

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), who preceded me, talked a little bit about the upcoming meeting of the World Trade Organization, and I would like to follow up on that.

It was Renato Ruggiero, the former director general of the World Trade Organization, who said, and I quote, we are writing the Constitution of a new world government, end quote.

Well, they left out a few things when they wrote that new constitution. They left out consumer rights and protections. They left out labor rights. They left out environmental rights and protections.

The United States has a tremendous opportunity, in hosting the beginning of the next round of negotiations at the World Trade Organization, to initiate a major overhaul of this horribly flawed agreement and drag it kicking and screaming into at least the late 20th Century.

Labor rights, well there seems to be agreement on labor rights. The President has admitted that perhaps the nonbinding, face-saving, political butt-covering side agreements on labor and the environment, which were not binding, which helped push NAFTA through this organization here, the House of Representatives, gave enough people political cover, will not be enough in the future for trade agreements and, if called, he and the vice president, for labor agreements to be core labor protections, to be core to any future agreement, the only problem is, their employee, the special trade representative, Charlene Barshefsky, does not seem to share their views.

When pressed in a press conference last week to expand upon what is the United States talking about here, they cannot be serious about putting labor protections into an international trade agreement, by God, then what would capital do? How could it run around the world looking for the most exploited sources of labor?

She said, quote, this is not a negotiating group. It is an analytic working group designed to draw upon the expertise of other multilateral institutions in order to answer a series of analytic points.

Now, that does not sound an awful lot like labor protections. It does not sound like it will get us to the point made by the previous gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), stopping trafficking in goods produced by forced child labor around the world. No, that is a little too far for the World Trade Organization, and if Ms. Barshefsky has her way, it will be too far for the United States of America to go. That is pathetic.

She goes on to say, the issue of sanctions is nowhere in this proposal and it is certainly not on the table, and then she goes on in another much longer quote I do not have time to give, to say

that this analytical look at labor protections will lead everybody to the conclusion that the best way to bring up labor standards around the world is not to have any; sort of like the theory of the Republicans here in Congress. If we did not have a minimum wage the market would set one and it would be good for everybody.

Well, maybe not the people who earn the minimum wage or just above it, but it would be good for the employers.

The same thing with the World Trade Organization and Charlene Barshefsky. They want to say the market will bring about in the future some sort of labor protections without these horrible dictates.

In fact, they are undermining our own laws here in the United States with the World Trade Organization, a little secretive body of 3 people who are exempt from conflict of interest, exempt from public disclosure, make binding decisions on trade disputes.

The U.S. has lost a number of trade disputes on environmental issues over the last few years, but they have won one big one.

We are going to force the Europeans to take hormone-laced beef. By God, that is a big victory for the U.S. and we should have more of this. We do not want to reform this organization. We do not want transparency and doing away with conflict of interest rules. We do not want any system of juris prudence the American people can understand. We do not want to allow environmental groups or labor groups to intervene and mess up the decision-making process of the World Trade Organization.

We have a tremendous opportunity as the United States of America to lead, and maybe we have to get rid of Ms. Barshefsky to do that.

#### QUINCY LIBRARY GROUP AND FOREST HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, we have a forest health crisis in this country and the Clinton-Gore administration's current do-nothing policies are utterly failing to address it. A government report released in April states that approximately 39 million acres of our western national forests are at extremely high risk of catastrophic fire.

Alarming, this same report indicates that the Forest Service has failed to advance a cohesive strategy to treat this 39 million acres at risk, despite the fact that the window of opportunity for taking effective management action is only about 10 to 25 years before catastrophic wild fires become widespread.

Last year, Congress passed historic legislation that was intended to provide the Forest Service a tool with which to proactively address and combat this forest health crisis.

The bipartisan Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act, which passed last Congress by an overwhelming margin of 429-to-1, mandated a project to manage our forests for health and safety, while providing for a responsible, ecologically sound level of harvesting to benefit local economies.

The Forest Service was assigned the responsibility of carrying out this specific plan, but made several last minute additions to the environmental analysis that have drastically tilted the bipartisan balance that this Congress struck in the law and the Quincy Group struck in its plan.

These changes, based on a combination of bad science and special interest politics, will prevent treatment on almost all of the 2½ million acres to be protected from catastrophic fire under the original plan. The decision was made behind closed doors, without public input.

Mr. Speaker, the Forest Service has taken it upon itself to circumvent a law that this Congress passed almost unanimously. The Quincy plan presented us with an opportunity to proactively prevent the very type of catastrophic forest and wildland fires that have ripped through 5 counties in my district in Northern California in the past 8 weeks, tragically taking two human lives.

These fires have also burned more than 250,000 acres of public and private property, destroyed more than 100 homes, eliminated thousands of acres of wildlife habitat and various species of wildlife, and generated tons of smoke. In addition, the American taxpayers have paid close to \$100 million to fight these fires.

However, the Forest Service has rejected this plan and has scaled it back to the point that it is almost meaningless, perhaps hoping the fire risks will somehow go away, despite the fact that the risk of catastrophic fire across the West is increasing.

The agency proposes to lock up our choked, fire-prone forests and allow prescribed fires to achieve its so-called forest management goals, even though this policy causes serious air pollution and poses a very real risk that a burn will get out of control, as it has on a number of occasions.

To add to this outrage, Mr. Speaker, the administration recently proposed to lock up an additional 40 to 50 million more acres of national forests, preventing the very management strategies that our fire experts are telling us we absolutely must take.

This attempt to shut down access to the public's forest lands is too much about what special interest groups demand and too little of what their own