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that. I can't believe we couldn't figure out a way to work this out.

Now, there's much bigger opposition to what—the larger legislative goals of the Million Mom March, but I think they're absolutely right. As you know, I favor—for example, I think if somebody buys a handgun, they ought to get a license, like a car license. It ought to be a photo ID license. It ought to show that they passed a background check and that they passed a gun safety check, just like you do when you get a car. That's what I think.

So I'd like to see the short-term goals resolved this year, and I want them to keep on pushing, because there is so much we can do. We can make America the safest big country in the world and still have people out there hunting and sport shooting, even having weapons for protection if they thought they needed them in their homes. But we can't do it without more prevention.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of polls which suggest that support for gun restrictions are wavering among men, and they tend to be more sympathetic to——

The President. If you read—let me just say this. First, I agree with that. But I think we've got to put it into some perspective.

If you go back and look at the data from the Pew Research survey, they do show that men, particularly men over 55, have been affected by the claims of the NRA and the advertising that the rights of legitimate gun owners are threatened. But they also show that a majority, a significant majority of the people, still respond that we need further gun control measures.

The real problem is whether you talk in general terms about gun control, or whether you talk in specific terms about closing the gun show loophole, banning large capacity ammunition clips, imposing child trigger locks, or licensing gun owners. If you give people the specifics, there are still 70 percent of the people with us, maybe more.

But the labeling fears—because it scares people. I said the other day to our staff, I said, this is weird. That's why the people who oppose our position, they always want to talk about more gun control and imply that the rights of hunters and sports people are threatened. And they use that label.

But you know, when we talk about the speed limits on automobiles or people having to get a license to drive their cars or laws that require you to use your seat belts or put in the right kind of baskets, child safety restraint seats—you know, all those things are laws. You want to drive a car, and you want to put your child in the car. They're all laws. Nobody talks about car control. And you have a constitutional right to travel, too, you know. The Supreme Court says you've got a constitutional right to travel. No one says car control is threatening our constitutional right to travel.

So I think that what we should do is, instead of having these label wars, we should calm down, lower the rhetoric, and say, what is it that we have proposed? What is it that they are advocating? Would it make us safer? Would it prevent more crimes and more accidental deaths and injuries? Does it infringe the Constitution?

My answer is, look at the facts of what they're advocating. Would it make us a safer country? Absolutely. Would it infringe the Constitution? Absolutely not. Therefore, we ought to do it. I think if we just calm this down and look at the facts, we'll prevail.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. outside the Ohio Army/National Guard Facility.

Opening Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion in Akron on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

May 12, 2000

Thank you. First of all, I'd like to thank Congressman Sawyer for inviting me here today, and I thank all of you for joining us. I know we have people here who have a lot of different views on this China issue, but I think that's important. I think this is a big part of what

makes our democracy work is that we sit and try to talk through these things.

I've got a few notes here that are specific to Ohio, so I'd like to just go over them. Obviously, I've spent a lot of time on this trade agreement with China, which was negotiated in order to let them in the World Trade Organization. And in order for us to benefit from its provisions, we have to grant them normal trading status on a permanent basis. For the last 20 years, ever since the formal opening of China in 1979, we've been doing it on an annual basis. So this—I want to make sure we understand, the decision before Congress is whether to go from an annual review of their trade relationships with us, to give them permanent normal trading status—that is, the same status that virtually every other country in the world enjoys.

Now, it's important to recognize that whatever you think the long-term consequences are, the short-term consequences are all running in our favor, because today we have a very large trade deficit with China, and they have very large tariffs and other barriers to our doing business with them. What this does is, they take down a lot of their barriers to trade and investment with America in return for membership in the World Trade Organization, which puts them in the global trading system and requires them to follow certain rules and gives us some way to appeal if they don't follow those rules. But what they get is membership in the club. What they give us are membership dues. That's the way you have to look at this. And the access, on purely economic terms, is, I think, quite impressive.

Today, Ohio is the leading State in machinery exports. Two-thirds of the industrial workers in this State have jobs that benefit in whole or part from exports. In the last 5 years—or from '93 to '98—Akron's exports to China have more than doubled. Over the same period, Ohio's exports to China also more than doubled. And this involves almost every sector of the Ohio economy. It's over $350 million now.

So if this passes—Secretary Glickman can talk about it later as well—there will be huge new markets for agriculture, new markets for automobiles, new markets for high-tech equipment, new markets for telecommunications equipment. We will be able for the first time, for example, to sell cars there or sell auto parts there without either having to put a manufacturing plant in China or transfer manufacturing technology. That's never been possible before. And the tariffs will drop on average in some of these areas, say, from 25 percent to 10 percent over a period of just a few years. So it's a big—it's in every way an economic winner.

In addition to that, you should know that last April, a year ago, we had most of this, but not all this agreement. And I consulted with, among others, the AFL–CIO and other people who were concerned about whether the economics work out fairly, and they asked me to go back and get some new provisions about our trade relations, so that if China dumped a lot of products into our market in a certain area, which threatened a lot of jobs, we could take immediate and quick action. I did that; that's why we didn't get this agreement last April.

I went back—China has now agreed to give us the right, for more than a decade, to move against them on a bilateral basis if there's trade injury in America. And the standard of proof we have to make is lower than the standard of proof we have to make under our laws for every other country in the world. And they agreed to this. They agreed to allow us to bring action against them if there's severe dislocation of our markets under a standard of proof lower than we have for any other country in the world, which is what I was asked to do, and we got that, against surges of imports and dumping and things like that.

So I think it is a good deal economically. But I have to tell you, I think it's more important for our national security. Why? Because if we let China in the WTO, they will be inside the world trading system. They will have a strong interest in working with other people and cooperating with other people. They will have a strong disincentive not to have trouble with Taiwan, even though there's a lot of tension between the two of them, as all of you have heard. And I think we'll be able to continue to work with them and relate to them and make progress on a whole range of other fronts.

I think it's quite interesting that most, not all, but most of the human rights activists in China, most of the democracy activists in China are for this agreement. There was a big article on the cover of one of our—I think the Washington Post, yesterday on the front page, where they'd gone and actually interviewed dissidents in China who were severely alienated from the Government, and everybody they interviewed

said, "Please do this. If you don't do this, America won't have any influence over the Chinese. You'll never be able to help us. We'll never be able to move forward. We'll be isolated; we'll be more repressed."

Martin Lee, the long-time democracy advocate in Hong Kong—who can't even go to China, has never met the Premier of China, for example, Zhu Rongji—in America last week said, "You have to do this. If you don't vote for this, you have no influence. You can't help me. Nothing will happen. And the chances of something bad happening in China will be much greater." The President-elect of Taiwan, who has previously advocated independence from China, wants us to vote for this.

Now, there are people in China who don't want this to pass. The most militant elements in the military, the most traditional elements, the people who control the state-owned industries, they don't want this to pass because they know if they open up China, their control will be undermined. And in one of the great ironies of this whole trade debate, I've never—it's an unusual thing to see that some of the most progressive people in our country are taking a position that is supported by only the most regressive people in their country. Because they know that isolation helps them to maintain control and the status quo.

I honestly believe this is by far the most important national security vote we will take this year. I think if we pass it, it will strengthen and stabilize our position in Asia and reduce the likelihood of conflict, even war, there for a decade. I think if we don't pass it, it will increase the chances that something bad will happen.

That's not a threat, and goodness knows if I didn't prevail, I would pray that I was wrong. I can only tell you that I've been doing this a long time. I believe I know what I'm talking about, and I think that it's very, very important.

And so, for whatever it's worth, that's why we're here. And Tom was good enough to get this panel together so we could just have a conversation. That's what this is about, and I want to hear from you. And I'm sure after this is over, all our friends in the media will want to hear what you said to me. [*Laughter*] And you feel free to tell them. But I think we ought to start now and have that conversation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in a classroom at the Ohio Army/National Guard Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan.

Remarks to the Community in Shakopee, Minnesota

May 12, 2000

Thank you. Well, first of all let me say I thank you all for coming out today. And I'm glad the weather made it easier on us.

I want to thank Terry and Kitty and Gene Hauer for welcoming us to their farm. I think we ought to give them a big hand; we have invaded them—[*applause*]. We managed to find enough unplanted space that I don't think we're taking their income away, but we certainly have invaded them today.

Dallas, thank you for your introduction and for your example. Secretary Glickman, thank you very much for the work you're doing, not only on this issue but on so many others to help the farmers of America. And I want to echo what you said about David Minge. He's a wonderful person. I've loved working with him these years I've been President. He is a straight shooter—although he never tells me any of those Norwegian jokes he's always telling Glickman—[*laughter*]—so I expect to get my quota before I leave.

But you should know that he is an extraordinarily attentive Representative for you. I don't even know how many times he's mentioned some specific thing of importance to the people of this district and the people of Minnesota. But if everybody worked on me as hard as he has the last 7 years, I wouldn't get anything else done, because he really does a good job for you.