

share with anybody who wants to go through it—and we can talk more about how it has happened—but when people think the Congress did not do much, we were not big players in getting us a balanced budget, I submit this is a pretty big part of it. If those went back up to the levels that were here 15, 20 years ago, we would sure be looking around wondering, are we ever going to stop spending Social Security money to pay for the expenses of our ordinary Government?

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I am going to address the Senate on the issue of the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the related parts of that package. But I appreciated being in the Chamber for these last few minutes to hear some of the discussion on Social Security and budgetary items.

I say with regard to Social Security—and I do not sit on a major committee dealing with the Social Security issue—all I know is, in the last few weeks, the Congressional Budget Office reported that while there may be a lockbox, apparently only one side has the keys to it because some \$18 billion has already been dipped into in order to pay for spending in the present budget.

While we have a lockbox, apparently only a handful of people have the keys to be able to dip into it when it becomes necessary to find funding. I hope, as well, we can find common ground solutions to the Social Security issue. As the Senator from Nebraska has pointed out, the long-term interests of all Americans depend upon our ability to make sure we have a trust fund that is sound and in good shape.

I also recall a few years ago when there were proposals to amend the Constitution of the United States to require a balanced budget. The advocates of that proposal, of course, included that Social Security be calculated in reaching a balanced budget. There were those who argued that you couldn't do that because Social Security ought not to be used for that purpose. But those who were the authors of the constitutional amendment to balance the budget are some of the same ones today who argue on the lockbox. It wasn't a lockbox when we were talking about balancing the budget with a constitutional amendment. It is today. Nonetheless, I hope we can come up with some answers to this for the long-term.

AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to address the issue of the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the African Growth and Opportunity Act which is

pending before the Senate. The package of incentives the Senate is considering this week includes the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the United States-Caribbean Basin Trade Enhancement Act, and the reauthorization of the Generalized System of Preferences and Trade Adjustment Assistance. Those are the four pieces of the proposal before us.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance dates back to 1962, when we decided to provide assistance to men and women in this country who had been adversely affected as a result of trade policies and who lost jobs. Trade adjustment allows for those individuals and companies that may be adversely affected to get some help. It has been a good law for almost 40 years, and I am confident this piece of the package is one all of our colleagues will support.

The matter dealing with the Generalized System of Preferences, the GSP, is also pretty routine, and one that we need to have enacted. I am, again, confident that this provision will also enjoy broad-based support.

The two pieces that are provoking the debate have to deal with the enhancement of the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act.

I will spend a couple minutes talking about both of those provisions. I support them. I think they are important pieces of legislation that are going to accrue to the benefit of our country. I know there are those who are going to argue that somehow this is going to cause great damage to certain workers in the country. I don't believe it to be the case. In fact, I argue that if we were to defeat the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Africa Growth provisions, that they will actually accrue to the detriment of workers.

These are two important provisions which are going to enhance job opportunities in this country and are not going to harm people. I notice the presence of the distinguished Senator from Delaware, chairman of the Finance Committee. I commend him and his colleagues on the Finance Committee for dealing as expeditiously as they did with this trade package. This is the only piece of trade legislation I am aware of that we will deal with in this session of this Congress. I am hopeful that a good, strong majority of our colleagues will support these two provisions on the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act.

First, let me share some factual information so people can put this whole effort into context. Today, the Caribbean countries and the Central American nations comprise about 1.9 percent of all of the imports that come into the United States, 1.9 percent total. Of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa that will be affected by this legislation if it is adopted, more than 700 million peo-

ple who are the poorest in the world, live in these 48 countries. These countries make up .86 percent of 1 percent of textile and apparel imports to the United States. So between the 48 countries and more than 700 million people in the sub-Saharan Africa region and the 24 countries that make up the Caribbean Basin and the Central American nations, we are talking about something around 2.75 percent of imports that come into the United States.

We are talking about millions of people who live in these nations. We have a provision that would allow for the duty-free import of products that come out of these two parts of the world. But it isn't just duty free. It doesn't mean anything they produce automatically comes to this country. In this provision, there is a very important clause regarding textiles, which is the source of most of the argument, I think. The distinguished Senator from Delaware can correct me if I am wrong, but I think the textile provisions are probably provoking the most debate. In the textile provisions, we say that the fabric and the thread that is used to assemble the product in the 48 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the 24 countries in the Caribbean, that fabric and that thread must be made in the United States. You can then assemble the product in these other countries and it will come into the United States.

Why is that important? Today, we have a massive amount of imports that come into this country from the Pacific Rim, Asian countries. There is no such requirement in those trade agreements, while there are quotas. In the year 2005, the quotas come off entirely. If we don't pass the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, by 2005, we are going to find our markets flooded by products made in the Pacific Rim, where there is no U.S. content requirement.

There are some 400,000 jobs in this country that make fabric and make the thread used in the production of these textile products that would come out of Africa and the Caribbean Basin. If we don't pass this legislation, those 400,000 jobs are in jeopardy. That is why this bill is important. First and foremost, this bill is important to America. As with any piece of legislation, the first consideration is, does it do any good or do no harm, but most especially, does it do any good for the people of the United States of America? I argue this bill is critically important to the well-being of almost a half million workers in the United States. Our failure to enact this legislation places those 400,000 jobs in jeopardy.

There are other reasons why I think this is important, aside from our own interests. We spent \$6 billion of U.S. taxpayer money in the 1980s in one of these Caribbean Basin countries, El

Salvador; \$6 billion from the U.S. Treasury went to finance a war basically in the one country of El Salvador. Today, there are some 335,000 Salvadorans living in the United States. In fact, there are 1 million illegal aliens from the 24 Caribbean Basin countries living in the United States. And every day, more come.

Why do they come here? Why did my great-grandparents come here? Why do the grandparents of parents of most people, with the exception of African Americans, come to America? My great-grandparents left Ireland not because they did not love Ireland any longer. It was because they were discriminated against. They couldn't get work. They weren't allowed to be educated. So they were left with no choice but to leave the country they loved to come to America. That is true for millions and millions of people in this country.

Why do Salvadorans, Nicaraguans, people of the Dominican Republic and other nations leave to come here? It is not because they don't love their own countries, but the opportunities in these nations are almost nonexistent in many cases. That is why they come here. Do you want to stop that flood from coming? You have to create economic opportunity or that flood is going to continue, as sure as I am standing here.

This effort doesn't solve that problem entirely. It would be ludicrous to suggest it would. But it would start to create economic opportunities in these countries that would allow their people to have some future without looking for the next boat or raft or plane in which to escape the economic deprivation they see in their own nation and to seek what millions have done over the years; that is, to come to this land of opportunity. If we are going to stem that tide, we have to begin by creating economic opportunity, or at least assisting in that process. I think this bill attempts to do that and does begin that process.

Let me remind my colleagues that many of these Caribbean countries over the last few years have been devastated by natural disaster.

These hurricanes that have swept across these islands and across these countries have left thousands homeless, without any future whatsoever.

I recall that only about a year ago at this time, or a little less—actually in early November of last year—I flew down to Nicaragua, after the hurricane hit there, with the wife of our Vice President, Mrs. Gore, Tipper Gore, and a group of Members of Congress. We went down for a weekend to help out with the international relief organizations to try to see what we could do as volunteers to provide some assistance.

I will never forget, there were six or seven of us inside a one-room schoolhouse in Nicaragua, outside of Mana-

gua. It took us an entire day with shovels to shovel out the mud in a one-room schoolhouse. That is how thick it was. It took six people almost an entire day to shovel the mud out of what had been a one-room schoolhouse a few days earlier.

We were looking over a small community that had just been devastated, with tent cities going up. Most of them were made of whatever scrap pieces of metal and cardboard people could find.

So we talk about these neighbors of ours to the immediate south in this hemisphere who have been devastated by these natural disasters and events and our efforts to try to help them get back on their feet. We could write a check, although I suspect we would not come up with \$6 billion in aid relief, as we did during the guerrilla conflict in Central America, for one country. We probably could not get that passed.

What we can do is try to provide some opportunity for jobs to be created, using U.S. content product, that would put some people to work in these countries, which keeps people working in America, and will provide some ray of hope for millions of people in these countries.

I commend the chairman of the Finance Committee and those who worked with him. This is a good bill. It is not perfect, and there may be some amendments that would be offered. My good friend and colleague from Wisconsin, Senator FEINGOLD, has an idea that is a different approach to what is included in the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. I like what he is going to propose. I don't know if he will offer it as an amendment or not. My concern is that it probably would not pass. It has a factor of aid written into it, and I don't think there are 51 votes for a massive aid package here, nor does it exist in the House.

So while I like what he proposes, I am concerned that would not make it, and what we have here, I think, can. I am attracted to what he is suggesting, but I don't necessarily believe that is going to be the answer in terms of how to do it. In the long term, it is creating economic opportunity in these countries that makes the most difference.

We now have a balance of payment and trade in the 24 Caribbean countries that is positive. We talk about a mounting trade deficit, and it is true; but now if we are going to attack the trade deficit, we are aiming at the wrong target.

To give you an idea where the numbers are, in the last several years, the trade surplus with the 24 Caribbean Basin countries is over \$2 billion. In the first 6 months of 1999, the surplus stands at \$830 million for this year alone. That is getting near \$3 billion in a trade surplus with these 24 countries.

It seems to me, if you want to deal with the trade deficit, maybe you ought to be aiming your sights on

other parts of the world, although I am not advocating you do it. But if you do, that is where we ought to be looking. We have a trade surplus, and it is only a small amount of imports; 1.9 percent of the total imports come out of these 24 countries. Nonetheless, we have a trade surplus.

It seems to me that trying to expand trading opportunities is one of the few bright spots around the globe when it comes to expanding job opportunities here by providing new markets where American-produced products can be sold.

With regard to these African countries, all of us have seen these photographs. You don't have to go to Africa or necessarily become a great student of what is going on in the sub-Saharan region. But anybody with even a passing awareness of what has happened to these countries over the last number of years has to be moved by it. They have to be moved by what they see.

When you see more than 700 million people living under the most abject conditions of poverty imaginable in the world, with less than 1 percent of textile and apparel imports coming from those 700 million people—I think .86 percent is the number; that is all it is coming into this country. If we can't say to these 700 million people in these 48 countries, look, take our fabric and our threads, and if you can produce a product to sell into this country, keeping the jobs here at home and enhancing your economic opportunities, then what do we stand for? How else do we really, in the long term, provide assistance to these people?

Does anybody really believe we are going to take out a check and write out an aid program to provide assistance to this many people in those countries? I don't think so. Ironically, only two of the countries in the sub-Saharan region have any kind of trading relationship with us at all. The other 46 have virtually no trading relationship. While this bill would potentially affect 48 countries, in fact, only 2 of the 48 really have any kind of involvement in terms of trading. Again, it is almost exclusively in the textile area.

Again, I will make the point I tried to make at the outset. This bill, first and foremost, is good for this country. In the year 2005, the quotas come off. Again, my colleague from Delaware has forgotten more about this issue than I know. He can correct me if I am wrong. In the year 2005, as I understand it, the quotas on trade from the Pacific rim come off. There are no content requirements, as I understand it, with product produced in the Pacific rim.

So if we don't provide an offsetting market to the Pacific rim market in the Caribbean Basin Initiative in the sub-Saharan region, come the year 2005, the people today who produce the fabric and produce the threads that

would be used to produce the products out of the nations affected by this bill would have their jobs in jeopardy because that content requirement is not there on the Pacific rim nations. The quotas do come off, and we could be adversely affected, in my view, by such an event. So it is going to be critically important that we start to build up an alternative market that has U.S. content requirements in it.

I know some of my colleagues have raised the issue of labor standards. They are legitimate issues to raise. I point out that, to the best of my knowledge, all 24 countries in the Caribbean Basin Initiative are signatories to the international labor agreements. They are already on the line for supporting those labor standards. There is a legitimate issue about enforcement of the standards; that is a separate issue.

But the fact is, there are labor standards here. The issue is whether or not you can enforce them and see to it that people are going to be protected to the extent possible by those labor standards. I hope we will figure out a mechanism to enforce the standards in those laws. The laws do exist to require these countries to meet those labor standards.

Again, I commend those who have been involved. I will have more to say on the bill as the debate moves forward.

For those who think that somehow this is a giveaway, this is just a favor we are doing for people who live in the island nations of the Caribbean or the Central American countries, nothing could be further from the truth. This bill is good for America. It protects jobs in America, expands growth and opportunity for businesses to be able to sell into these markets.

The best social welfare program is a job. That is the best social welfare program. Nothing does more for a nation, for a family, or for an individual than to give them an opportunity to have a job, where they are self-sufficient and providing for their families and themselves. This proposal that increases a trading opportunity with these poor countries in Central America and the Caribbean and in the 48 nations of sub-Saharan Africa gives them an opportunity to have a job which, in the long-term, is what preserves democracy and creates the kind of wealth and education necessary for nations to prosper and to grow.

Again, with only 1.9 percent of all the imports coming from the Caribbean, those 24 countries, and less than 1 percent of textiles and apparel coming from the 48 nations in the sub-Saharan Africa nations, I think this country of ours and the Senate should support this initiative and say to the nations and the people: We want you to be partners with us. We want you to have the chance to provide for your own people.

We want to do so without costing jobs for hard-working Americans. This bill does both of those things, and for those reasons is richly deserving of the support and votes of Members of the Senate.

For those reasons, I urge adoption of this bill when the appropriate time comes to vote aye.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I understand that I am entitled to up to 1 hour under the rules at this point, or at any point during the debate on the motion to proceed. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during debate of H.R. 434 the following members of my staff have access to the floor: Mary Murphy, Tom Walls, Mary Ann Richmond, Linda Rotblatt, Sumner Slichter, and Michelle Gavin.

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

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the African Growth and Opportunity Act and the Africa trade debate.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act's supporters believe that this legislation is a landmark—that it represents a real opportunity for growth on the continent, a new way of thinking about Africa.

And they want us to believe, as they believe, that to reject it, or try to improve it, would be to reject all engagement with the continent and indeed to reject all of the African people's enterprise and energy.

On that they are wrong. This bill is deeply flawed, and must be changed in a number of fundamental ways or, quite frankly, if we can't do that, I think it should be defeated.

For 7 years I have served on the Subcommittee on Africa and I have committed myself to supporting democratization, peace, and development in the many varied countries of that continent. I support engagement with Africa as strongly as any Member of this body.

I am deeply concerned about the dearth of economic ties between the people of the United States and those of the African continent. The current level of trade between us is depressingly small. Africa represents only 1 percent of our imports, 1 percent of our exports, and 1 percent of our foreign direct investment.

Should something be done to stimulate our trade with Africa? Absolutely.

But I urge this body—let's not pretend that we are now debating a comprehensive trade package for Africa, for this bill is not in the least com-

prehensive. Let's not fail to address the need to build an environment that will foster and sustain mutually beneficial economic relationships. If we fail to assemble the components of that environment in this trade package, it cannot be called comprehensive, and I don't think it should even be passed.

There really are only two defensible views of this bill. It either does virtually nothing at all or, worse, it actually does harm.

This legislation actually does very little for Africa. The trade benefits we are talking about are not terribly significant. The African Growth and Opportunity Act makes African states eligible for temporary preferential access to the U.S. market for textiles and apparel only.

Many of Africa's primary exports are not addressed at all by this legislation.

The African Growth and Opportunity is silent on the subject of corruption. But surely corruption ranks right beside instability as one of the primary disincentives for American companies to get involved in Africa.

In fact, of the 17 sub-Saharan African states rated in Transparency International's 1998 Corruption Perception Index, 13 ranked in the bottom half. Shouldn't a major piece of U.S.-Africa trade legislation at least mention this issue? Shouldn't it at least take a stab at addressing the corruption that impedes healthy commercial relationships?

Mr. President, this legislation does nothing at all to address the African context for economic growth. That context is a challenging one—it is a context of boundless potential amid a web of obstacles.

Economic growth in Africa faces the obstacle of a devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic. In the course of 1998, AIDS was responsible for an estimated 2 million African deaths. That's 5,500 deaths a day.

Eighty-seven percent of the world's HIV-positive children live in Africa. Their lives are that continent's future. Their chronic illness and their deaths each day erode a little more of Africa's promise. It is difficult to see how the United States can enjoy mutually beneficial trade relations with Africa unless we commit ourselves to addressing HIV/AIDS crisis on a scale beyond anything we have done before.

Economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa faces the obstacle of a staggering \$230 billion in bilateral and multilateral debt. Africa's debt service requirements now take over 20 percent of the region's export earnings. How can Africa become a strong economic partner when its states must divert funds away from schools, away from health care, and away from infrastructure in order to service their debt burden?

How can we talk about economic engagement and simply ignore these painfully obvious realities?

Mr. President, in several ways, I believe that this legislation actually would do harm.

By seriously addressing only the textile industry, it would discourage the kind of diversification that African economies need to gain strength and stability.

AGOA also fails to adequately tackle the problem of transshipment. Transshipment is a practice whereby producers in China and other third party countries establish sham production facilities in countries which may export to the United States under more favorable conditions. Then these producers ship goods made in their factories at home and meant for the U.S. market to the third country, in this case an African country, pack it or assemble it in some minor way, and send it along to the United States marked "Made in Africa," enjoying all of the trade benefits that label would bring.

As my colleagues know, transshipment is a very serious problem. Approximately \$2 billion worth of illegally transshipped textiles enter the United States every year.

The U.S. Customs Service has determined that for every \$1 billion of illegally transshipped products that enter the United States, 40,000 jobs in the textile and apparel sector are lost.

I'd like to share some words from the Peoples Republic of China with my colleagues.

It is a pretty startling example of what can happen.

This is a quote taken from the official website of the Chinese Ministry of Trade and Economic Cooperation. It says, and this is a direct quote:

There are many opportunities for Chinese business people in Africa. . . . Setting up assembly plants with Chinese equipment, technology and personnel could not only greatly increase sales in African countries, but also circumvent the quotas imposed on commodities of Chinese origin imposed by European and American countries.

Mr. President, it's not hard to see that those who would engage in transshipment aren't too worried about the protections we currently have in place to guard against it.

If nothing else raises a red flag for my colleagues when they consider the African Growth and Opportunity Act, this should be a crystal clear signal. Whatever opportunities this legislation creates by and large will not be opportunities for Africans.

In fact, the African Growth and Opportunity Act does not require that Africans themselves be employed at the firms receiving trade benefits.

While it is utterly silent on African employment, AGOA actually takes a step backwards for Africa with regard to content. The GSP program requires that 35 percent of a product's value-added content come from Africa. This legislation lowers that bar to 20 percent. This is progress?

Mr. President, AGOA also contains weak provisions for ensuring workers'

rights. It relies on GSP provisions to protect African labor. But some countries—like Equatorial Guinea—have GSP today, and still do not allow the establishment of independent free trade unions.

AGOA could lead to exploitation in the name of increased trade. AGOA does not mention environmental standards at all. Any plan for sustainable economic development must include some notion of environmental protection. This is particularly true of a continent like Africa, where in some countries 85 percent of the population lives directly off the land.

We are all affected when logging and mining deplete African rainforests and increase global warming; we all lose when species unique to Africa are lost to hasty profitmaking schemes, hatched without regard to sustainability or long-term environmental effects.

Environmental quality also has serious implications for peace and stability in the region. As we have seen in the Niger Delta, environmental degradation can lead to civil unrest.

Responsible trade policies must adequately address human rights and environmental issues—not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because, in the long run, it will create a better business climate for Africans and Americans alike.

In addition, the failure of the African Growth and Opportunity Act to mention the critical role that development assistance plays in promoting African growth and opportunities has raised alarm here at home and internationally. The perception is that the United States has deluded itself into believing that a small package of trade benefits—benefits which may not actually affect Africans themselves—can replace a responsible and well-monitored program of development assistance. This inevitably must cast doubt on the United States commitment to development in Africa.

I care deeply about Africa and about United States policy towards Africa, and my colleagues know that. But I am here today not just because of my own concerns, but because of others—because I know how deeply they care about Africa, and I have heard them voice their very serious concerns about AGOA.

African-American leaders ranging from Cornel West to Randall Robinson oppose the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Just 2 weeks ago, a group of African-American ministers representing communities from Massachusetts and Mississippi, California and New Jersey, Virginia and Illinois came to Capitol Hill to express their opposition to the African Growth and Opportunity Act. I will read briefly remarks of Rev. Alexander Hurt of the Hurt Inner-City Ministries, Church of God and Christ on

the African Growth and Opportunity Act:

I have never fully felt like an American until the day that I watched my President land in the land of my fathers. It was like introducing two old friends to each other. That the AGOA is in any way associated with that trip is the saddest part of this debate. There are millions of African-Americans who, like me, connect the President's trip to Africa with a start of a new kind of relationship between not only Africa and America, but Africa and the West. AGOA closes that possibility. For it represents not a new future, but a return to the past.

America in a period of abundance that is unknown in human history, can not be moved to reach out to Africa to help starving nations. In the end we must decide if we will have a foreign policy that reaches out with a hand toward nations as equals, or with a hammer and pound them into subjection.

Few things have changed with America's position toward Africa. What was once done with the canon and the gun is now being done with medicine and debt.

I have heard African voices raise the alarm about AGOA as well as American ones. The Congress of South African Trade Unions has issued a statement opposing the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

A statement issued by 35 African NGO's—including Angola's Journalists for the Environment and Development, Kenya's African Academy of Sciences, South Africa's International People's Health Council, and Zambia's Foundation for Economic Progress—strongly opposed AGOA.

Women's groups have spoken out as well. Women in Law Development in Africa, a coalition of African women and women's advocacy groups, opposes the African Growth and Opportunity Act, as does Women's EDGE, a coalition of international development organizations and domestic women's groups.

The Africa-America Institute organized focus group discussions in eight African countries and the United States to foster discussion of proposed United States-Africa trade legislation. They found that AGOA will not contribute to African development unless the United States and other donor countries also increase investments in African human resource development and take measures to relieve Africa's debt burden.

I know others have voiced support for AGOA, and I don't question their motives. Some of those supporters believe that this is the only game in town, and that a deeply flawed Africa trade bill is better than no bill at all. I think they are wrong. This Senate has a responsibility either to make this bill better, or to refuse to let it become law.

I want to take a positive approach and make this bill better. Therefore, I have proposed alternative legislation, S. 1636, the HOPE for Africa Act. It was based largely on the efforts of my colleague from the House, Congressman

JESSE JACKSON, Jr., and I am grateful to him for his leadership on this issue.

The provisions of the HOPE bill point the way toward a truly comprehensive and a more responsible United States-Africa trade policy. I intend to use elements of HOPE to try to amend and improve AGOA.

Mr. President, I want to amend AGOA to make goods listed under the Lome Convention eligible for duty-free access to the United States, provided those goods are not determined to be import-sensitive by the President. These provisions would mean more trade opportunities for more African people.

At the same time, AGOA must be changed to reflect the importance of labor rights, human rights, and environmental standards. My proposals will clearly spell out the labor rights that our trade partners must enforce in order to receive benefits. They will also contain a monitoring procedure that involves the International Federation of Trade Unions, so that violations will not be glossed over at the expense of African workers.

I will propose stronger human rights language, and incentives for foreign companies operating in Africa to bring their environmental practices there up to the standards that they adhere to at home.

I will propose tough transshipment protections that give American entities a stake in the legality of the products they import. I want to be sure that Africans and Americans really do benefit from our United States-Africa trade policy.

In that same vein, I will propose that trade benefits be contingent upon African content and the employment of African workers.

I will propose that the United States reassert its commitment to responsible, well-monitored development assistance for Africa.

I would be irresponsible if I did not propose changes to AGOA that will address the factors crippling Africa's economic potential today—debt, HIV/AIDS, and corruption.

I will urge this Senate to include anticorruption provisions that I will offer as an amendment to the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

I will propose that we address debt relief in this legislation so that, at the very least, we can put ourselves on the path toward taking well-thought-out and responsible action.

For all its wealth of natural resources, Africa's people are its most valuable resource. I will support measures to prioritize HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in AGOA. In addition, I want to address the issue of Africa's intellectual property laws, to ensure that United States taxpayer dollars are not spent to undermine the legal efforts of some African countries to gain and retain access to low-cost pharmaceuticals.

Mr. President, if all of this sounds ambitious, it is. Any plan to seriously engage economically with Africa must be ambitious. My bill and the amendments I will offer to AGOA are the minimum we must do to knock down the obstacles to a healthy, thriving, and just commercial relationship between the countries of Africa and the United States. The bill before us falls short of the minimum meaningful effort. The rhetoric that surrounds the African Growth and Opportunity Act is certainly ambitious. It is the content that is insufficient.

We must demand more of a United States-Africa trade bill than AGOA has to offer. Ambitious plans can lead to rich rewards for both America and Africa. Anything less promises failure, despair, and decades more of lost opportunity.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IN HONOR OF SENATOR JOHN CHAFEE

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, it is with great sadness I rise to mourn the passing of Senator John Chafee. Senator Chafee was much more than a colleague to me. Senator Chafee was a very close friend as well. The Senate has lost a giant, and I assuredly have lost a friend.

John Chafee will go down in history as one of the best U.S. Senators to ever grace this Chamber. Senator Chafee was one of those rare people who was able to rise above partisanship and work constructively with others on both sides of the aisle to achieve important things for the American people.

John Chafee always had a smile, he always had a feeling of the possible, and even in the darkest times when it seemed as if there was no way to bring people together in this Chamber, John Chafee had the confidence that if we just reached out, if we were rational and reasonable and talked to each other, we could accomplish great things. That was the spirit of John Chafee, and it will be in this Chamber long after he has left us.

I look at his desk now and I see the bouquet of flowers there. What a fitting tribute to John Chafee because he graced any room he entered. That is the way I remember John. When I learned yesterday that he had died, I was thinking of my last encounter with John, which was on the floor last Thursday. I was exiting the Chamber

with a group of Senators. I walked past him and he said: Hey, don't you talk to me anymore? Because I hadn't exchanged our usual greeting.

I came back and I reached out to him. We shook hands, had a brief conversation, and I told him: John, you know I'll always talk to you. We had a little conversation about what was occurring in the Senate and what might be done to improve things. That was John Chafee. That was quintessential John Chafee. How are we going to make things better?

He never spent a lot of time ruminating and worrying. Instead, he spent time figuring out how we were going to make things better. That is what I so admired about John Chafee, that and his basic human decency. You could not find a more decent person to work with in this Senate or in any other forum than John Chafee. I admired him so much because he really gave a life of dedication to public service.

John Chafee, we all know, was very fortunate. He grew up in a family of means. He did not have to spend his life in public service. He could have been on "easy street." But that is not the way John Chafee chose to lead his life. Instead, John determined he would take on one public challenge after another, whether it was serving in the Marine Corps, of which he was very proud, or whether it was serving his State as Governor, or serving as Secretary of the Navy, or serving here in the Senate. John Chafee had a life dedicated to public service. His State of Rhode Island and our country are the richer for it.

I served on the Finance Committee with John. It was the only committee assignment we shared. But I soon became a partner and ally of John Chafee's on the Senate Finance Committee because we thought about issues in much the same way. John Chafee was somebody who believed deeply in fiscal responsibility. He felt very strongly that was something we should pursue. But at the same time, he had a progressive agenda. He was really the leading advocate for the mentally ill, the disabled, and the retarded. As the Finance Committee considered changes to Medicare and Medicaid, I was honored to work closely with John to make sure that changes did not negatively impact those groups.

Together, I remember well, we sponsored an amendment to ensure that disabled children would not be removed from the Supplemental Security Income Program. As a result of John's leadership, more than 100,000 disabled children were able to maintain critical benefits to help their families afford the costs associated with their disability. That was John Chafee. He cared about other people—and really cared, not that superficial "just talk the talk." John Chafee cared enough to