

Council of the Americas. NAFTA resulted in an increase of just 4 million dollars' worth of exports to Mexico from Kentucky.

Unfortunately, the other side of the equation—imports from Mexico—has had a much more immediate and devastating impact on Kentucky. In 1993, over 30,000 Kentuckians worked in the apparel industry. Today, there are just 25,000 Kentucky apparel workers. The layoffs began soon after NAFTA passed and continue to this day. Just this past August, a major apparel manufacturer in my State laid off 2,000 workers.

When these jobs are lost and plants close, it is simply devastating to whole communities in Kentucky. I'd like to share with my colleagues an account of the plant closings we've suffered in Kentucky.

An August 8 story in the Louisville Courier-Journal talked about the latest blow to Kentucky's garment industry. Layoffs by Fruit of the Loom of 2,000 workers represents the latest loss to what the paper described as the "hemorrhaging garment-industry" in Kentucky. "At Fruit of the Loom alone, employment will have fallen from 11,000 2 years ago to 5,000 by the time the latest round of layoffs is completed * * *."

The vice president of Fruit of the Loom was blunt in his assessment. "We're being impacted by global competition resulting from international trade barriers. We can do the same work cheaper somewhere else."

Bill Parsons, executive director of the Lake Cumberland Area Development District where Fruit of the Loom is located, agrees.

Why would any good businessman want to stay in the U.S., where its going to cost \$8.48 an hour to make a garment you can make for 48 cents somewhere else? It makes a lot of business sense when you're looking at the bottom line.

David and NaDena Agee know firsthand about the bottom-line. Another Courier-Journal story tells how they "have a mortgage on a house they bought two years ago when they were both making good salaries at the Fruit of the Loom Plant in Campbellsville. They also have a 19-month-old son who is growing up fast. But after October 8, neither David nor NaDena will have a job because of continuing layoffs at the plant. They are worried about how they will provide for their son."

Instead of telling hardworking Americans like the Agees how fast track will assure them of a stable future, supporters of fast track are simply looking the other way.

Mr. President, I understand that international trade is not just confined to NAFTA. But proponents of fast track won't find a convincing argument on the other side of the world either.

Our trade deficit is enormous and growing. In 1995, our trade deficit rang in at \$105 billion. Last year's deficit was still higher—\$114 billion. And this year we are on our way to our fourth

consecutive year of record high trade deficits. The monthly trade deficit has increased each month this year except June.

Why do we have such enormous deficit? In the past, the experts have chalked it up to our persistent and large budget deficits. But now that we are in our fifth year of declining budget deficits and on our way to a balanced budget, that explanation has fallen out of favor.

Now, the experts are prepared to tell us the reason is a low savings rate compared to other countries—even though many of those other countries with higher savings rates don't have a Social Security system, as we do.

It seems any explanation of a trade deficit will do, so long as it has no connection to our trade policy. But that, in this Senator's mind, is where the problem is: our trade policy seems too often to be crafted for the benefit of other nations.

Month after month, I receive letters from Kentucky businesses asking for an end to a trade barrier an international trade agreement was supposed to resolve. This year, for example, I have received letters that: called for an end to Canada's exploitation of a NAFTA loophole to inundate the U.S. with wool suits made of Chinese fabric; demanded the Philippines implement a WTO decision against that country's system of using import licenses to keep American pork out; decried China's de facto ban on pork and tobacco products; called for better enforcement of our flat glass agreement with Japan; and, opposed the EU's proposal to accelerate the phase out of CFC's in an effort to disadvantage U.S. exports.

Mr. President, violations of existing agreements are particularly costly in the textile and apparel sector, where 4 to 10 billion dollars' worth of goods are illegally shipped to the United States. Countries like China and India routinely illegally label and ship their products through a third country in order to avoid an agreed upon quota.

Let me share a specific example of the noncompliance I'm talking about. After the enactment of the Uruguay round, the United States brought a case against Japan. Japan maintained a tax system designed to discourage the sale of imported distilled spirits, including Kentucky bourbon.

In November, 1996, the WTO found that the Japanese system violated the principal of national treatment—that a participating nation must accord imported and domestic products the same treatment.

How did Japan respond? Japan agreed to make the necessary changes to its tax law—by the year 2001, five years after the WTO decision! So now, the Japanese and American Governments are in negotiations over how long it's going to take Japan to fix a law it should never have adopted in the first place. What's more, there is now talk that the United States may accept "compensation" for Japan's refusal to

amend its law. This would mean that U.S. distilled spirits exporters won't get a thing out of an agreement that was supposed to win them market access.

Mr. President, I want to close by reiterating what brings me and other fast-track opponents to the floor. It's not because we want to raise up new tariff walls. It's not because we are isolationists. It's not because we want to protect jobs from any competition whatsoever. It's simply because our trade policy has not been a good one for the people of my State, nor the vast majority of States. It's because there ought to be a way to negotiate trade agreements that make Congress a partner every step of the way. And it's because there are so many problems in the agreements we have today that demand to be fixed.

So let's work together to forge a new trade policy that truly opens markets overseas, that benefits all Americans and that includes important issues, like labor laws and environmental regulation.

Mr. President, let's put fast track on the right track.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, November 7, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,426,731,931,109.43 (Five trillion, four hundred twenty-six billion, seven hundred thirty-one million, nine hundred thirty-one thousand, one hundred nine dollars and forty-three cents).

One year ago, November 7, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,243,332,000,000 (Five trillion, two hundred forty-three billion, three hundred thirty-two million).

Twenty-five years ago, November 7, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$435,658,000,000 (Four hundred thirty-five billion, six hundred fifty-eight million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,991,073,931,109.43 (Four trillion, nine hundred ninety-one billion, seventy-three million, nine hundred thirty-one thousand, one hundred nine dollars and forty-three cents) during the past 25 years.

SENIOR CITIZEN HOME EQUITY PROTECTION ACT

The text of the bill (S. 562) to amend section 255 of the National Housing Act to prevent the funding of unnecessary or excessive costs for obtaining a home equity conversion mortgage, as passed by the Senate on November 9, 1997, is as follows:

S. 562

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Senior Citizen Home Equity Protection Act".