

Carolínians. Let's try to put that job loss statistic into perspective. The distinguished chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator ROTH, knows that there are only 412,000 jobs in the entire state of Delaware. A senior member of his committee, Senator BAUCUS, who was a conferee on this legislation, surely is aware that there are only 389,000 total jobs in Montana. Alaska has 289,000 jobs, Wyoming has 235,000 jobs, Vermont 296,000, South Dakota 381,000 and North Dakota 325,000 jobs.

Perhaps Senators would feel differently about U.S. trade policy if all of the workers instead of their entire states lost their jobs in the last decade. Yet that's the precarious state of textile and apparel in America, Mr. President, and Congress continues to promote policies that will further erode the industry.

In the textile communities of North Carolina, where 18 plants shut down in 1999 alone, you can bet they don't talk much about the booming economy. They're talking about something else.

Last April, I held a hearing in the Foreign Relations Committee on the effects of NAFTA five years after it took effect. Among those who provided testimony was a wonderfully unassuming woman named Vontella Dabbs. Ms. Dabbs works at Delta Mills in Maiden, North Carolina, and although she was seated at the same table with Ambassador Richard Fischer and Pat Buchanan, she stole the show.

I am going to quote extensively from her testimony because it's important and it bears repeating again and again. She said the following:

I come to you not as an expert in any field, not as a politically motivated person, but simply as an American that is deeply concerned for both my future and the future of my family and friends. I cannot quote you statistics or give you fancy computer-generated data to support some theory about foreign trade. What I can give you are honest and heartfelt feelings about what's going on in our community, as related to the foreign trade agreements and the people who work in textile plants. . . .

Today . . . modern textile companies and plants are threatened by one thing that I feel can put an end to our entire industry. This threat is that we are not being given a fair opportunity to compete with foreign business on a level playing field. Many of the well-intentioned laws, treaties, and trade agreements enacted during the past few years have made the competition between domestic and foreign textile business unfair, in favor of the foreign producers. These treaties and laws and trade agreements have not really opened up the world to American textiles, as was intended, but instead have opened our borders for foreign manufacturers to flood our country with goods produced with near slave labor in deplorable conditions for workers. These agreements have also created an incentive for American manufacturers to close the door on American manufacturing and go south to Mexico and the Caribbean to invest millions in foreign countries. And by doing this, they are putting thousands of hard-working Americans out of a job.

It's hard to argue with that, Mr. President, though I have no doubt that many of my colleagues will try to do so. I can hear them now, saying that may comparable new jobs have been created through the growth of the retail industry. To which the textile communities of North Carolina say, "Thanks for nothing." Textile jobs pay 63 percent more than retail jobs. While the average mill worker earns wages of \$440.59 a week, retail workers make only \$270.90.

Worse, the loss of textile jobs means money is drained from the economies of the hardest-hit communities, making it impossible for these towns to support this highly touted new retail employment. When the mills close, workers can't simply consult the local newspapers to get another job. Instead, they are forced to relocate, looking for those elusive retail jobs that pay barely more than half than the job they just lost, and are growing most rapidly in larger cities with a higher cost of living.

With this in mind, the last thing Congress needs to do is increase the amount of cheap imports coming into our markets. Yet this is exactly what H.R. 434 will do. Even worse, however, the bill provides the perfect loophole for Asian countries to circumvent U.S. import restrictions. No wonder many people around town are starting to refer to this legislation as the "Chinese Transshipment Bill."

Here's how Asian companies can easily conduct illegal transshipments from both African and Caribbean nations, Mr. President. Asian companies, which currently must comply with U.S. quota and duty requirements, will simply set up shop in the nations that benefit from this legislation. Once they are in operation, it's impossible to know whether garments are actually assembled in Africa or the Caribbean or being shipped to these countries from elsewhere. Then, under the bill, they can add another \$3 billion to their current agreements with the United States.

Mr. President, these illegalities certainly won't benefit American textile companies—and it's hard to see how it does much for the African and Caribbean nations that this bill is ostensibly designed to help. Instead, it merely allows already-established Asian companies to use these nations as simple fronts for their own business. I certainly hope that's not what the Senate has in mind.

Mr. President, in my view, the decimation of one of America's most important industries is absolutely unacceptable. I do not quarrel with the contention that economic development in Africa and the Caribbean is an important objective and ultimately in America's best interest. Yet I fail to see why we must sacrifice an entire domestic industry to this international goal.

Sadly enough, the Senate is now poised to do just that. I am realistic enough to know the ultimate outcome of this debate. But I would be remiss in my duty as a Senator from North Carolina—and as an American—if I did not take a stand on behalf of the many thousands of workers who have paid—and will continue to pay—the price for a U.S. trade policy willing to countenance the destruction of the textile industry and the communities it supports.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. BROWNBACK pertaining to the introduction of S. 2540 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

FIGHTING NEUROFIBROMATOSIS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome the opportunity to call the attention of the Senate to neurofibromatosis, or NF, a cruel neurological disorder that affects so many of our citizens. In the past, groups who come together to fight NF have asked Congress to designate May as "World Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month." This year, they are directing their energies to more substantive issues. I commend NF Inc. and other advocates across the nation for their leadership and their strong commitment to this cause.

NF is a genetic disorder of the nervous system that can cause tumors on nerves anywhere in the body at any time. It is a progressive disorder that affects all ethnic groups and both sexes equally. It is one of the most common genetic disorders in the United States—affecting one in every 4,000 births.

There are two genetically distinct forms of this disorder—NF-1 and NF-2. The effects are unpredictable and have varying manifestations and degrees of severity.

NF-1 is the more common type, occurring in about 1 in 4,000 people in the United States. Symptoms include five or more light brown skin spots known as café-au-lait macules, as well as tumors that can grow on the eyes or spine. In most cases, the symptoms are mild and people can live normal and productive lives. In some cases, however, NF-1 can be severely debilitating.

NF-2 is less common, affecting about 1 in 40,000 people, and much more severe. Tumors grow near the auditory