We need to adopt the Dorgan amendment, look at what has happened with our trade policy, pause, and have a national conversation about a new direction for trade in the 21st century.

Let's wait on the passage of Peru and Panama. Let's wait on the passage of South Korea and Colombia. We need a conversation that includes all parties involved. That means investors. It means workers. It means small business owners. It means communities with people who are so affected by trade. The Dorgan amendment is a significant first step in doing that.

We should adopt the Dorgan amendment. We should pause and look at where our trade policy is going, and then we should embark in a new direction on trade in this country.

FAMILY FORUM EARMARK

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise today to discuss a project I sponsored in the fiscal year 2008 Labor, Health, Human Services and Education appropriations bill. The project, which would develop a plan to promote better science-based education in Ouachita Parish by the Louisiana Family Forum, has raised concerns among some that its intention was to mandate and push creationism within the public schools. That is clearly not and never was the intent of the project, nor would it have been its effect. However, to avoid more hysterics, I would like to move the $100,000 recommended for this project by the subcommittee when the bill goes to conference committee to another Louisiana priority project funded in this bill.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I appreciate the sentiments by the Senator from Louisiana and accept this proposal to move the funding for this project to other priority projects for the State of Louisiana in the bill when it goes to conference committee.

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I concur with my colleague and will agree to move these funds in conference committee.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, since the year 2000, shortly after news reports attributed hundreds of deaths to asbestos exposure from decades of vermiculite mining in Libby, MT, I have worked hard on behalf of the people there to ensure that they received the care they needed. The Center for Asbestos Related Disease plays an important role in screening Libby residents and providing them with the health care they need as a result of this tragedy.

The people living in Libby suffer asbestos-related diseases at a rate 40 to 60 times the national average. They suffer from mesothelioma at a rate 100 times the national average. The culprit for this unprecedented tragedy is a highly toxic tremolite asbestos amphibole. Due to the shipping of Libby asbestos to processing sites in 30 States, and its subsequent use as insulation material in all parts of the country, the toxicity of this amphibole is an issue of national importance.

The Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency have designated the Center for Asbestos Related Disease as a clearinghouse for information that facilitates clinical epidemiological and pathologic studies of asbestos-related diseases. This new role unfortunately comes without adequate funding to accommodate the transition to this national leadership role.

This is an issue of national concern to scientists who rely on tremolite asbestos data for their work. Support letters have been sent to Members of this body by researchers at the Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation from California, Mount Sinai Medical School in New York, Wayne State University in Michigan, North Carolina State University, the University of Vermont, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Pennsylvania, and Montana State University. These letters all emphasize the importance of the Libby data to the national research efforts on asbestos related disease.

That is why I submitted an amendment to the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2008. My amendment would provide $250,000 to the Center for Asbestos Related Disease in Libby, MT, so that the clinic can provide its critically important information to clinical researchers and universities across the country. The raw data and data management that the center provides for research institutions will facilitate meaningful research into amphibole asbestos toxicity and health impacts.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the Russian Federation is, in many respects, a democratic state. Elections are held at regular intervals, local and national elective bodies meet and pass legislation. Referenda may be held on major issues, both at the national and local level, although this exercise may be reduced in the near future.

But there is another consideration, in which the Russian Federation falls short in its democratic characterization.

Freedom of the press is vital to the existence of a stable democratic state. Journalists must be able to openly report on all issues without fear of physical harassment or economic pressures. It is no accident that Napoleon said that four newspapers were more effective than a thousand bayonets.

Therefore, it is regrettable that a number of Russian journalists have recently been murdered while reporting on subjects sensitive to the Russian government. Other have been beaten or otherwise prevented from doing their job. One recent victim was involuntarily incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital.

Among those Russian journalists who have given their lives for their profession was Anna Politkovskaya, who reported extensively on the brutal war in Russia's secessionist region of Chechnya. Last week, friends, colleagues, and supporters of this courageous woman marked the one-year anniversary of her assassination.

Politkovskaya was fearless in her efforts to bring correct and unbiased information on the Chechen war to her readers. This was a hard-earned counterpoint to the propaganda that much of the electronic media turned out daily on the conflict . . . when there was any mention of it at all. While other journalists reported on the conflict from afar, she routinely traveled to troublesome areas to view and describe first-hand the problems and issues in the war-torn region. She was one of few Russian reporters to actively engage the Chechen people in open dialogue, and she presented her findings in a fair and balanced manner. Her resume included a long list of awards and commendations for her investigative skills and professional competence.

On October 7th, 2006, Ms. Politkovskaya was carrying groceries up to her Moscow apartment when, according to authorities, a gunman clad in black fired twice, shooting her once in the head. The murderer left the weapon at her side, a brazen gesture indicating, or meant to indicate, the commission of a contract murder. The Moscow newspaper Novaya Gazeta, where Ms. Politikovskaya worked, suggested the assassin or assassins had been following her closely and probably for a long time. Indeed, she was used to being watched and harassed. Numerous threats had already been made on her life, and at one point in 2001 she was forced to flee to Vienna.

As Co-chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I would also note that Anna Politkovksya delivered memorable and compelling testimony on the conflict in Chechnya at Commission hearings on Capitol Hill in September 2003, and she was awarded the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's annual Prize for Journalism and Democracy in that year.

Recently, several suspects were arrested in connection with the murder. However, there are disturbing reports that the investigation has been marked

by irregularities and apparent political considerations. For instance, Russian officials have been quick to assert that certain individuals and factions outside of the Russian Federation must have ordered the killing, although they have presented no credible proof. The fact is that Politkovskaya's work was extremely critical of corrupt and incompetent officials in the Russian government. At the time of her death, she had been working on a story about the torture of detainees in the jails of the pro-Moscow Chechen authorities.

The true instigator of this murder might well reside in Moscow, London, Grozny, or Murmansk. In any event, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated during a visit last week to Germany that the investigation is ''on the right track.'' Let us hope that he is correct.

And let us also remember the sacrifice and the journalistic integrity of Anna Politkovskaya and her colleagues in Russia and throughout the world, who risk life and limb every day to discern the truth and bring it to their fellow citizens.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to comment on the status of the alternative minimum tax, AMT.

There is some good news regarding the need to do a patch to protect 19 million families. If you look back over the last few months, I have come to the floor several times to urge my friends in the Democratic leadership in both bodies to focus on this problem and get legislation ready. Earlier today, I urged the House to begin work on an AMT patch bill. I urged them to send it to the Senate so that Chairman BAUCUS and I will have a vehicle to deal with this pressing problem.

We have a few weeks to act before the IRS forms are finalized. After that time, there could be big problems for taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service.

I was pleased to read in this afternoon's press reports that Chairman RANGEL is going to process an AMT patch bill.

I also want to commend our Finance chairman, my friend, Senator BAUCUS, for convening an informal meeting of the Finance Committee to discuss this pressing matter. I hope the Democratic leadership provides Chairman BAUCUS floor time to take up a committee bill.

On a related point, at a press event earlier today, in answer to a reporter's question, I indicated that we could look at measures to insure that certain high-income taxpayers who pay no regular income tax or AMT pay some tax. I would like to elaborate on that comment.

I have referred many times to the IRS statistic of high income taxpayers who pay no regular income tax or AMT. The statistic is that, for the tax year 2004, IRS Statistics of Income reported that 2,833 taxpayers with incomes over $200,000 paid no income tax. That same group paid no AMT as well. I will ask to have inserted in the RECORD a copy of that statistic.

The reason this group does not pay tax is defects in the AMT. What I was saying is that the AMT is defective in its original purpose. That is, to make sure that all high-income taxpayers pay some tax. I was not arguing for a tax increase on high-income taxpayers who are paying either regular income tax or AMT. I was arguing that, if anything, if the AMT's original purpose is to be served, then insure that those not paying ANY tax, pay it.

Mr. Presdient, I ask unanimous consent to have a copy of the statistic to which I referred printed in the RECORD.

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

TABLE 1.—RETURNS WITH AND WITHOUT U.S. INCOME TAX: NUMBER OF RETURNS, BY SIZE OF INCOME UNDER ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS, TAX YEAR 2004

[All figures are estimates based on samples]

Returns by tax status, size of expanded income	Returns by size of adjusted gross income				
	All returns	under $50,000 [1]	$50,000 under $100,000	$100,000 under $200,000	$200,000 or more
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
All returns					
Total	132,226,042	91,302,396	28,166,641	9,735,569	3,021,435
Under $50,000 [1]	90,478,783	89,700,020	767,886	8,163	2,714
$50,000 under $100,000	29,115,600	1,572,295	27,186,378	353,025	3,901
$100,000 under $200,000	9,564,057	27,792	205,880	9,279,698	50,687
$200,000 or more	3,067,602	2,289	6,497	94,683	2,964,133
Returns with U.S. income tax					
Total	90,876,672	50,767,865	27,371,775	9,718,430	3,018,602
Under $50,000 [1]	50,003,838	49,336,042	659,474	6,609	1,713
$50,000 under $100,000	28,278,142	1,413,628	26,509,632	351,123	3,759
$100,000 under $200,000	9,532,119	17,365	197,144	9,267,112	50,498
$200,000 or more	3,062,574	831	5,524	93,587	2,962,632
Returns without U.S. income tax					
Total	41,349,370	40,534,531	794,866	17,139	2,833
Under $50,000 [1]	40,474,945	40,363,978	108,411	1,555	1,001
$50,000 under $100,000	837,458	158,667	676,746	1,902	142
$100,000 under $200,000	31,938	10,428	8,736	12,586	189
$200,000 or more	5,028	1,458	973	1,096	1,501

[1] Includes returns with adjusted gross deficit or with negative expanded income.
NOTE: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.
Source: IRS, Statistics of Income Division, June 2007.

RED RIBBON WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, in cosponsoring a resolution commemorating Red Ribbon Week. Red Ribbon Week, celebrated October 23–31 of this year, encourages individuals, families and communities to take a stand against alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug abuse.

The tradition of Red Ribbon Week, now in its 22nd year of wearing and displaying red ribbons, started following the assassination of U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency Special Agent Enrique ''Kiki'' Camarena. In an effort to honor his memory and unite in the battle against drug crime and abuse, friends, neighbors and students from his hometown of Calexico, CA, began wearing red ribbons. Shortly thereafter, the National Family Partnership took the celebration nationwide. Since then, the Red Ribbon campaign has reached millions of children, families, and communities across the country, spreading the message about the destructive effects of drugs.

In my State of Iowa, the theme for Red Ribbon Week is ''Take a Stand—Be Drug Free.'' Schools and community groups across the State are organizing a variety of activities including pledges, contests, workshops, rallies, theatrical and musical performances and other family and educational events. These events are all designed to educate our children on the negative effects of drugs and to promote a drug-free environment.

Research tells us that the longer a child stays drug-free, the less likely they will become addicted or even try illegal drugs. This is why it is so important to maintain a coherent anti-drug message that begins early in adolescence and continues throughout the growing years. Such an effort must involve parents, communities and young people. Red Ribbon Week provides each of us the opportunity to take a stand by helping our children make the right decisions when it comes to drugs.

In light of the growing epidemic of prescription drug and cold medicine abuse throughout the Nation, this year's Red Ribbon Week holds greater importance. I thank my colleagues for