

But there is much more opportunity for growth and an FTA will serve as the catalyst for trade promotion. ROK's average tariff on goods is just over 11 percent—three times higher than the U.S. equivalent. The average tariff applied by ROK on agricultural products is even higher—52 percent.

This comprehensive trade accord will eliminate tariffs and address other barriers to trade in the United States and the Republic of Korea, thereby stimulating U.S. export growth and investment. As the U.S. International Trade Commission noted, U.S. goods exports to ROK could increase by 50 percent and U.S. agricultural exports could increase by 200 percent with a fully implemented KORUS FTA.

New Yorkers, in particular, could realize substantial benefits from the KORUS FTA as tariffs and other barriers are eliminated. In 2005, New York exported \$1.4 billion in goods to the Republic of Korea, including machinery, computers and electronic products, transportation equipment, and chemicals. And the FTA would liberalize ROK services markets, creating exciting opportunities for New York's financial services providers.

Agriculture is also very important to New York's economy. Our state is one of the top dairy producers in the country, along with apples, hay, and cattle. If we are able to lower ROK trade barriers on these goods, New York producers will increase sales as they expand their market share in the Republic of Korea. ROK, for example, applies a 45 percent duty on apple imports.

Despite our close bilateral alliance, U.S. market share in the Republic of Korea has actually decreased in recent years due to the influence of other emerging economies in the marketplace. Enhanced and preferential access to the ROK market for U.S. exporters and investors will improve our economic position in Asia and allow us to compete more effectively in the very challenging global marketplace.

Further, the Republic of Korea has FTAs with several other countries, and is currently negotiating with Canada. The KORUS FTA will level the playing field for U.S. exporters who would otherwise experience a competitive disadvantage in the ROK market.

In addition to the economic benefits an FTA could provide, it is also important to note ROK role as a long-standing U.S. ally.

The United States and the Republic of Korea have a mutual defense treaty that dates back to 1953, and ROK has supported U.S. military efforts abroad, including in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, ROK pledged over \$30 million in aid for relief and recovery efforts—the fourth largest amount donated by any foreign country.

I strongly believe that this new partnership between the United States and ROK is positive development for both of our countries. As the trade negotiations proceed, I look forward to working closely with the U.S. and ROK negotiators, my New York constituents, and fellow colleagues so that we can ensure this agreement is a win-win for both countries.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to extend my remarks noting this important occasion. I hope that my colleagues will join me in recognizing and supporting the KORUS FTA negotiations.

TRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF ITS 101ST ANNUAL CONGRESS

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 19, 2006

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to the National Baptist Convention, USA, which opens its 101st congress today in Baltimore. An estimated 50,000 members will attend this convention, making it one of the largest conventions hosted by the city of Baltimore.

The National Baptist Convention, USA, is the Nation's oldest and largest African-American religious convention, with a membership exceeding 7 million people. This convention is a great pillar of African-American tradition and history.

It is especially fitting therefore that the inauguration of this convention falls on June 19th. Today is the 141st anniversary of Juneteenth, the national celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. The convention is a prominent example of the power of faith, freedom, and compassion. I am pleased that the convention has taken a very active role in responding to the tragedy caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

I wish the convention a wonderful week in Baltimore. I appreciate the choice of my hometown—which has a very special role in African American history—as the site of their convention. I know that members of the convention will enjoy their time in Baltimore, and that Baltimoreans will enjoy serving as hosts.

I urge my colleagues in the House to join me in saluting the National Baptist Convention of Christian Education for its proud tradition and noble service to the community.

TRIBUTE TO GIRLS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 19, 2006

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 1906, veteran educators in Chattanooga, Tennessee—Tommie Payne Duffy, Eula Lea Jarnagin and Grace McCallie—boldly resolved to create an independent school to prepare girls for higher education. With indomitable fortitude and spirit, they committed their finances, time, and energy to establishing Girls Preparatory School, which they opened on September 12, 1906. This year, Girls Preparatory School celebrated its 100th anniversary, and the 2006 graduating class of 102 girls joined over 7,000 women as alumnae of the school.

In a modest, four-room schoolhouse, the three founders laid the foundation for what is now one of this Nation's great secondary schools for girls. Today, on a 60-acre site overlooking the Tennessee River, the school is an impressive complex of technology-rich academics buildings and superb athletic facili-

ties that serves some 750 girls annually in grades 6–12.

With an honor code that provides an environment of trust, a community service program that teaches that service to others and by providing a superior education with opportunities for personal growth to students of diverse backgrounds from 40 communities in Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia, colleges and universities across America have come to recognize Girls Preparatory School as among the best preparatory schools in the Nation.

Named the National School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education, the school has been honored by the national Character Education Partnership and received the Award of Excellence from the National Endowment for the Arts. Its students have been named Presidential Scholars, National Merit Finalists, and National AP Scholars.

I am proud to stand on the House floor today to say that Girls Preparatory School is poised for another 100 years of greatness, committed to graduating independent girls with a lifelong love of learning.

RECOGNIZING SAMANTHA MOORE

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 19, 2006

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Samantha Moore as the winner of the 2006 Original Oratory National Championship. Having a history of excellence, the McDowell Speech and Debate team continues on this path with Moore's achievement; it is my hope that they will be able to continue to succeed long into the future.

Moore is a high school senior and member of the school's speech and debate team. She recently competed in the original oratory category at the National Catholic Forensic League Championship, established in 1953. After winning out over hundreds of students to even compete in Chicago, Moore defeated 200 of the top young orators in the country to capture the National Championship. She was among over 2,300 students from 500 schools that competed at the Grand National Championship. Because of the impeccable delivery of her self-written speech, Moore was able to captivate the judges and attain a near-perfect score.

This is an unprecedented achievement for a student in Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District. It is the first time that any student from Northwestern Pennsylvania has captured a National Championship in a speech event in over 20 years.

Moore represents the talent that can be found in America's youth. The very greatness of this country is founded upon its future leaders. Moore is an example of academic excellence and leadership. For her accomplishment, she deserves congratulations.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me at this time in congratulating Samantha Moore, her family, teachers, and team on the National Championship with wishes of a successful future.