

enforce the labor standards negotiated in the May 10 agreement. This administration cannot and will not enforce American worker safety right here in the United States.

In a statement released on May 11, AFL-CIO President, John Sweeney, reminded us of the Bush administration's past failures by saying: "The Bush violations against nations like Jordan and China remind us there is no guarantee the executive branch will enforce any new rights workers may gain through these negotiations."

The machinists labor union echoed Mr. Sweeney's statement in a letter to Congress dated August 2. It states: "We are well aware of this administration's dismal record when it comes to workers' rights. For example, it has refused to issue a trade complaint against China for workers' rights violations described fully in AFL-CIO submissions. Given its past record, we fear that this administration will simply ignore even the most egregious labor violations."

Recently, I received a letter from two Peruvian labor federations concerned about the labor provisions in the pending FTA.

Madam Speaker, our trade policies must start to serve the interests of America's working families and workers around the globe. We can do better. We need to overhaul our trade readjustment program. We need to calculate the loss of American jobs when this bill goes into effect, and we need to remember that our majority is here because working men and women demanded that we look out for them and their families.

Let's slow down, vote "no" on this trade deal, and stand up to those people who stood up for us. That, Madam Speaker, is the very least that we can do. I urge my colleagues to please vote "no" on the Peru agreement.

FREE THE CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, pro-democracy activists inside Cuba report that an undetermined number of dissidents were detained by the dictatorship on the morning of September 27. The dissidents were on their way to participate in peaceful activities to request the release of political prisoners.

Those detained in Cuba on September 27 include Martha Beatriz Roque, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez "Antunez," Blas Augusto Fortun Martinez, Yubi Diosenegui Pernet Perez, Alicia Martinez Guevara, Alejandro Gabriel Martinez Martinez, Guillermo Perez Year, Amado Ruiz Moreno, Carlos Cordero

Paez, Idania Yanes Contreras, Yesmi Elena Mena Silvano, Jose Diaz Silva, Georgina Noa Montes, Arturo Montgomerly Alonso, Roberto de Jesus Guerra Perez, Yunieski Garcia Lopez, Lester Fernandez Zamora, Felix Reyes Gutierrez, Yoel Espinosa Medrano, Ariel Orama Martin, Angel Raul Perez Gavilan, Javier Delgado Torres, Carlos Michael Morales Rodriguez, and others whose names I do not have. At this time it is unknown how many of the detained dissidents have been released and how many will be kept in confinement. It is up to the whim of the ailing tyrant.

The list of political prisoners languishing in Cuban prisons is long, Madam Speaker. Sixty dissidents who were peacefully expressing their opposition to the dictatorship remain in prison since the regime's brutal crackdown of March 2003, joining hundreds of other political prisoners. Reporters Without Borders reports that there are at least 23 journalists languishing in abysmal conditions in Cuban prisons.

The Miami Herald today published a very important editorial about one such journalist. I think it's an editorial that deserves commendation and attention. It reads as follows:

Normando Hernandez Gonzalez may die for exercising free speech in Cuba. An independent journalist, he has been imprisoned since Cuba's crackdown on dissidents in April 2003. Now he is so critically ill that he was transferred to a Havana military hospital last week.

It is bad enough that Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez, 39, is serving a 25-year sentence for criticizing the government, something people in free countries do every day. Yet things could get worse. Returning him to prison would be a death sentence. This is where he contracted serious ailments, chronic digestive disorders and tuberculosis among them. Even if his condition were to improve in the hospital, he would not last long in the filthy cells and eating the food given to political prisoners.

The hope now is that Cuba will free Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez and allow him to leave the country and soon. International pressure is needed.

To their credit, legislators in Costa Rica granted Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez a humanitarian visa in April. Cuban authorities refused to honor the visa. But a recent move appeared to get Cuba's attention. Jose Manuel Echandi Meza, a Costa Rican lawmaker, filed a formal complaint with the U.N. Human Rights Commission two weeks ago that accuses Cuba of torturing Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez by denying him proper medical treatment. The following day, he was sent to the Havana hospital. He appears to be getting some medical treatment, according to his wife.

That wasn't the case before. Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez has been deteriorating since his first year in prison. He has been beaten, placed in solitary confinement and repeatedly denied access to basic medical care. He blames overcrowded, vermin-filled cells and contaminated food and water for his multiple illnesses. He suffers nausea, diarrhea, fever, fainting spells and weight loss.

Last December, he was rushed from his prison to a hospital in Camaguey. There he was placed in a room with no furniture. His

food was thrown under the door. He returned to prison untreated. While Cuba boasts of its health care system, it denies political prisoners basic care.

PEN, a writers advocacy group, awarded Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez its prestigious Freedom to Write Award earlier this year. For more information on his case, go to PEN's Web site at www.pen.org. Let the world know that Mr. Hernandez Gonzalez and hundreds of other political prisoners haven't been forgotten. All of them should be released."

Now, Madam Speaker, the same week that approximately 30 dissidents were rounded up and thrown in dungeons by the Cuban dictatorship, the Spanish Government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero decided to unilaterally break the European Union's "Common Position" on Cuba, by entering into a cooperation agreement with the Cuban tyranny.

Mr. Rodriguez Zapatero and his government thus continue to act as the Castro brothers' most zealous advocates in Europe, and they deserve the condemnation of all freedom-loving men and women for their disgraceful actions.

I renew tonight my call for the immediate liberation of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in totalitarian Cuba and urge international solidarity for them and for their right to be released immediately and unconditionally, all of them, now.

OPPOSE THE PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, many of the newly elected freshmen campaigned on a platform of ensuring a significant change of course from the Bush trade policy.

The Peru Free Trade Agreement is based on the same flawed NAFTA-CAFTA model that has been so devastating to industries all across our Nation.

While I campaigned for this seat 5 years ago, the cornerstone of my campaign also was to fix our broken trade policies. I've seen firsthand what they have done to the State of Maine.

I firmly believe that in order to address our trade imbalance, we have to change the trade model. The Peru Free Trade Agreement is the same old model with a little lipstick.

There is overwhelming opposition to the agreement by unions, environmental, consumer and small business groups. They're all asking Congress to oppose the Peru FTA. Who supports the bill? The large multinational corporations, Big Business, does.

When Tom Donahue, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce,

states that he is "encouraged by assurance that the labor provisions cannot be read to require compliance with ILO conventions," we should be more than skeptical.

While we have all heard that the Peru trade agreement text improves labor and environmental standards, we fail to hear that they were added on top of the same old NAFTA and CAFTA text. The bottom line: this is another Bush NAFTA expansion.

Key unions are worried about the labor provisions. The new provisions require countries to adopt, maintain, and enforce only the terms of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The new FTA language does not require signatories to meet the ILO conventions. That's the binding standards. The declaration is a nonbinding statement.

It is highly likely that changes to the environment and labor provisions will have no real effect on the ground.

We all know that the Bush administration has a long record of not enforcing the standards of past trade agreements. Why should they start now?

And there are so many problems with the Peru Free Trade Agreement, whether it's the privatization of Social Security, ban on anti-offshoring, or failure to protect our intellectual property rights. There are more than enough reasons to oppose the Peru FTA. Not to mention if you look at NAFTA, NAFTA has caused a worse problem here in the United States with illegal immigration. The Peru Free Trade Agreement will do the same thing, cause the illegal immigration problem to get worse.

I could go on and on about the Peru FTA. I ask my colleagues to really listen to what America is saying about these free trade agreements. I'm asking Members to vote their conscience. Oppose the Peru FTA.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS REPORT ON THE ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, it's so good to see you in the Chair, especially on this occasion as we engage in the Congressional Black Caucus message hour.

This evening it gives me great pleasure to spend some time talking about

the annual legislative conference that was this past weekend right here in Washington, DC.

I am joined this evening by the co-chair. The Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus foundation is KENDRICK MEEK, but the co-chairs of this wonderful weekend this year are my good friends G.K. BUTTERFIELD from North Carolina and my colleague and good friend DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Virgin Islands.

So I am going to begin by yielding to my colleague and good friend from the great State of North Carolina, G.K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I want to first of all thank the gentlelady from Ohio for her leadership here in the Congress. One of the first Members that I met when I came to Washington 3 years ago was STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES. She is engaged all the time and is certainly representing the constituents of her district. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you this evening.

We have just finished the 37th Annual Legislative Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

I want to delineate between the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. Those are two separate entities. So often people confuse those entities, but the Congressional Black Caucus proper is simply an unofficial organization of the 43 CBC members, African American Members who are serving in the Congress who meet from time to time to discuss public policy issues. It is not a foundation; it is simply an informal gathering of Members of Congress.

By contrast, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation is a very formal organization. It is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt foundation that has been in existence for many years. I want to start off by making that point abundantly clear.

The Congressional Black Caucus is composed of 43 members. We hear that number from time to time. That's a very important number. It has not always been 43 members. The African American representation here in Congress has evolved over the years, and now it is at its highest point in its history; 42 African Americans serve in the House. Of those 42, 40 are full voting Members of the House of Representatives. The other two have the right to vote in committees and in the Committee of the Whole, but not in the full House, because they represent the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. Hopefully one day in the not too distant future even those two Members will have a right to full participation here in the Congress.

But having 42 African Americans in the House of Representatives is significant. That is 17 percent of the House of Representatives, at least the Democrats in the House of Representatives come from the Congressional Black Caucus, and so that is very important.

So over the years, the Congressional Black Caucus has seen fit to annually

produce an annual legislative conference whereby African American leaders from all across the country can come to Washington in fellowship and interact and network with other people across the country, and then we conclude the week by having a gala or an annual dinner. We have just completed the 37th annual conference this past week, and it was a smashing success.

I want to thank all of those persons who had a hand in making it happen. KENDRICK MEEK from Miami, Dade County, Florida, is the leader of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. We used to call him a part of the 30-something club, but he has now passed that great 40-year-old mark, but he is still young and energetic and dynamic.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Are you a member of the 30-something club?

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. No, ma'am, I am not. I am a member of the 60-something.

But KENDRICK MEEK has led our organization, and we had a very, very good conference last week. I am not going to go into all the details, I am sure my colleague, DONNA CHRISTENSEN, who was also my cochair last week may give you details about it, but it was a wonderful week.

We had brain trust on just about every topic that you can imagine. We had a gospel extravaganza, and one of my choirs from North Carolina came to Washington and really, really had a magnificent showing in that extravaganza. Then we had a prayer breakfast. We are very close to prayer in the Congressional Black Caucus, because we know it has been our faith that has brought us thus far along the way. Then we concluded on Saturday night with our gala. I don't know how many thousand people were at that dinner.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. More than 3,000.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Yes. There were more, more like 4, 5,000 people in attendance at the dinner, and it was a great success.

I want to thank all of those persons who had a hand in making the week the success that it was, particularly Dr. Elsie Scott and the staff of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

You know, Congresswoman, I say in speeches all the time and I will say here on the House floor today, you know, we get credit for a lot of things that we really don't deserve, Members of Congress. We cut the ribbons and take pictures and sit in meetings and engage in unnecessary debate sometimes, but it is the staff that does the heavy lifting and gets the job done. So kudos to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation staff.

Let me conclude by saying that since 1868 there has only been 122 African Americans who have served in the United States Congress. That is an actual statistic. Our research shows that 19 African Americans served in the House of Representatives during the Reconstruction. Four of those were