our Nation’s public health infrastruc-
ture. We must continue to fight infec-
tious diseases and ensure that this legis-
lation is enacted to help protect our civil-
citizens and provide them with the healthiest food possible.

AGRICULTURAL TRADE FREEDOM ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to voice my sup-
pport for S. 566, the Agricultural Trade Freedom Act, which was passed out of
the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry this morning on a 17–1 vote. I appreciate Senator
LUGAR’s strong leadership on these
trade and international issues.

More than any other industry in America, agriculture is extremely de-
pended on international markets. Almost one-third of our domestic agri-
cultural production is sold outside of the United States. Clearly, a strong
international market for agricultural commodities is therefore of utmost im-
portance to our agriculture economy.

As those of us who hail from agri-
cultural states know, the business of
agriculture in America reaches far be-
yond farmers alone. There are many rural businesses, such as feed stores, machinery repair shops and veterinarian-
s, which depend on a strong agricul-
tural economy. And when we discuss international trade, there are many na-
tional businesses, such as agricultural exporters, which are greatly impacted by our trade policies.

Despite the importance of these international markets, agricultural commodities are occasionally elimi-
nated from potential markets because of U.S. imposed unilateral economic sanctions against other countries. These economic sanctions are imposed
for political, foreign policy reasons. Yet there is little to show that the in-
clusions of agricultural commodities in these sanctions actually have had the intended results. The question now emerging from this policy is who is ac-
tually hurt by the ban on exporting commercial agricultural commodities, and should it continue?

American farmers and exporters ob-
viously face an immediate loss in trade when unilateral economic sanctions
are imposed. Perhaps even more dev-
astating, however, is the long-term loss of the market. Countries who need ag-
cultural products do not wait for American sanctions to be lifted; they find alternative markets. This often
leads to the permanent loss of a mar-
et for our agriculture industry, as
new trading partnerships are estab-
lished and maintained.

Our farmers, and the rural businesses and agriculture exporters associated with them, are consequently greatly
hurt by this policy. The Agricultural
Trade Freedom Act corrects this prob-
lem by exempting commercial agricul-
tural products from U.S. unilateral
economic sanctions. The exemption of commercial agricultural products is not absolute; the President can make the determination that these items are indeed a necessary part of the sanction
for achieving the intended foreign pol-
icy goal. In this situation, the Presi-
dent would be required to report to
Congress regarding the purposes of the
sanctions and their likely economic impacts.

Recently, the administration lifted
restrictions on the sale of food to
Sudan, Iran and Libya—all countries
whose governments we have serious
disagreements with. It did so, and I am
among those who supported that deci-
sion, because food, like medicines, should not be used as a tool of foreign policy. It is also self-defeating. While our farmers lost sales, foreign farmers
made gains.

Unfortunately, the administration
did not see fit to apply the same rea-
soning to Cuba. American farmers can
not sell food to Cuba, even though it is
only 90 miles from our shores and there is a significant potential market there.
This contradiction is beneath a great
and powerful country, and Senator
LUGAR’s legislation would permit such
sales. The administration should pay
more attention to what is in our na-
tional interests, rather than to a tiny,
voluntary minority who are wedded to a
policy that has hurt American farmers
and the Cuban people.

The Agricultural Trade Freedom Act
maintains the President’s need for
flexibility in foreign policy while si-
multaneously recognizing the impact
that sanctions may have on the agri-
cultural economy. The legislation is
supported by dozens of organizations
including the National Association of
State Departments of Agriculture, the
U.S. Dairy Export Council, the Na-
tional Milk Producers Federation, and
the National Farmers Union.

In closing, I would like to thank Sen-
ator LUGAR for his leadership on this
issue. I was pleased to join with him,
the ranking member, Senator HARKIN,
the Democratic Leader, Senator
DASCHELLE, Senator CONRAD and others
in this effort, and I look forward to
working with them and all members of
the Senate to see that this measure be-
comes law.

THE GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of
a letter from the International Broth-
erhood of Police Officers, in support of
my amendment to close the gun show
loophole, be printed in the RECORD.

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

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD
OF POLICE OFFICERS,

Hon. FRANK LAUTENBERG,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Dear Senator LAUTENBERG: The Inter-
national Brotherhood of Police Officers
(IBPO) is an affiliate of the Service Employ-
eyes International. The IBPO is the largest
peace union in the AFL-CIO.

On behalf of the entire membership of
the IBPO, I am writing to express our support for
your amendment that would close the gun show
loophole. Every year, there are approxi-
ately 4,000 gun shows across the coun-
try where criminals can buy guns without a
background check. This problem arises
because while federally-licensed dealers sell
most of the firearms at these shows, about 25 per-
cent of the people selling firearms are not
licensed and they are not required to comply
with the background check as mandated by the
Brady Law.

The “Lautenberg amendment” will close
the gun show loophole and help law enforce-
ment crack down on illegal firearms. Every offi-
cer on the street understands that this legis-
lation is needed to help shut down the deadly
supply of firearms to violent criminals.

Sincerely,

KENNETH T. LYONS,
National President.