and exploitative child labor abroad does not help create jobs in America. Just the opposite, it hurts that effort. Our workers and our local businesses should not be competing with the worst forms of child labor abroad.

As a result, I strongly believe that we need to put the break on this flawed trade agreement. It is time for us to begin passing fair trade agreements that promote good quality jobs both here and abroad and work to end the worst forms of child labor. This agreement does not meet that test.

PRESIDENTIAL COIN PROGRAM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD my letter dated October 17, 2011, to the minority leader regarding S. 1385.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, October 17, 2011.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR LEADER MCCONNELL: I respectfully request that the Senate not enter into any unanimous consent agreement pertaining to S. 1385, a bill to terminate the \$1 presidential coin program. I have concerns about the impact of this bill, including whether taxpayers will benefit from ending the \$1 presidential coin program.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
United States Senator.

REMEMBERING ELOUISE COBELL

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor this weekend's passing of my friend Elouise Cobell—an extraordinary Montanan, American and American Indian. I am proud to have nominated her for the Congressional Gold Medal. As a role model for every American child, she deserves that highest honor.

Elouise Pepion Cobell was a star—truly a guiding light that will always lead the way for all Americans who fight for justice and fairness. Elouise's tireless leadership set this Nation on a new course, and what she accomplished reminds us that any person in any part of this country has the power to stand up and right a wrong, no matter how difficult it may be.

Sharla's and my thoughts and prayers are with Elouise's husband Alvin, her son Turk, and her entire family. We join the Blackfeet Nation and all Montanans in mourning, honoring and celebrating the life of an extraordinary Montanan. Future generations will learn about Elouise Cobell's legacy and they will be inspired to follow her lead. She will always be remembered as an American hero.

I have many memories of Elouise. I first met her when I was a State Senator. I knew what she was working on but I never imagined she would ever get as far as she did. Not many people in this world have the determination in them that Elouise had. From those early days, until just a few weeks ago, I talked to her numerous times. She had been fighting the Federal Government in court for a decade, and wouldn't take "no" for an answer. She knew what she wanted, and wanted it yesterday.

After I finally convinced her I wanted to help, our relationship changed. We became friends working together on a common goal; a settlement that was fair and balanced. And believe me, as my friend, she was not afraid to call me and tell me what she thought and how to get things done.

But I will never forget talking to her on the afternoon of November 19, 2010. The Senate had just approved the Cobell Settlement. Our bill paved the way to send her settlement to President Obama for his signature. She