We keep talking about creating a level playing field when it comes to fair trade. But this bill pulls the field right out from under U.S. industries which have already had an uphill fight just to stay alive.

It doesn't make any sense. And I urge my colleagues to vote against it. NAFTA should have taught us a lesson.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have a question. If the Senator from Florida is going to speak now, I am not actually trying to get the floor ahead of him. I wanted to ask the Senator from Florida, is it his intention to speak on this legislation now?

Mr. GRAHAM. I am prepared to yield time to the Senator if he is prepared to speak at this time.

Mr. BREAUX. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. GRAHAM. Will the Senator from Minnesota yield? I had indicated to our colleague, the Senator from Louisiana, who wishes to make a memorial statement for our colleague, Senator Chafee, that he would have an opportunity to do so at this time.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Absolutely. Of course.

Mr. GRAHAM. I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized for 5 minutes.

IN HONOR OF SENATOR JOHN CHAFEE

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to rise to express my thoughts about the loss of a great friend and a dear colleague, Senator John Chafee. The Senate has lost a great Senator and this country has, indeed, lost a great American. All of us in the Senate family have lost a great friend.

John Chafee was a Senator who thought of what was best for his country first and thought about the politics, if he did at all, last. All of his colleagues, I know, will have great personal memories of Senator Chafee, how their paths crossed over the years, and the work he did as a leader of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. On our own Senate Finance Committee, when we had such historic debates, Senator Chafee was always in the midst of them. I know his work on the Environment and Public Works Committee will ensure all Americans in the future will breathe cleaner air and drink cleaner water and have to worry less about their health because of the environment in which we all live. He always was a leader in the environmental area and will always be noted for that. It is true; all of us are better off for the services he provided in that capacity.

I remember John Chafee and the efforts he and I undertook together. It was, indeed, my privilege to work with him on what became known as the Centrist Committee, a centrist coalition. Senator Chafee was enthusiastic about finding a consensus on the difficult issues that faced our country, but he was concerned about more than just trying to find a consensus; he was really concerned about creating a consensus. His efforts in our little coalition produced some dramatic results because he, in hosting these meetings with our colleagues from both sides of the aisle, truly recognized solutions to difficult problems cannot come from the far left or the far right. These difficult solutions must be found in the center, and that is where I think he found himself most comfortable.

We used his hideaway office here in the Senate almost on a weekly basis, as I said, to host meetings between Republicans and Democrats who worked together. We talked to each other rather than merely listened to echoes of ourselves. We actually spoke about the issues and tried to find and recommend solutions that were not necessarily good political solutions but were the right thing to do for this country.

I think his greatest accomplishment in this area that I remember was the recommendations that he helped guide in the area of health care. We ultimately brought them to the floor of the Senate and they were adopted by a very strong majority of this Senate, to a large extent because of the credibility John Chafee brought when he was listed as being one of the principal cosponsors. Unfortunately, those recommendations did not become the law of the land, but I am certain, and very confident, that one day they will.

So John Chafee will be missed by all of us. He served his State and he served his Nation very well. I look to the day in the Senate when there will be more John Chafee's. Certainly this Nation and this country needs them and we deserve them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in expressing my profound sadness on the passing of our good colleague and our great friend, Senator John Chafee, and to offer my most sincere condolences to his wife Ginny, their 5 children, and 12 grandchildren, the entire Chafee family, and also people in Rhode Island, who have lost a strong advocate, a compassionate leader, and a true friend.

This body and this Nation are diminished today by the loss of one of the finest people I have ever had the privilege to know in politics.

Senator Chafee's life was an ode to the finest ideals of public service. He fought in World War II and Korea because he believed in freedom. He served in the State legislature and as Governor of Rhode Island because he loved his State. He answered the call to become Secretary of the Navy because he wanted us to have the best defensive force in the world. He ran for the Senate because he thought he could make a difference, and what a difference he has made.

I had the honor of working with Senator Chafee in this body for only a little under 5 years, but as did everyone else on Capitol Hill, I had long known of his reputation for thoughtfulness and reason. Indeed, for anyone who really cared about the art of legislating, John Chafee was a household name.

I consider myself fortunate for the opportunity to have worked with this great American and to have seen firsthand why he engendered such respect and affection from both sides of the aisle and from all political persuasions. He was an extraordinary man of sincere humility, boundless energy, and steadfast integrity. It was difficult enough coming to terms with his impending retirement from the Senate. Now it will be immeasurably more difficult to come to terms with his passing.

Throughout my tenure in the Senate, I have felt a special kinship with Senator Chafee on a number of levels. For one thing, he and his wife Ginny have long had a home in my State of Maine, a home that has been in his family more than 100 years, in the beautiful town of Sorrento just across the bay from where my husband's family has a place. And we had a chance to see them during the course of the summer. Clearly, I knew from the start that Senator Chafee was a man of discerning taste.

In fact, he would often say—only half-jokingly—he considered himself the third Senator from Maine. If such a thing were really possible, we could not have been more honored, and we certainly could not have had a better advocate for our great State.

On the political front, I always saw Senator Chafee as something of a kindred spirit. He epitomized what it meant to be a modern, moderate Republican. For him, compromise was a way things got done. It was the way we distilled all the opinions, all the issues, all the viewpoints, and arrived at legislation that could change America and change lives for the better. For John Chafee, there was strength in compromise, courage in compromise, honor in compromise, and he was right. He viewed it not as an abdication of principle but a catalyst for constructive policy.

Senator Chafee was willing to take risks in order to do what he believed was in the best interests of Rhode Island and our country. For him, leadership and the public good were two concepts forever and eternally intertwined. Sometimes that meant being a lone voice in the wilderness, and he was willing to be that voice.

Time and again, John Chafee was there, both out in front and behind the

scenes, as Senator Breaux just mentioned, forging consensus, breaking deadlocks, and bringing people together on countless issues that were key for Americans, issues that resonate today in people's daily lives and will continue to resonate for generations to come.

John Chafee always put ideas ahead of ideology. That is why he was at the forefront of the legislative and political debates in Congress. He proposed sensible, viable, and realistic alternatives. I well remember in the budget debates of 1995 and 1996 when Senator Chafee joined Senator Breaux to form a bipartisan group of Senators to bridge the political gulf that had opened in the aftermath of the Government shutdown. I was proud to be a member of that group because John Chafee was never about making the political points; John Chafee was about making the process work, and that is precisely what he did during the budget debate and throughout his entire 23 years in the Senate.

He was a tireless advocate on so many issues vital to the future of this country, perhaps none more important than the health of our Nation's environment. In fact, when it comes to the protection of our natural resources, it can truly be said that John Chafee has left a lasting mark on the landscape of America.

He was a strong voice for the environment, shepherding the Clean Air Act of 1990 and consistently supporting the preservation of our country's precious wetlands and open spaces. He has played a role in every major Federal initiative to control pollution and protect our natural resources over the past 20 years, and it is testament to his vision that generations of Americans not even born will have John Chafee to thank for a healthier world.

Of course, it is not only the health of our environment he sought to protect. Until the very end, John Chafee was a champion for those less fortunate, and that includes health care for low-income families and expanded health coverage for uninsured low-income children. He was a visionary on the issue of child care. He knew we had to make it safer, more accessible, more affordable, and it was my privilege to join him in that fight.

More recently, just last week, I joined him on a bill he and Senator Rockefeller introduced that will help foster children make the transition to independent living. Just shortly after I learned of John's passing, I had to get on a plane yesterday, and I picked up a newspaper and read an editorial in the Los Angeles Times, in fact, praising this legislation, saying this is not extending a welfare project but building a bridge to independence. That is the type of approach John would take on issues.

I ask unanimous consent that the editorial be printed in the Record.

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

[From the Los Angeles Times, Oct. 25, 1999]

FOSTERING LIFE SKILLS

Every year 20,000 foster children, in the United States turn 18 and are ''emancipated.'' It's a cheerful euphemism for loss—of shelter, health care and their foster parents.

Federal Health and Human Services statistics show that many former foster children lack the resources and training to make much of their abrupt freedom. In Los Angeles County, for instance, fully half of the 1,000 foster children who are ''aged out'' of the system every year end up homeless within six months.

Legislation now pending in the Senate Finance Committee, by Sens. John Chafee (R–R.I.) and John D. Rockefeller (D–W. Va.), gives Congress a chance to recognize what any parent raising an adolescent already knows: Yanking the whole safety net at age 18 can be a recipe for disaster.

Since 1992, Washington has allocated $70 million a year to states that want to help foster children ages 16 to 18 prepare for independent living by teaching them how to budget money, prepare for college and find a job. The modest Chafee/Rockefeller bill would double funding to $140 million a year, allow that money to be spent helping those over 18 and extend Medicaid eligibility to those ages 18 to 21.

This is not extending a welfare crutch; it's building a bridge to independence. ''Bridges to Independence'' is in fact the name of a nonprofit program in Los Angeles that has successfully given older foster children the tools they need—from a sympathetic ear to job-interview counseling and apartment-hunting skills—to lead productive lives.

Chafee and Rockefeller have asked Congress to approve their bill by voice vote and send it to President Clinton this week.

Congress is scrambling to approve several higher-profile, multibillion-dollar spending bills before recessing next week. And fast-tracking the bill, which largely mirrors President Clinton's fiscal year 2000 budget requests for foster care, means getting the approval of fervent anti-Clinton Republicans like House Majority Whip Tom Delay (R–Texas). However, the bill is gaining broad support in Congress and was championed in Senate testimony last week/19 by none other than Delay. Delay explained that, as the foster father of two adolescents himself, he understands the problems of the foster children who testified before him. One ''emancipated'' foster child told legislators how she ended up sleeping behind McDonald's, in laundry rooms and hospitals ''because they were safe and they were warm.''

The United States can surely do better by its most vulnerable youth than a ''safe, warm'' laundry room to call home.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, that was typical of John Chafee. He saw the potential of people—the best in people—and did everything he could to enhance their lives. He did not just root for the underdog; he was on the field helping the underdog. We can attribute more than a few upset victories over the years to his efforts.

It is hard for me to believe it was just 6 days ago I saw John at the weekly lunch we moderate Republicans hold every Wednesday. We take turns holding them in our offices. Last week, it was in John's office. Little did we know it would be for the last time.

It was a tradition he started in 1995. Back then, our circle included Senators Cohen and Kassebaum. We always looked forward to them. They were our refuge to discussions of what was happening on the floor, in the Senate, and in the country. It was a refuge from the ''hurly-burlyness'' of the process in the Senate with like-minded Senators. It was a tradition we looked forward to every week. I know it will not be the same without him.

At these luncheons, John always brought to the table the issues about which he most cared. We would also expect he would have a list of issues and legislation he was promoting that he thought was important to bring to our attention and to get our support. In fact, John was just speaking last week, as I said, about the foster children legislation, and I joined him on that issue because he was so passionate, as he was on all of the issues, whether it was child care, the environment, or families on welfare looking to make a better life for their family. Such talk never surprised any of us in the room because it was the essence of the man; it was what drove him.

Once again, it was also revealed in words forged by deep compassion and unyielding humanity in so many respects. Maybe it sounds trite in our world at the end of the 20th century, maybe it sounds old fashioned in a time when cynicism is celebrated over optimism, but John Chafee cared. He was a good man who believed he had something to offer the Nation in which he felt privileged to live, and he saw public service as a noble calling. Ironically, perhaps, it is precisely because of people such as John Chafee that public service remains a noble calling.

So today, there is a hole in the Senate where this great man once was. There is an empty desk on this floor where a remarkable leader once stood. There is a hollowness in our hearts.

But even in the midst of our sadness, let us also celebrate the life of a man who brought such extraordinary credit upon himself, his family, his State, and this institution. Senator Chafee now and forever will be a part of this Chamber. His compassionate and reasoned voice will forever echo from these walls, and his legacy will endure. It is a legacy we would all do well to follow.

We measure success in our lives and in this body by many different standards. But at such a solemn time as this, I cannot help but think of the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson who wrote:

> . . . to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. . . . This is to have succeeded.

So many lives have breathed easier because John Chafee lived, because John Chafee cared, because John Chafee was a United States Senator.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Florida.

Yesterday, as I was driving with my wife to the airport in Springfield, IL, to catch the plane, we were listening to National Public Radio and heard that my friend and colleague, Senator John Chafee, had passed away. I turned to my wife and said: This was a really special guy. I am sorry you didn't get to know him.

I have only served in the Senate for a little over 2 years. I look over there at his desk, which now has a bouquet of flowers, and realize that just a few days ago we were on the floor together talking about legislation and votes.

He was such an extraordinary man. In the 2½ years I have been here, I came to know him and developed a friendship across the aisle, Democrat to Republican. I really came to respect John Chafee. He has an amazing story. Tom Brokaw has a famous book that is very popular called ''The Greatest Generation,'' about the men and women who served our country in World War II and what special people they were. John Chafee was one of those people. To leave Yale and enlist at the age of 20, to go into the Marines and be part of the invasionary force on Guadalcanal, and then to come back and complete his education but to consider his obligation to his country so paramount he left again to serve in the Korean war under some very difficult circumstances, it shows a special, personal commitment to public service. Many of us, myself included, stand in awe when we consider that.

Then, of course, he served as Secretary of the Navy during the Vietnam war, a very controversial period in our history, and was regarded as a fair and honest man in that responsibility. Three times Governor of his State of Rhode Island, four times elected as Senator from a State which has historically elected more Democrats than Republicans, it was quite a tribute to John Chafee that he was elected time and again by his neighbors and friends in the State of Rhode Island.

Here on the Senate floor he played an important role. In my mind, he was a constant reminder of what the Senate could be on a good day; that there could be people of like mind on both sides of the aisle coming together to find bipartisan solutions. When I would have a gun control bill I wanted to offer to try to reduce gun violence, I would look across the aisle. I always knew John Chafee would stand up and come to the press conference. We would announce the bill. As we would leave, he would say: I know I am going to hear it again from the National Rifle Association back home but, he said, I just think this is the right thing to do.

It wasn't just on issues of gun violence. You could find the same thing when it came to issues to protect the environment. John Chafee always stood out from the pack. He was always a special person, trying to build an alliance, trying to build a coalition.

I recall when he came to me and asked me to do him a personal favor. As a junior Member of the Senate who respected him so much, I wasn't going to say no. But he told me he had been chosen by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations to head up an Atlantic Forum that took place every 2 years, bringing together political leaders from Europe, South America, and North America to talk about the future. He asked me if I would be kind enough to attend that conference in Portugal.

I thought about it and realized if it was important to him, it should be important to me. We went to Portugal together. John Chafee presided over about the 150 gathered to talk about some very involved political issues. He did it with such grace and style, such knowledge of the subject. It was one of the more successful conferences I ever attended. When it was over, he announced, shortly thereafter, that he was going to retire from the Senate. He came and asked me, as a favor, would I consider taking over the chairmanship of this forum.

It was a great honor that he would even ask me to consider following in his footsteps, after he had written such an envious record as the chairman of the Atlantic Forum. I have agreed to do that. I hope it will continue in his memory.

As he tried to bridge the ocean to make sure people in North America and South America and Europe came together to find common ground, he did the same thing day in and day out in the Senate.

Just a few months ago we had a contentious debate over gun control. At the last moment, Vice President GORE came in to cast the deciding vote. An important bill left the Chamber, but before that vote was cast, I was talking to John Chafee about this issue on which we held common views. He talked to me about what we could accomplish on the Senate floor and how we shouldn't go too far. He said: A lot of my colleagues over here on the Republican side disagree with me on this issue. I think we ought to stop at this point. I think we have made our point, and we have a good bill. We should proceed.

When I came back over to the Democratic side, I said: This is the advice of John Chafee. A lot of Democratic Senators looked and nodded because they knew it was good advice. It was not only good advice from the head; it was advice from the heart. That was the kind of person he was, respected so much for his intelligence but respected even more for his kindness and his compassion.

I am honored to serve in the Senate. There are moments in public life when each of us think twice about whether we chose the right career. But there are also moments that are ennobling moments, when you feel as if you were part of a great institution for a great Nation. I always felt working with John Chafee embodied those moments. He spoke to the best of the Senate.

He was a good friend, a great colleague, and he was a great American who served his Nation in so many ways. We are going to miss John Chafee, but his memory will endure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, before yielding time to the Senator from Minnesota, I will take a few moments to also share some thoughts about our departed colleague, John Chafee.

I had the great privilege of serving with John Chafee for nearly 13 years. We served together on the Environment and Public Works Committee and on the Finance Committee and had many opportunities to work closely together.

John Chafee was the kind of public servant whom citizens in a democracy hope to have representing them. He represented a small State, both geographically and relatively, in population. It is the kind of State where the citizens have an intimate relationship with their elected representatives; they know them personally; they can evaluate their character; they are not dependent on a flickering 30-second television ad to give them information about the people who are seeking their vote.

Election after election, in a largely Democratic State, Republican John Chafee received the vote of the people of the State of Rhode Island, a great tribute to the fundamental character of the citizens of that State and the man who gave his life in the service of that State.

John Chafee's life was epitomized by the word ''service.'' As Governor, as Secretary of the Navy, as a Senator, he displayed wisdom, dedication, and patriotism. Those qualities had been molded in the flames of World War II and the Korean war, where he served in some of the most intense combat. I imagine when some people suggested that a vote in the Senate was a testing vote, a difficult vote, he might have put that in the context of what he experienced in his young adult life at Guadalcanal.

As a colleague, I particularly admired the thoughtful, pragmatic manner in which he approached his duties in the Senate. He was a mentor. I remember the first committee meeting in which I participated, which was a markup, a meeting in which legislation was before the Environment and Public Works Committee for action and then recommendation to the full Senate. It

was the 1987 version of the transportation bill, always a controversial matter.

I had come to that committee with a number of ideas from my previous State experience in Florida. I was enthusiastic and had some amendments to propose. On the first day of committee consideration of this legislation, I was fortunate to get two of my amendments adopted. After the vote on the second amendment, Senator Chafee, speaking across the committee room from his position on the Republican side, said to me: Good work; now I recommend you quit.

That was good advice for that day.

His willingness and distinctive ability to reach out to Senators with all points of view kept the Senate at the reasonable center of American politics. John Chafee was proud to be categorized a moderate, proud to assume the label of a centrist. He brought common sense to our deliberations.

The Senate has sometimes been analogized to ''the saucer,'' as in a cup and saucer. It is the place where the hot tea or coffee is poured so that it can be cooled before it is consumed. That was one of the rationales of our Founding Fathers, establishing a bicameral legislature with one house being very close to the people and one house being, hopefully, a more deliberative body. John Chafee epitomized that concept of the place where the hot passions are reconciled.

John Chafee was also the kind of person who was more interested in results than with recognition. There probably are some pieces of legislation that are known as the Chafee act, or have his personal name associated with them. But, frankly, today, I cannot recall what that might be. I think John Chafee is perfectly satisfied with that. His goal was not to have his name etched in legislative marble or stone but, rather, to achieve a result. He was interested in building the edifice, not whose name was on the cornerstone of the edifice. That was the kind of human being John Chafee was.

As a result of his commitment to results rather than recognition, in fact, some of the Senate's most memorable achievements in recent years bear his imprint. Expanded environmental protections, a balanced budget, and an improved transportation system were the results of his leadership and influence.

As with all of us, John Chafee was a good friend, a trusted colleague. John will be sorely missed. He leaves a legacy that adds distinction to this body and to the title of public servant. We all send our deepest sympathy and best wishes that solace will be found in the great accomplishments of this truly great man, and that his family and the thousands of persons fortunate enough to call John Chafee a friend will find a solace and a capacity to deal with the grief that we all suffer today.

Mr. President, I yield such time as he may wish to the Senator from Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, first of all, for those who might be watching our deliberations, I had a chance to speak yesterday about Senator Chafee. I will get back to the debate on this legislation.

As I listened to my colleagues, I was reminded of a press conference that we had several months ago on some work I have been doing with Senator DOMENICI. The legislation is called the Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act, which we very much want to pass this year. Certainly, we won't get it done in the next 2 weeks, but I hope we will when we come back. I remembered that one of the original cosponsors was Senator Chafee. I agree with what everybody has said about him. It will be a tremendous loss for the Senate and our country. Again, today, I extend my love to Senator Chafee's family.

AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, both colleagues have been gracious to those of us who are in opposition to this legislation. We will be taking some time to lay out our case against the legislation. Senator HOLLINGS, of course, is one of the leading opponents. Because of the necessity to go back to his family experience of the real agony of having a home burned down, he needs to be away for this afternoon. A number of us will be here because a number of Senators want to speak. I will divide up my time and take about a half hour now, and I will be back this afternoon as other Senators speak.

I have a letter that went out to Senators, signed by many African American religious leaders who oppose the African Growth and Opportunity Act and support the HOPE for Africa Act. That is the title.

I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD.

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

AFRICAN-AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS OPPOSE THE ''AFRICA GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT'' (AGOA) AND SUPPORT THE ''HOPE FOR AFRICA ACT'', OCTOBER 20, 1999

DEAR SENATOR: We are a group of religious leaders who share with other community leaders, scholars and activists, grave concerns about the various proposed versions of the ''Africa Growth and Opportunity Act'' (AGOA: H.R. 434, S. 1387, S. 666). We urge you to oppose the AGOA approach to U.S.-Africa relations.

We support an alternative legislative proposal, the ''HOPE for Africa Act'' (HOPE meaning Human Rights, Opportunity, Partnership and Empowerment) S. 1636 introduced by Senator Russ Feingold (WI). The HOPE for Africa bill has been developed with colleagues and other public interest advocates, human rights and community groups in Africa and the United States.

We have been very clear about our opposition to H.R. 434, the ''Africa Growth and Opportunity Act'' that has now come over to the Senate. We view this controversial bill, which was accurately dubbed the ''African Re-colonization Act'' last year, as actually *damaging* to the interests of the majority of African people.

The AGOA's sponsors have refused to seriously address the concerns of its prominent critics, such as TransAfrica President Randall Robinson, Professor Ron Walters, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Rev. William Campbell, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice and Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., and many of his colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus including Rep. Maxine Waters, and Rep. John Lewis.

Over the course of the last and current Congress, African American leaders and organizations concerned about Africa have carefully studied the actual provisions of the different versions of the AGOA. Close analysis of the bills reveals that although they are wrapped in rhetoric about helping Africa, these bills are designed to secure U.S. business interests, often at the expense of the interests and needs of the majority of African people and at the expense of African nations' sovereignty and self-determination. They have thus been rightly designated as ''corporate bills'' rather than as measures promoting justice or fair trade.

Incredibly, the House version of AGOA, which its proponents insist will be preserved in any House-Senate conference process, imposes substantial burdens on the sub-Saharan countries, burdens which are not imposed on other U.S. trading partners. That the U.S. should condition trade with African nations alone on demands that these countries reorganize their domestic policies and priorities is offensive. To add injury to insult, these burdens are in exchange for meager trade benefits—two of the 48 sub-Saharan countries would have quotas for textiles and apparel removed, yet all such quotas expires when the Multifiber Agreement sunsets in 2005.

The Senate versions of the ''Africa Growth and Opportunity Act'' effectively eliminate even the meager trade benefits the House version of AGOA could provide African countries. After all, it is highly unlikely that manufacturers will assume the expense of shipping product to Africa (as opposed to the Caribbean) just for the limited purpose of assembly, as provided in the bill.

The people of Africa must have our support as they strive to build democracy and improve the standard of living in their nations. Certainly it would be a travesty if U.S. policy actually undermined the future prospects of most Africans, which is why many on the continent oppose AGOE.

Given our opposition to the AGOA approach and our strong desire for a mutually beneficial U.S.-Africa policy, African colleagues participated in crafting a proposal aimed at promoting equitable, sustainable, sovereign African development. The key elements of ''The HOPE for Africa Act'' are the African priorities of debt relief and self-determination of those economic and social policies best suited to meeting the needs of African people. These include strengthening and diversifying Africa's economic production capacity (for instance in the processing