

Now, ERS is not alone in the view that China will have to be buying agricultural commodities. According to Worldwatch's Lester Brown, China's water supplies in its grain-producing areas are falling at a high rate. He sees massive grain imports and growing dependence on U.S. grain.

The Farm Bureau also expects great benefits from China's accession to the WTO. U.S. exports to the Asian region as a whole are expected to increase in the next few years.

I would like to conclude my remarks tonight by putting all of these facts and figures into context. For years, we in agriculture have complained about the use of unilateral sanctions to change the behavior of various governments around the world. Recently, we have made some progress on this front, with some restrictions lifted last year that have resulted in sales of some corn to Iran and wheat to Libya.

If we look at what USDA estimates that we in agriculture lost because of the United States' own decision not to trade with certain countries, the total in 1996 was about \$500 million. The estimates for this year have to be considerably more than \$500 million. That is less than a third of the \$1.7 billion we will lose in 2005 if we do not grant China permanent normal trade relations.

All six of the countries currently under sanctions, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and North Korea, together, import only \$7.7 billion in food and agricultural products each year. That is about half the \$14 billion China imports today annually.

We need to make the right decision on China and stop giving away agricultural markets to our competitors. That is what those of us who support treating China as our competitors do. What sense does it make today for the United States to unilaterally say to any country that we will not sell them our food and medicine, when our "friends" sell to that country? That is something that I have failed to understand in some of the arguments against PNTR. It is one thing if we multilaterally, if all of our "friends" also agree to use food and medicine as a weapon. That would be a powerful tool. But to do it unilaterally, it seems to me, only punishes our own producers, in this case farmers and ranchers, and it hurts the people of which we are trying to help, and it strengthens the governments of which we are trying to change.

I hope that this and other statements we will hear over the next few days will convince at least 218 of us in this body to do the right thing, to grant permanent normal trade relations with China, to allow them to come into the WTO, and, for the first time in history, have them subjected to the same laws that apply to the rest of the free world. It sure cannot hurt to try it.

FINDING A CURE FOR AUTISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, every morning Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jimmy Morales helps his 6-year-old daughter get ready for school. Like many 6-year-old kids, Nora sings along to Britney Spears, N-Sync or Cristina Aguilera. Once at school, she introduces her dad to all of her classmates, gives daddy a kiss and a hug, and sends him off to work.

While to most people this may sound like a normal day in the life of a 6-year-old for Nora, many of these achievements have come only as a result of hard work. Unlike most little girls, Nora would not like to wear ribbons or clips in her hair. She could not look her parents in the eye nor tell them about her day with her grandparents. In fact, Nora's parents were not even sure she recognized her own name.

The reason: 4 years ago, Nora was diagnosed with autism; a neurological disorder which impacts a half a million people in America.

The world through the eyes of an autistic child is a complex puzzle with no solution. Autism affects the normal development of the brain and it impacts in the area of social interaction and communication skills. As a result, children living with autism have a difficult time responding appropriately to their environment. This includes playing with friends and forming relationships, even with their own parents.

Autism is four times more prevalent in boys than in girls, but it does not discriminate. It knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries. And family income, life-style and educational level do not affect the chances of autism's occurrence. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, no one knows exactly why autism strikes approximately 1 in every 500 individuals.

Autism not only has no known cause, but it has, sadly, no known cure. Sadly enough, the national rates of children being diagnosed with autism are increasing dramatically. For example, in the State of California, the numbers have increased 237 percent in the last 10 years. In my home State, 50 percent of the children diagnosed with autism reside within my community of south Florida.

The pictures that I would like to show to my colleagues and to the viewers tonight that we see here are of Bonnie and Willis Flick, two autistic children residing in my Congressional District who are fortunate enough to receive treatment and intervention therapy to help them cope with every day life.

A good day for Bonnie is similar to the one we just heard about Nora.

Bonnie is a high functioning autistic child who attends a very special school, The Learning Experience in Miami. And because autism is a spectrum disease that is manifested in a variety of forms, some children are not as high functioning as Bonnie.

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For example, life for Bonnie's autistic brother, Willis, is a bit more difficult. Willis is mostly nonverbal and is not able to tell his mother that he is hungry or sleepy or not feeling well. He is unable to verbally express his joy, anger, or frustration; and that makes life all the more difficult for those around him.

Bonnie and Willis receive professional assistance to help them optimize their potential and learning capabilities. But there are many autistic children who are less fortunate.

As if families of autistic children did not suffer enough distress, one of the biggest challenges facing them is finding health coverage for treatment and therapy of this condition.

Fortunately, Nora's parents, as well as Bonnie and Willis' parents, have been able to work through obstacles to ultimately find the care that their families so desperately need.

Many families, however, are not as fortunate. We must continue to work so that all health insurance and health maintenance organizations include coverage for services to treat autism.

In my Congressional district, the University of Miami operates the Center for Autism and Related Diseases, CARD, which helps hundreds of children and their families whose lives are impacted with autism.

The CARD centers operate throughout the State of Florida and provide free individual and family assistance services as well as training programs for the parent and the professional. These centers focus on finding ways to change the behaviors and perceptions of individuals with autism in a way that will allow them to successfully learn, work, and communicate.

Mr. Speaker, we need to continue to support centers like CARD whose services benefit families struggling through the ordeal of autism.

Last week, the House passed the Children's Health Act, which contains a provision to establish centers of research and expertise. It is establishments like these that will help families of autistic children.

I hope that, on behalf of the Bonnies and the Willises and the Noras in their districts, my colleagues will continue to pass legislation like the Children's Health Act and provide funding to research the causes for this disorder. With continued research, every day we are one day closer to finding a cure for this debilitating disability.