

human rights, on labor rights and especially, just lately, on its remarkable rescue of the American hostages after their being 5 years within the FARC. They are taming the terrorist organizations with our help, and they deserve our continued support in that effort.

Madam Speaker, the Central American agreement has helped to bolster ties with our partners in the region. It has helped to create U.S. jobs and to encourage economic growth in neighboring countries. Colombia will do the same. I reiterate my call for the leadership of this House to schedule an up-or-down vote on Colombia this year. Given the nature of our trade laws, it will be too late if this gets put on hold until next year, and we will have missed a critical opportunity to strengthen our relationship with an important partner in the region and to create fair trade for Americans.

Ladies and gentlemen, the whole world is watching America. Let's not turn our back on Colombia. Let's not show the world we're economic isolationists—afraid to compete or afraid to hold out our hand to partners in our backyard. Let's not as a Congress be beholden to a few special interests. Democrats and Republicans, Defense Secretaries and Secretaries of State agree that this is one of the most important foreign policy decisions that we can make. The whole world is watching. Let us schedule a vote for Colombia and pass it this year.

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, I don't have any further speakers, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, earlier today, regrettably, there was a failure to move forward on the multilateral trade talks known as DOHA. Some are calling this a collapse in trade talks, but I believe that we can and that we must continue to make progress in multilateral trade talks. We must spend our energy not by placing blame but by considering solutions to the current challenges.

The World Trade Organization serves a crucial role in the trade system of the world. I believe I speak on behalf of the entire Ways and Means Committee when I say that we remain committed to a robust DOHA agreement. The bill before us demonstrates America's continued commitment to alleviating poverty through our trade policies. I urge the Members to support H.R. 6560.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker the most important argument in favor of the United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement is that it is manifestly good for the United States and our interests.

The most obvious benefit is expanded trade.

Opponents claim that the agreement will force the U.S. to remove restrictions on Colombia's exports, resulting in more imports and leading to a loss of jobs and income in the U.S.

But these opponents do not understand that, because most of Colombia's exports already enter the U.S. with few or no restrictions, it is Colombia's barriers that will be removed and U.S. exporters that will benefit.

And expanded U.S. exports to Colombia translate directly into increased jobs and income here at home.

Colombia will certainly benefit, but the U.S. will benefit more.

This free trade agreement is about more than economics. It is essential to securing U.S. strategic interests in the Hemisphere.

In a region in which anti-American regimes are aggressively targeting U.S. interests, Colombia remains a steadfast ally.

That ally is battling an array of internal and external enemies, and the U.S. has an enormous stake in ensuring that Colombia wins that fight.

Long under siege from FARC guerrillas who once controlled nearly half the country, Colombia has, in recent months, inflicted major defeats on an armed insurgency that has: sought to overthrow Colombia's democratic government; killed and kidnapped thousands of Colombians, as well as Americans and other foreigners; and provided protection to drug kingpins shipping billions of dollars of cocaine, heroin, and other illegal drugs to the U.S. every year.

Colombia looks poised to free itself from these threats and achieve peace and long-term stability.

Given the stakes, our friends and enemies in this Hemisphere are watching how we treat this vital ally in the region.

The Colombian government has done everything we have asked of it, even renegotiating the already concluded agreement to add new provisions regarding labor and environmental issues. But to no avail.

As a result, our friends and enemies are in danger of concluding that the U.S. has turned its back on Colombia and that the assault on U.S. interests and allies is paying off.

Over the past decade, the once near-hopeless security situation in Colombia has been transformed, with crucial assistance and unwavering support provided by the United States.

But there is much left to be done.

Although the insurgency has been severely weakened, there are many thousands of guerrillas still operating. The cultivation and export to the U.S. of illegal drugs continues. And there are large areas of Colombia in which the central government has virtually no presence.

U.S. assistance and support for Colombia has been instrumental in its success, and will continue to be so in the future.

But that means more than simply security assistance and money. The easiest, most direct, and most effective means we have to bolster Colombia at this critical stage is passage of the free trade agreement.

Congress has a golden opportunity to support our embattled ally and further our own interests. If we falter, so may Colombia, and the achievements of a decade will be needlessly squandered. And then some may ask: "Who lost Colombia?"

Mr. McDERMOTT. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6560, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

**REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6599, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009**

Ms. CASTOR, from the Committee on Rules (during consideration of H.R. 6560), submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-800) on the resolution (H. Res. 1384) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6599) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2009, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

**HUBBARD ACT**

Mr. KIND. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6580) to ensure the fair treatment of a member of the Armed Forces who is discharged from the Armed Forces, at the request of the member, pursuant to the Department of Defense policy permitting the early discharge of a member who is the only surviving child in a family in which the father or mother, or one or more siblings, served in the Armed Forces and, because of hazards incident to such service, was killed, died as a result of wounds, accident, or disease, is in a captured or missing in action status, or is permanently disabled, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the dollar limitation on contributions to funeral trusts, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6580

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

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Hubbard Act".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Continued payment of bonuses and similar benefits for members of the Armed Forces who receive sole survivorship discharge.
- Sec. 3. Availability of separation pay for members of the Armed Forces with less than six years of active service who receive sole survivorship discharge.
- Sec. 4. Transitional health care for members of the Armed Forces who receive sole survivorship discharge.
- Sec. 5. Transitional commissary and exchange benefits for members of the Armed Forces who receive sole survivorship discharge.
- Sec. 6. Veterans benefits for members of the Armed Forces who receive sole survivorship discharge.
- Sec. 7. Unemployment compensation for members of the Armed Forces who receive sole survivorship discharge.