

I thank my colleague and friend and fellow Texan, Representative TED POE of Houston, for serving as the chief House sponsor for this legislation. I also express my gratitude to the House leadership team and Chairman GOODLATTE of the House Judiciary Committee for their important work on this issue.

This legislation, as we said before, will provide victims of sexual exploitation, slavery, and human trafficking in the United States with an avenue to find healing and restoration. Most importantly, the victims, who are often children, will have access to additional resources to ensure that they get the shelter and the services they need. I am thankful that Members from both Chambers and from both sides of the aisle were able to recognize the urgency of the matter and get the job done.

While this bill represents a step forward, there is more we need to do and more we will do to continue to fight the scourge of human trafficking. In the coming years, we will look back on this moment as a time when our country finally began to get serious about this problem and heard the voices of the thousands of American victims in our own backyard.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this Chamber has now turned its consideration to trade promotion authority, or TPA. I am a supporter of this legislation because my State is the largest exporting State in the country, and I think our economy and the number of jobs that are created in Texas are reflective of our strong commitment to international trade.

We simply find the point inarguable that to open new markets to the products that our agricultural sectors grow, our ranchers raise, and our manufacturers make seems to be such an obvious thing to do. That is why I am a big supporter of this legislation.

It is not something that just helps businesses; it helps consumers, too. Reducing the protections for domestically produced goods helps consumers most dramatically. It helps with their cost of living and helps make their daily or weekly or monthly paycheck go a little bit further.

Earlier this week, the Wall Street Journal reported that U.S. exports to trade-pact countries were growing at a far higher rate than exports to nontrade-pact countries. So if we get this TPA passed and the United States enters into one of these agreements under negotiation, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we could see American exports to the region skyrocket. This region in particular involves 11 other countries and makes up about 40 percent of the world's economy, and, of course, it would be a ready-market for U.S. products, from beef to electronics.

The reason why trade promotion authority is so important is because it

makes no sense—in fact, I think it is almost impossible—to negotiate a trade deal with 535 Members of Congress. Congress gives the President the authority within very firm and clear directives on how the President's U.S. trade administration should negotiate this. Frankly, I think this is one area where we have bipartisan agreement that this is good. So why wouldn't we work together in the best interests of the American people and our economy?

Trade doesn't just help businesses, as I have said; trade and TPA also help the consumer by driving down prices they pay every day at the drugstore, the grocery store, the hardware store—you name it. This legislation is good for American exporters and good for American consumers. Put simply, trade is good for America.

Let me reiterate that this bill is not filled with partisan rhetoric. It is actually a very simple trade tool that will give Congress the authority to examine any upcoming trade deal the President is trying to cut and make sure the American people get a fair shake.

I have heard several of our colleagues say they have gone down to a room to look at what has so far been negotiated on the Trans-Pacific Partnership. That is a good thing, but the fact is that negotiations aren't complete. That is not the whole deal; it is just a start.

Many of the provisions in the TPA are just commonsense proposals. For example, if passed, TPA would give Congress the authority to access the full text of the trade agreement. Of course, it is hard to get more straightforward than that. It would also make sure there is greater transparency and accountability in the negotiation process, with regular briefings by the administration to Congress and Members allowed to actually attend the negotiations.

In short, this trade legislation will provide Congress the needed oversight of the trade negotiations and will act as a safeguard for American interests to make sure our markets and our goods and services remain competitive in the global marketplace.

Finally, I would like to say that this is a reminder of how the Senate should function—as a deliberative body that votes regularly on a bipartisan basis to do something important to help hard-working American families. We vote.

I hope we will have a series of votes later this afternoon. I think having an open amendment process, as the majority leader has promised, is something that has been found to be a welcome development not just for the majority but also for the minority, which I know wants to participate in the process and thus represent their constituents to the best of their ability. Although some of my colleagues from across the aisle do not support this legislation, I hope they don't block it and prevent those of us who are interested in passing a good trade promotion authority piece of legislation from working productively.

I would encourage all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to offer their amendments so that the Senate can debate them and vote on them. That is our job as the elected representatives of the American people.

I see TPA as a real opportunity to help American workers earn higher wages and send more American-made products around the world. I encourage our colleagues to support this bill and in doing so to lend support to the hard-working Americans who increasingly rely on trade to support their families.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLARIFYING THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BORDER PATROL AGENT PAY REFORM ACT OF 2014

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2252, which has been received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2252) to clarify the effective date of certain provisions of the Border Patrol Agent Pay Reform Act of 2014, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 2252) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the reauthorization of trade adjustment assistance, which is included in the bill we are now considering. I urge my colleagues to oppose any attempt to curtail this vital program.

Trade adjustment assistance—better known as TAA—plays an essential role in helping hard-working Americans who through no fault of their own lose their jobs as the result of what is often unfair foreign competition. TAA programs enable displaced workers to acquire the new skills, the new training necessary to prepare for jobs in other industries.

I am proud to have authored the bipartisan legislation with Senator RON