

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, November 9, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for 4 minutes.

WHAT IS THE WTO?

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, with all the talk about the meeting of the WTO in Seattle, it is worth answering the question, what is the WTO? The World Trade Organization, the Uruguay Round of the GATT, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, is a broad-ranging set of international trade rules that, number one, imposes obligations on foreign countries that are beneficial to U.S. multinational companies and, number two, it imposes obligations on the Federal and State governments that place tight limitations on Congress and the State legislatures that are beneficial to foreign multinational companies.

The WTO makes the world the oyster of large multinational businesses, because the WTO takes away the inability of national governments to set the laws of their countries. National governments, including the United States, lose the ability to pass laws affecting the import of products that are dangerous or that are made where there are no worker protections, child labor prohibitions, minimum wage standards or where workers are deprived of the right to organize into unions and bargain collectively.

Even if the import of those products would put U.S. workers out of work or would endanger consumers or the environment, the WTO says no.

At the current time, there is a WTO panel hearing arguments against France's ban on asbestos, a proven carcinogen in humans and a substantial workplace danger.

According to the Congressional Research Service, legislation passed in the U.S. Congress to ban imports of products made with child labor, quote, would be inconsistent with GATT arti-

cles, unquote. In other words, the WTO would not permit Congress to ban products made with child labor.

So here is the imbalance: The WTO permits measures that make it easier for large companies to locate anywhere in the world but the WTO forbids a country from banning a product made with child labor.

What would happen if the U.S. passed a law that banned the import of products made with child labor? Any one of the 131 member countries could seek a tribunal in Geneva to overturn the U.S. law. Companies that profit from products made from child labor would be expected to lobby countries to bring such a case. It is possible that companies would be able to bring such a case themselves, without persuading a country government to do so, if the WTO is expanded some more. If a WTO panel of trade bureaucrats ruled that any child labor ban violated the WTO, the U.S. would have to repeal the law or pay damages.

According to the Congressional Research Service, that is just what the WTO tribunal would rule.

So when the World Trade agreement was negotiated, we gave away the United States' greatest negotiating leverage, access to the U.S. market, to improve the rights and living standards of workers in the U.S. and around the world. The U.S. has basically unilaterally ceded this.

In the next few weeks, trade ministers from many of the world's countries will be meeting in Seattle to discuss how to expand the WTO. The U.S. is sending many negotiators, but will they be bargaining for what we need? What we need, what the working people in the United States and overseas need, is to renegotiate the WTO before any expansion occurs. We need to place limitations on the WTO. We need to explicitly enable the United States and other countries to prohibit import of products made with child and forced labor.

We need to be able to use the leverage of access to the U.S. market and other markets to guarantee the rights of workers to organize into unions and bargain collectively; to be protected by workplace safety and right-to-know standards that are minimally equivalent to current U.S. standards; and to benefit from legal minimum wage levels.

We need the WTO to be limited to improve conditions for workers in the U.S. and around the world. American workers would benefit. They would

have less reason to be pressured into abandoning efforts to improve wages and conditions by employer threats to move plants and equipment to the Third World.

SELLING ABORTED BABY PARTS, WHAT HAS THE UNITED STATES COME TO?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 350, a resolution which addresses the horrible practice developing in America of trafficking in baby body parts for monetary reimbursement. Abortion clinics are selling dead, unborn babies, or parts of them, to middlemen. These middlemen, in turn, are selling them to researchers.

Mr. Speaker, just look at this blowup of this price list taken from this chilling magazine article from someone in this awful business. A liver, \$150, but it can be gotten for \$125 if it is from a younger baby, or one can get a 30 percent discount if it is significantly fragmented; a spleen, \$75; pancreas, \$100; a thymus, \$100.

Look at this, a brain, \$999. Notice they even use marketing techniques in this gruesome business, selling it for \$1 less than a thousand dollars to make it, I guess, a more attractive purchase.

Again, if it is fragmented, what a terrible way to describe a baby's injured brain from abortion, one can get a 30 percent discount; almost like step right up, ladies and gentlemen. A baby's ear, \$75; eyes, \$75 for a pair, \$40 for one; skin, \$100; the spinal cord, \$325.

Mr. Speaker, I wish this price list were a cruel Halloween hoax, but it is not. It is a price list for human body parts from aborted babies, in America. This is not Nazi, Germany.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution calling for oversight hearings.

THE WTO NEEDS A MAJOR OVERHAUL, AND THE UNITED STATES HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO IT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized during morning hour debates for 4 minutes.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.