severely conflicted with respect to its duty to the people of the country and to the Members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, this is not what the people's House should look like. This is not how the people's business should be done, whether it is about allowing space for true and honest political debate, as many Members on the floor today earlier argued for the ability to talk about the asylum provisions in the bill that we will vote tomorrow, but the time was not allotted to do that. The time was not allotted to have that kind of discussion that affects so many people. Why did they do that? Because they do not want the discussion. As our colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), said, it appears that they know they can win the vote, they just do not believe they can win the debate. Time and again we see that happening.

As severe as that problem is with respect to closing down democracy in the House, the changing and the corrupting of the ethics process is far more severe because our first obligation is to make sure that Congress does, in fact, do its business in an ethical fashion, not in a corrupt fashion, and that Members of Congress are held to an ethical standard that justifies their support by the people of their districts.

WE MUST REPEAL PNTR WITH CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I am announcing today that along with 61 cosponsors, 45 Democrats and 16 Republicans, I am introducing legislation that will repeal Permanent Normal Trade Relations, PNTR, with China.

Anyone who takes an objective look at our trade policy with China must conclude that it is an absolute failure and needs to be fundamentally overhauled. There really can be no other conclusion.

Today, as part of our overall record-breaking $600 billion trade deficit, we have an estimated $160 billion trade deficit with China. Incredibly, this trade deficit with China has increased by 29 percent over the last year alone and almost 50 percent since the passage of PNTR in 2000.

Very few experts in this area doubt that the trade deficit with China will continue to escalate in the years ahead. In industry after industry, corporate America is shifting our manufacturing plants, our good-paying jobs to China where desperate people are forced to work for wages as low as 20 cents an hour. Anyone who went Christmas shopping this year knows that more and more products on the shelves are made in China: toys, bicycles, computers, televisions, shoes and sneakers, all kind of clothing and hats, telephone, furniture, auto parts and even artificial Christmas decorations. Ironically, the little American flags that Members of Congress wave around are often made in China.

In the last 4 years, the United States has lost 2.7 million manufacturing jobs, over 16 percent, of our entire manufacturing sector. In my own small State of Vermont, we have lost 20 percent of our manufacturing jobs during that period. PNTR with China and our disastrous trade policies in general are one of the key reasons for that, but we should be very aware that PNTR with China is not only leading to the destruction of traditional manufacturing and blue collar jobs. It is leading to the loss of millions of high-tech, information technology jobs as well. These are the jobs that we were told would be there for our kids and would secure them with a place in the middle class.

The question that the American people have to ask is why it is that corporate America, with the active support of the President of the United States and the congressional leadership, is selling out the American people and making China the economic superpower of the 21st century. Not only is China rapidly becoming the manufacturing center of the world; it is quickly becoming the information technology hub as well.

Andy Grove, the founder of Intel, predicted last year that the United States will lose the bulk of its information technology jobs to China and India over the next decade. John Chambers, the CEO of Cisco, was typical of many high-tech leaders when he said, ''China will become the IT center of the world. What we're,'' at Cisco, ''trying to do is outline an entire strategy of becoming a Chinese company.''

At a time when poverty in America is increasing, the gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider and most of the new jobs projected for the future are low wage with minimal benefits, the great economic struggle of our time is whether the middle class of America can be saved. Will we be a country in which ordinary workers have bright futures with good-paying jobs and decent benefits, or will we continue to move in an oligarchic direction in which the rich get richer and most everyone else gets poorer? To a significant degree, the answer to that question will depend on whether Congress has the courage to make fundamental changes in our trade policy, including PNTR with China.

The word has got to go out loud and clear to companies like Wal-Mart, GE, GM, IBM and dozens more, as well as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, that they cannot keep sending America's future to China. Trade is a good thing, but must be based on principles that are fair to American workers. The U.S. Congress can no longer allow corporate America to sell out the middle class and move our economy abroad.

It is not acceptable that Jeff Immelt of General Electric, the CEO, says, ''When I am talking to GE managers, I talk China, China, China, China, China.''

It is not acceptable that Thomas Donahue, the CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ''urges'' American companies to send jobs overseas.

It is not acceptable that Bill Gates, the wealthiest man in America, tells us that Communist authoritarian China has created ''a brand new form of capitalism, and as a consumer it's the best thing that ever happened.''

We need to repeal PNTR to China.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss Social Security and the current efforts to fundamentally change the nature of this important retirement security and collective insurance program. I want to focus specifically on the impact of these efforts with respect to younger workers.

For years, my generation has been told that Social Security would not be there for us when we reach retirement age. We have been told that we are fools to count on expected Social Security benefits when planning for our own retirement; and lately we have been told that if we divert a portion of our contributions into private accounts it will somehow shore up Social Security's balance sheet while improving the return on our investment.

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But those claims simply are not supported by the facts.

Make no mistake, the Social Security program faces some challenges over the next 50 to 75 years. There are a number of proposals currently being developed to try to address these problems while encouraging private savings. And I am committed to working in a bipartisan manner to support smart targeted solutions that are fiscally sound; that do not require slashing of scheduled benefits; and that do not add to the Federal deficit. But I have serious concerns with any proposal, including that of the administration, to privatize or establish personal accounts within Social Security.

First, such proposals require substantial mandatory benefit cuts to retirees; and, second, they require massive amounts of borrowing to finance the transition costs, a fiscally irresponsible plan at a time of record deficits. Despite claims to the contrary, these benefit cuts will be particularly significant to younger Americans.

The Social Security System's own actuaries estimate that the average 48-

year-old will see his or her benefits reduced by 10 percent if the privatization plan is implemented. The average 18-year-old can expect a 33 percent, and by some estimates a 40 percent, reduction in benefits by the time they retire in 2052 with this risky privatization plan. The average 28-year-old will see his or her benefits reduced by 26 percent.

As a member of our Nation's younger generation of workers, I know we can do better, and I know that my generation and younger generations will not be duped into believing that Social Security faces a crisis, especially as the details of privatization plans and the structuring of proposed private accounts are made clearer.

Rather than slashing the benefits of those who are at the beginning of their careers, we should empower them to take control of their retirement security in order to enhance private savings and give them the tools to manage their financial futures with confidence and certainty. Rather than add trillions to a growing national debt, a debt increasingly owned by foreign countries, we should act in a way that is fiscally responsible. And at a time when it is harder to qualify for pension benefits, Congress should undertake meaningful pension reform rather than continuing to weaken the three-legged stool of a solid and well-rounded retirement plan.

Mr. Speaker, Congress needs to take the long-term difficulties facing Social Security seriously, but we must be fair and comprehensive about our solutions. It is irresponsible to characterize Social Security's fiscal situation as one of imminent collapse. In order to make good decisions about the future of the program, we must engage in an honest debate about the longer-term problems facing Social Security, and that includes a real and accurate accounting of the cost of privatization as we debate the budget over the upcoming months.

The data on the proposals to privatize Social Security show that private accounts do little to improve the financial health of the program. Indeed, the massive transition cost, an estimated $1.4 trillion over the first 10 years and another $3.5 trillion over the following decade, will hasten the date of Social Security's insolvency.

Importantly, even without changes, without any changes, Social Security will be able to pay full benefits for nearly 40 years, according to the more conservative estimates of Social Security's own actuaries. After that, Social Security will continue to pay 75 to 85 percent of scheduled benefits. So, clearly, younger workers and future generations are not going to be inheriting a Social Security System that is bankrupt.

I share the concern of many independent commentators that efforts to fix Social Security through privatization will ultimately do more harm than good. What we need is a broader debate about real retirement security. If we approach that debate with an open mind and the resolve to strengthen Social Security as well as enhance opportunities for private savings, we can ensure that generations of Americans can look forward to spending the best years of their lives without worrying about how to pay for their basic needs. Americans of all ages deserve nothing less.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to spend just a few minutes talking about these private accounts and emphasizing two groups, young people and African Americans.

I want to state first out that President Bush insists that he is undertaking this drastic dismantling of Social Security for the good of our young people. He wants Americans to believe that private accounts are a great deal and a good deal for those under age 55. But the President is wrong. Privatizing Social Security not only does not help; it is a hindrance to the financial security of young people for several reasons.

First of all, these private accounts will not be monies handed to young people to invest as they see fit. Plans will be chosen for the young people, and these plans will be complex, complicated; they will have certain restrictions and limits, and then there is that troublesome annuity requirement.

All I say to young people across America today is to look at this privatization and examine it very, very carefully. I want young people to do something else. I hope that most young Americans will think about how their lives will change if their parents do not have Social Security on which to rely. In fact, without Social Security, their parents will likely have to rely on them for a portion of their income. And caring for aging parents is difficult enough for adult children without the added burden of having to replace income from promised Social Security benefits, which will be lost due to the President's privatization plan.

As a senior Bush administration official admitted last week, ''Private personal accounts will do absolutely nothing to fix Social Security's fiscal problems.''

The President claims he will not cut benefits for current retirees to fund his proposal. He claims he will not raise payroll taxes. Well, the only thing left is to borrow the money, thereby increasing the deficit, a deficit that will have to be paid, of course, you guessed it, by younger workers, the very group that the President is saying he is trying to help.

Another sad misrepresentation of the President's plan is his insistence that young people will be able to invest their money as they see fit. In reality, the plan will only allow workers a choice from among a handful of investment options, not the entire stock market, and not as you see fit. If young people believe they will have the ability to invest their payroll taxes in any stock or mutual fund they choose, they are wrong.

Once again, this plan is not what it seems, and I hope the young people will realize the problems inherent in the privatization of Social Security. Look for yourself. This may be a Trojan horse.

Now, I want to say that I like President Bush personally. I have been one of those few Democrats who have worked with the President on many of his proposals. But I have been recently disturbed when President Bush said that since black men die sooner than whites, Social Security is a bad deal for them and private accounts is a better deal.

Well, I agree with Columnist Paul Krugman, who noticed recently that President Bush has blatantly manipulated the facts and made false assertions, all in the hope of convincing African Americans that this is a good deal for us. The claim that black people get a bad deal from Social Security because of a shorter life expectancy is wrong.

Mr. Bush's use of this false argument is doubly shameful. I do believe he is getting some bad advice on this, because I know the President, and I know that he is a decent person. But inadvertently, when he makes the claim that Social Security is bad for black people because they die younger, he is exploiting the high black youth mortality rate to promote this privatization plan instead of trying to remove the deep inequities that remain and that black people face in our society.

The black population's low life expectancy is largely due to high death rates in childhood and young adulthood, before we even get started. The childhood infancy mortality rate among black people is three times the national rate. We are there before we even get started.

So when the President makes this kind of statement, it is sort of like cutting the legs out from under a man and then condemning him for being a cripple. We know that when African American men make it to 65, they collect the same amount of benefits and they live 14 or 15 years additionally, almost up to the 16 years of white Americans.