

It is fitting that we address this legislation during National Public Health Week, a time when our attention is focused on the critical need to improve public health. I think it is also fitting that we recognize this week while we remember Ryan White, who died 18 years ago yesterday. This brave young man, whose namesake, the Ryan White CARE Act, has saved so many from the ravages of HIV/AIDS, taught us all an important lesson about our personal roles in improving the public's health.

I am the sponsor of two bills that passed this week, the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Act, which amends the Public Health Service Act regarding early detection, diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss, and the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Management Act, which provides schools with guidelines on how to create appropriate management and emergency plans for children with food allergies.

I also support the following bills that were adopted by the House this week:

The Wakefield Act, which amends the Public Health Service Act to improve emergency services for children who need treatment for trauma or critical care;

The Cytology Proficiency Improvement Act, which provides revised standards for quality assurance in screening and evaluation of gynecologic cytology preparations to ensure that health care professionals who screen and interpret tests for cervical cancer are skilled in today's medical technology;

Reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury Act, which provides for the expansion and improvement of traumatic brain injury programs by providing grants to States to support the treatment and rehabilitation of traumatic brain injury patients.

The Safety of Seniors Act, which directs the United States Department of Health and Human Services to oversee and support education campaigns focused on reducing falls and preventing repeat falls among older Americans;

And finally, the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, which establishes grant programs to provide for education and outreach on newborn screening and coordinated follow-up care once newborn screening has been conducted.

These bills will make great strides in ensuring the public's health and the essential mission of our Nation. Without health, children cannot grow to be all that God meant for them to be, adults cannot fulfill their role as contributing members of our society, and our elderly cannot peacefully live out their golden years.

If one were to ask any of us to list those things that might be the enemy of our destiny, we would all have to agree that poor health would be at the top of the list. For this reason, I will continue to fight for the expansion of quality health care programs to help ensure that every American can benefit from a more vibrant and productive quality of life.

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. I rise in support of bringing this important agreement to the House floor.

Ladies and gentlemen, I come from the State of Illinois. I represent a district that's heavily dependent on exports for growing our economy. We make heavy construction equipment. We grow a lot of corn and soybeans. We export a tremendous amount of plastics and petrochemicals. This trade agreement is a big winner for States like Illinois as it is for our Nation.

You know, right now our products made in Colombia, whether farm products or manufactured goods, they enter the United States essentially duty free. The Andean Nations of Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia, they've got the opportunity for all their products to come to the United States duty free, but our products made in America face taxes when they're exported to Colombia. In fact, the bulldozers made in my district, I have 8,000 workers, union workers who work for Caterpillar, they make the yellow bulldozers. Mining is a big industry in Colombia, we want to sell those products there, but they face 15 percent tariffs when they're exported. It makes them harder to compete with the Asians.

The corn and soybeans and livestock products produced in my district, they face tariffs today up to 40 percent, making it hard to compete with the Argentineans and Brazilians and the Colombian market, a nation of over 40 million people.

The bottom line is 80 percent of U.S. exports to Colombia will be duty free immediately once this trade agreement goes into effect. And I would note that, as we've seen, countries like Chile and the central American countries and elsewhere where we have trade agreements, we've seen 50 percent faster growth in exports in nations who have trade agreements than those who do not.

And I would note also, again, Colombian products come to the United States duty free, tariff free, but our products face barriers going in. This agreement eliminates those and makes trade a two-way street. It's an important agreement, and I urge it be brought up for a vote and I urge bipartisan support.

Those who oppose this trade agreement say Colombia hasn't done

enough. And I want to begin by asking, who is the Republic of Colombia? What nation in Latin America is the oldest democracy in Latin America? It's Colombia. What nation is the second largest Spanish-speaking nation in all Latin America? Colombia. What nation is the most reliable ally of the United States, particularly when it comes to counterterrorism and counter-narcotics? Colombia. And what nation has done more under its current democratically elected president to reduce violence in Latin America? It's Colombia, clearly.

Colombia is not only a friend of the United States, in fact, our enemies in Latin America identify Colombia as our best friend. And they say, you know, watch the United States, they always turn their back on their friends; watch how they treat Colombia when it comes to this trade agreement.

And those who would argue against this trade agreement say, you know, you've got to look at the labor violence, you've got to look at the violence in the country; and Colombia just has not done enough to address violence. Well, President Uribe is the most popular elected president in this entire hemisphere. This Congress today suffers from a 15 percent approval rating, President Uribe in Colombia has an 80 percent approval rating. He was elected to reduce the violence in his country, and he succeeded.

In fact, 71 percent of Colombians today say they feel more secure because of President Uribe. Seventy-three percent say President Uribe respects human rights. Homicides are down 40 percent, kidnappings are down 76 percent. Colombians feel free to drive anywhere in Colombia. And I would point out that today, the murder rate in Colombia is lower than Washington, D.C., it's lower than Baltimore. It's safer to walk the streets of Bogota, Colombia than it is in Washington, D.C., yet those who oppose this agreement say the murder rate is too high and that Colombia needs to do more. But Washington, D.C. is more violent than Colombia.

Here's the facts: When it comes to labor violence, President Uribe has made major changes. He has increased the Prosecutor General's budget by 72 percent in the last 2 years. He has added over 2,100 new posts, adding 418 new prosecutors, 445 new investigators. He has done so much that the President of the United Workers Confederation of Colombia says, "never in the history of Colombia have we achieved something so important." Yet there are those who want to turn their back on President Uribe in Colombia.

And when it comes specifically to protections provided to labor leaders, and I have met with many Colombian labor leaders, and they note that in Colombia, if you're a labor activist or labor leader and you feel in danger, you can request special protection from the government.