

Kamela came on to head my HELP Subcommittee on Employment and Workforce Safety about 5 years ago. Ever since then, he has been a critical part of my staff.

Bill is a trusted adviser, and I think what impresses all of us the most is he truly is a visionary when it comes to making the Federal Government a strong partner in worker training and safety.

Thanks to the work of Bill Kamela, across the country today, fewer employees have to worry about the danger of hazards or unsafe working conditions that they go to work every day and see. Because of his good work and insistence, more workers today get access to good-paying jobs, training, and advancement.

I come to the floor today because Bill is now preparing to move on to the next phase of his career. While we are all in my office very happy for him, we are all extremely sad to see him go. I wanted to come to the floor today to take just a couple minutes to recognize Bill's tremendous contribution on behalf of working families throughout the entire country.

Bill grew up in Buffalo, NY, where he learned the value of hard work and public service. Although he left Buffalo for Washington, DC, many years ago, anyone who has spent time with him knows that his passions are all things Buffalo, especially his beloved Buffalo Bills. We know when it comes to them, they take precedence over anything else that is going on.

Anyone who has worked with Bill also knows that he took to heart those lessons he learned growing up there about the importance of public service. Bill has dedicated his life and his career to helping kids and young people and families everywhere find success. He has worked with the National Urban Coalition, in the office of Congressman Gus Hawkins, at the National Safe Kids Campaign, and with a number of nonprofits. In every one of those positions, he has worked behind the scenes for policies that keep our working families strong.

Before he came to my staff, Bill spent 6 years at the Department of Labor under President Clinton where he served as chief of staff for the Employment and Training Administration. When he worked at the Labor Department, one of his responsibilities was to implement the Workforce Investment Act, which is, as we all know, the cornerstone of our national job training system.

Since coming to my staff, he has worked diligently on WIA, and thanks to him workers today have access to the training they need so they can still be successful in life no matter what happens to them.

Bill has been the staff director for my Employment and Workforce Safety Subcommittee. His dedication to those

working families, as well as his passion for public service, has made it possible for us to make progress on the key piece of legislation to which he has devoted so many years, the Workforce Investment Act.

What impresses many of us in the Senate is that he works across the aisle, and he brings people of all kinds to the table to get things done. He has worked tirelessly, as I said, to fund and strengthen WIA and other job training programs to help workers find and keep good-paying jobs.

He also worked extremely hard and impressively on the Miner Act, which improved safety and ensured coal miners have better access to lifesaving equipment, air, and water in case of an accident.

But I think one of the things I will remember Bill the most for is his work on helping us to pass in the Senate the Ban Asbestos in America Act. He sat with me in countless meetings. He talked to so many families. He held the hands of widows whose spouses had died as a result of their exposure to asbestos. And he brought so many people to the table and diligently worked detail after detail after detail until we could bring up this bill in the Senate and, after many years, finally pass it. I owe him a debt of gratitude for that, and I want him to know as he leaves my office we are going to keep working under his name to get that bill done and to the President so those people he has worked with can finally see this bill become law.

I have to say again he has been instrumental in our efforts to make the Federal Government a strong partner. He brings together educators, workforce folks, labor, and employers because he knows everyone needs a seat at the table so our workforce can compete in this global economy.

But his contributions go far beyond legislation. Outside of my office, his attention to building personal relationships has earned him tremendous respect and admiration of workforce leaders across my State. Inside my office, he has earned all of our respect. He is a mentor to all of his coworkers. He has never been one to close the door behind him. He is always generous with his time, and he has helped bring up the next generation of staffers who rely on him so much for his sound advice or a good pep talk, whichever they need.

Bill has an uncanny knack for keeping everything balanced on staff. He sets realistic expectations, but he does not ever let anyone get discouraged. I know that will carry him far in this world.

So I come to the floor today to thank Bill for his work and for his dedication to our country, and I thank him for his personal advice so many times, his enthusiasm, and his passion for working families in my State and across the country. I wish him the best as he moves on. He will be dearly missed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

COLOMBIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, at the conclusion of my remarks, I will yield to Senator STABENOW of Michigan who will also talk about trade adjustment assistance in Michigan and Ohio and all that our States are going through in large part because of misdirected trade policies.

Yesterday, President Bush announced he would send a proposed Colombian Free Trade Agreement to Congress for a vote. He does this over the opposition of the Democratic leadership in the House and in the Senate, in defiance of our desire to work on a bipartisan basis, and in direct opposition to the desires of a growing number of Ohioans and Michiganders and Americans all over this country. In doing so, President Bush has nailed shut the fast-track coffin.

As my colleagues know, this agreement was negotiated under the so-called fast-track provisions. It is an extraordinary procedure provided only for trade agreements, not for any other kind of legislation. Trade is that special and that important to a very narrow but very powerful, very influential group of people in this country. Congress decided years ago to delegate an enormous amount of power to the executive branch to negotiate trade agreements. In nothing else does this body, charged under the Constitution with specific duties and responsibilities, give that much power to the executive branch as it does with these trade agreements.

Under the fast-track provisions, once presented to Congress, a so-called free-trade agreement triggers a 90-day clock for consideration of the agreement. No amendments can be offered to improve it, unlike anything else here. Congress is given a take-it-or-leave-it decision.

Much of the talk about this agreement centers around the violence and impunity in Colombia, especially as it relates to trade unionists, and for good reason.

International organizations and human rights groups look at Colombia's record with urgency and alarm. Human rights defenders, trade unionists, and community leaders in Colombia are today receiving death threats from the rearmored paramilitary group, known as the Black Eagles, and are reeling from a new wave of violence.

This leaflet blown up, of course, was distributed at a March 6 rally in Colombia. The beginning says: Death to the leaders who march for peace and justice. This was a peace and justice rally. The Black Eagles handed out this leaflet to state their point of view, if you will. Before, during, and after

this countrywide rally on March 6 against paramilitary and all forms of violence, at least two march organizers were killed.

Union leaders Carlos Burbano and Carmen Cecilia Carvajal were killed for trying to voice their views. At least three other leaders were killed in events also associated with the march. March organizers all over the country received death threats such as these. One organizer's house was attacked with gunfire a week before the rally on February 29.

These human rights issues are exceedingly serious. Yet the administration cavalierly casts them aside, barely acknowledging the culture of violence and impunity.

Just the merits of the Colombian Free Trade Agreement is another fundamentally flawed trade pact in the long line of trade agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA, in the long line of bad trade policies such as PNTR with China. If these are really "free" trade agreements, if it did what its supporters tell us, simply knocking down trade agreements, it would be a smaller document. It would be a couple of pages, just getting rid of tariffs. Instead, it is many more pages, such as NAFTA. NAFTA was 900 pages of rules and regulations, having little to do with trade because instead of simply eliminating tariffs, which we would like to do, these agreements are packed with rules on investment, services, procurement, telecommunications, drug patents, and more.

So why do we get thousands of pages of seemingly nontrade issues in a trade agreement? Because these trade agreements are rules to protect corporations, not rules to protect workers. These trade agreements are rules to protect the drug companies, not to protect the environment; rules to protect hedge funds, not rules to protect consumers; rules to protect Wall Street, not rules to protect Main Street.

Notice the word "protect." They—the editorial writers, the Harvard economists, the CEOs, the Wall Street bankers, the corporate lobbyists, the big-time lawyers, the hedge fund managers—try to label people such as us "protectionists." I guess it depends on whom, Mr. President, you want to protect.

NAFTA, CAFTA, and Colombia protect the drug companies and the investment banks. They protect the corporate interests. Theirs is sort of a high-class protectionism. But protecting labor, protecting consumers, that is not protectionist. That is the duty of Government.

Many in this Chamber will recall the debate on the Central American Free Trade Agreement. We had a coalition of religious people, consumer advocates, environmentalists, small business, medium-size manufacturers, and organized labor in opposition to

CAFTA. CAFTA's proponents said if it did not pass, poverty would get worse in Central America. CAFTA, they promised, would promote economic growth and curb the violence in Central America and would serve as a model for strengthening democracy.

The U.S. Trade Representative, Mr. Zoellick, said "if CAFTA stumbles, labor rights in Central America will not be strengthened," as if anybody in this administration really wanted to strengthen labor rights. The reality is that there have been disturbing developments in the region, including the recent passage by the Honduran Government of a law to create exception zones that will allow foreign factories to pay less than the national minimum wage.

How does that help Honduran workers that there is a zone in which they pay a subminimum wage?

Labor ministries in Central American countries still lack the staffing and the resources to implement their programs. In many cases, budgets have actually been reduced since the passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Consistent with its history of repeating the same act and expecting different results, the administration now wants Congress to approve a deal with Colombia, a country where there are increased and continued death threats against labor activists, followed by assassinations of labor activists, followed by nothing, followed by no prosecution, no attempts to find the killers, continued excuses from President Uribe, and continued excuses from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Trade Representative and, frankly, yesterday, President Bush himself.

The administration has shown no willingness to enforce labor and environmental rules at home, so it is hardly surprising it would ignore violations among our trading partners.

There have been well-documented abuses of sweatshops in Jordan, despite the supposedly better labor standards in that agreement. Jordan, to its credit, has taken steps to crack down on these companies and work with non-governmental organizations and others in promoting the standards intended in that agreement.

It is important to note that the Bush administration, however, did not use the enforcement tools available to it in that trade agreement to require labor compliance. So why do we think they will use the provisions in this trade agreement, the Colombian Free Trade Agreement, to require labor compliance? Of course, they won't. But when there is a commercial dispute or a drug patent dispute, the administration comes down on a country with all the fury it can muster. Protect the drug companies? The administration says yes. Protect workers? No thanks. Protect oil interests? The administration

says, of course. Protect the environment? The administration says, no thanks. Protect the banks and the financial institutions? The administration says: Where do I sign up? Protect food safety for our children, protect toys for our children, food safety for our families? The administration is not particularly interested.

Why then should we consider a trade agreement with a country such as Colombia which is known as the most dangerous country in the world to be a union activist? In fact, Colombia has an unbroken record in recent decades of leading the world in trade unionist killings. Violence against unionists continues at extremely high levels. The vast majority of trade union assassinations remains unsolved.

Preliminary figures show that between 12 and 17 trade unionists were killed in the first 3 months of 2008. Among those murdered was Carmen Ramirez, a teacher and member of the teachers union. She was killed on her way to work on March 4.

Gomez Rozo Leonidas, the director of the National Union of Bank Workers, disappeared on March 5 and was found dead 3 days later.

A subunit of the attorney general's office was established in 2006 in Bogota to accelerate resolutions of assassinations of trade unionists. Despite more resources for these cases, convictions have lagged behind murders, leaving the unsolved murder/conviction rate at 98 percent. Of the 2,283 murders between 1991 and 2007—2,283 murders of union activists in that 17-year period—there have been 50 convictions. There have been 50 convictions out of 2,283. Does that sound like the Government really is interested in going after hate groups like this?

We need to craft trade policies that deliver the long-term results we need, not just the short-term profits a few multinational companies crave. When it comes to trade and the Bush administration, ideology trumps outcomes. Special interests always—always—trump U.S. interests.

Congress needs to reject this agreement. The Senate needs to make a clear statement that we stand for a better approach to trade, one based on using our market as leverage to raise living standards in Latin America, in Michigan, in Montana, in Ohio, and our whole country.

Mr. President, joining me today is Senator STABENOW of Michigan, who, during her almost 7½ years in the Senate and time in the House, has been a stalwart advocate for workers in Michigan and across this country, and she is particularly interested in this trade adjustment work, with the problems in Michigan. She has stood strong, and we are joining together today.

I yield to Senator STABENOW.

Ms. STABENOW. First of all, I thank Senator BROWN for his eloquence and

his comments and his conviction. I know he would agree with me that we want trade; we just want to export our products, not our jobs. That is what we want to export.

It seems to me, Mr. President, that the administration, one more time, is getting the cart before the horse. We hear all the time about the interest in beefing up trade enforcement and passing Trade Adjustment Assistance or dealing with currency manipulation and so on. Yet those things are not happening, and the administration comes forward one more time with another trade agreement without those things in place.

Now, I first wish to thank the chairman of the Finance Committee for speaking out very strongly about this and for introducing the bipartisan Trade Adjustment Assistance bill that he has indicated must be passed before this trade agreement is even considered. I appreciate that very much and his willingness to report from the Finance Committee, on which I am honored to serve, a bill dealing with currency manipulation. We have a trade enforcement bill as well.

But the reality is that we have not received support from the administration, and we have not seen the willingness to make this the priority it needs to be in terms of our families. I know it is a priority for our leader. I know it is a priority for the chairman of the Finance Committee and the majority of us on that committee. Yet still today we are here one more time with an administration that, rather than listening to the leadership, the Speaker, rather than listening to our leadership and being willing to address the needs of workers who have lost their jobs because of trade, sends up another trade agreement. And as my friend from Ohio has indicated, it is not one that focuses on what is right in terms of workers—either the workers in Colombia or the workers in Michigan or Ohio or Montana or across the country. From my perspective, it is hard to imagine that since the beginning of this administration, almost 8 years ago, we have lost 3.6 million manufacturing jobs—million. That means 3.6 million families who had great middle-class jobs with health benefits and pensions now find themselves either unemployed or underemployed in many situations. In my home State of Michigan, we have lost 425,000 jobs. I don't know how many folks are in Montana for sure, but my guess is that would be a pretty big percentage of the folks who live in a State you love dearly and advocate for every day—425,000 people in the last 7½ years.

Again, we know the economy is changing, and we are focused on advanced manufacturing. We are focused on new technology. Michigan is becoming a leader in alternative energy and will be a leader in alternative energy, but we have to continue to make

things in this country. That is what manufacturing is about. I happen to believe that an economy doesn't grow unless you make things and grow things and then you add leverage to it and you add value to it. That is how you have an economy. That is how we have had an economy and a middle class that has been the envy of the world.

Frankly, when we look at creating a level playing field, we ought to be talking about bringing other countries up to us, not racing to the bottom. Americans have been told: If you only work for less, lose your health care benefits, lose your pension, we can be competitive. Senator BROWN talks about Colombia setting up zones, or other countries, where companies don't have to even pay minimum wage in those countries. If they come in as an American company or a company from another part of the world, they can come in and pay workers less. That is a race to the bottom. That is not a race we can win, and I don't want to win it because if we win that race, we have lost the American dream. We have lost the middle class of this country. What we want is a race up, and that means education, innovation, changing the way we fund health care, and, yes, it means a level playing field on trade.

I believe that before we can go further with trade agreements, there are four things we have to make clear we are going to get done on behalf of American workers and American families:

Trade Adjustment Assistance. There is an excellent bipartisan bill which has been introduced in the Senate which is a bill that would extend and improve upon trade adjustment assistance. This was set up so that if somebody loses their job because of trade, they are going to be able to go back to school and they are going to have their health care benefits continued for a couple of years while they get retraining to be able to go into that new economy we all talk about.

Secondly, we have to have a stronger trade enforcement operation in this country. Mr. President, we have some 230 different trade agreements. According to former Secretary of Commerce Mickey Kantor, who came before the Finance Committee, we have the smallest trade enforcement office of anyplace in the industrialized world—the smallest trade enforcement office. So we need to beef that up. Again, we have legislation to do that. We just need to pass it and get it signed into law and hear the President will support it. It includes a provision that Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I have been working on, a bipartisan agreement we have worked on for years, to create what we call a U.S. Trade Prosecutor but basically is a chief enforcement officer—a place for business to go when their patent is stolen or there is an unfair trade practice against them so we have some-

body fighting for American businesses and American workers. That needs to get done.

We need the strongest possible currency bill to address what is, in fact, against the law and creating an unfair advantage—particularly as regards China but in the case of the auto industry, Japan as well—where they are manipulating their currency and selling products to us that get anywhere from a 5-percent up to a 40-percent discount right off the top because of the valuation of their currency. That needs to change. That is called a level playing field.

Finally, Mr. President, we need to make sure we extend unemployment benefits for folks who have been unemployed due to our inaction on trade or through other parts of the economic upheaval we have been in, in so many parts of the country, and which, unfortunately, is growing across the country. I think Michigan was the canary in the coal mine, in many ways. We were hit hardest first—the epicenter of manufacturing—but this is now spreading across the country. We need to make sure the middle-class person who has lost their job has the opportunity to at least put food on the table and pay the mortgage while they are continuing to look for work.

I believe those things need to be put in place before we send any more trade agreements forward—a trade agreement that we don't have the capacity to enforce, where we are not helping the workers who have lost or will lose their jobs, and where we are not addressing the broader issues that have cost us jobs every single day.

I am stunned. We got the new numbers on Friday for what has happened. Last week's dismal jobs report was released. It was reported that our Nation lost 83,000 jobs last month—83,000 jobs last month. We know what is happening. We know we are in a recession. We have known it in Michigan for a long time. Yet President Bush's Chief Economist, Edward Lazear, said:

I don't focus too much on the monthly unemployment rate because it has been a bit volatile.

A bit volatile? Three weeks, 4 weeks ago, we were hearing: Well, the underlying fundamentals of the country are good. We have a little housing problem, but the underlying fundamentals are good.

With all due respect, I don't know what planet these folks are on, but the reality is that we have seen a convergence of issues, from the housing situation, to the broader financial markets, to trade imbalance, trade deficits, huge deficits in our budget; we have seen a lack of enforcement on trade agreements; jobs lost, 3.6 million manufacturing jobs alone; and I think this is more than just a little bit of volatility in the economy.

So, Mr. President, I am extremely hopeful that we will say no to this Colombian Free Trade Agreement and that we will stand up for Americans, that we will stand up for Americans who have lived their lives working hard, trying to play by the rules, and who expect us to stand up for them, and American businesses that have done the same thing. Let's pass Trade Adjustment Assistance the right kind of way. Let's make sure we have a strong policy on currency manipulation. Let's make sure we toughen our trade enforcement laws. And let's most certainly recognize the tens of thousands—millions at this point—of those who are on unemployment insurance and who are asking us to extend those benefits, as has been done in every other time of recession, so that they have the ability to be able to care for their families while they are looking for a job.

Mr. President, I hope we will value the dignity of work and what millions of Americans are going through every day now and understand it is our job, first and foremost, to fight for them.

I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

IRAQ

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I know many people have been watching General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker reporting on what is going on in Iraq. Obviously, it is very important information, and I would hope we would heed what they are saying.

Regrettably, I must say that too many in the Democratic Party remain in denial over the progress being made in Iraq and still remain politically vested in defeat. We have heard the leaders of the party say: Oh, we have already lost. They believe that might give them an advantage in the November elections. That is certainly a bad way to decide what our strategy should be to defend the security of the United States.

We have made great progress in our fight against terrorism. The war is far from won, but today there is no question that the central battleground in the global war on terror is Iraq. Our men and women in the military are fighting the al-Qaida terrorists there in Iraq, where Osama bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri say they are going to establish their caliphate. We are fighting that war so that future generations will not have to fight them on our own soil.

For my colleagues who argue we should not be fighting them in Iraq but in Afghanistan, let me get you a little bit of intelligence news. Al-Qaida is not in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida left Afghanistan after we deposed Saddam Hussein. What we are fighting there are the indigenous Taliban insurgents, not al-Qaida.

More than anyone else, our brave veterans who are fighting in Iraq against the al-Qaida know the dangers of defeat. They know what they and others like them have done. Their word to us is: We as a nation, but more specifically we as your military, have made too many contributions and too many sacrifices to walk away from this essential battle for our freedom and declare defeat.

My own son, a marine, returned last fall from his second tour of Iraq with his scout snipers. He returned on success because they cleaned al-Qaida out of Falluja and Al Anbar, and they turned the job of keeping security over to the Iraqi Sunni Citizens Watch and the police.

If my colleagues will listen today to the voices of veterans who are on the Hill in their tan golf shirts, they are the voice of people who have been in the field—the Vets for Freedom, with whom I have had the honor of being this morning, and to General Petraeus and Admiral Crocker—these are the people we need to listen to, not the voices of moveon.org and the Code Pink extremists. We need to bring our troops home, but we need to bring them home on success. That is what they fought for; that is what they are there for.

As one man in the field reported today: You can't be for us, for the troops, and against the war because we are the war.

Despite the evidence of progress in Iraq, the media seems trigger happy to report bad news. Less than 48 hours after Iraqi security forces began their campaign against the militant Shia factions in Basra, the media already was declaring the operation a failure. The operation initiated on March 25 was designed to quell rogue factions of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi army. In covering the fighting, the press displayed its previously seen penchant for quickly throwing in the towel when the military operation does not instantaneously achieve its goals. If the operation were a failure and didn't meet its goals, then why did Muqtada al-Sadr order a cease-fire? I don't know of any commander who has declared a cease-fire when he is winning.

Right now, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker are testifying before the Senate on the progress being made in Iraq. I expect that testimony will show that the new counterinsurgency, or COIN strategy, backed up by the surge, has been working and has brought Iraqi citizens to our side in the fight against al-Qaida.

Since the surge forces began operating under this new policy in mid-2007 and the adoption of the COIN strategy, there is some important security progress to point to. Overall violence in Iraq, civilian deaths, sectarian killings, and attacks on American forces are all down. Coalition forces

have captured or killed thousands of extremists in Iraq, including hundreds of key al-Qaida leaders and operatives. American troops are beginning to return home on success.

In addition to security progress, the Iraqis are also making critical political progress. While this front has been the slowest—and we must continue to demand that the Iraqis assume greater control—the Government has taken several important steps. The Iraqi Government has enacted a pension law that keeps the promises made to Sunnis. It has enacted a deBaathification law that allows midlevel Baath Party members to reenter political and civic life. It has passed a budget that focuses spending on security reconstruction projects and provincial governments. It has enacted an amnesty law, and it has reached agreement on a provincial powers law that will ensure the Iraqis the right to be heard in upcoming elections.

Democrats are in denial of the progress in Iraq despite this evidence of both security and political gain. Their rejection of the reality in Iraq does not extend just to the current Petraeus and Crocker testimony, however. Some who favor retreat and defeat in Iraq have also taken issue with the classified Iraq National Intelligence Estimate, or NIE, distributed to lawmakers last week.

Always quick to tout and cherry-pick information from a NIE that can be twisted to support their motives, the retreat-and-defeat gang has outright rejected the latest Iraqi intelligence report. They claim it is "too rosy."

Unfortunately, this denial is no more than rhetoric and fodder for the mainstream media because we know that defeat in Iraq would have serious national security implications and do great harm to our image around the world, an image that so many of our colleagues on the other side say they wish to repair. Iraq is the central battleground in the war on terror. In addition to giving al-Qaida safe haven, defeat in Iraq would embolden a possibly nuclear-armed Iraq. The intelligence community has stated in an open hearing before the Intelligence Committee earlier this year that if we withdraw from Iraq before their army and police can maintain security, violence and chaos will spread across the region.

This has been a tough fight. We have lost over 4,000 of our bravest and finest men and women. The surest and most fitting way to honor their memory and their service is to ensure victory, not defeat.

Mr. President, I have several Members on my side who have been waiting for time in morning business. What is the situation?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republicans control 9 minutes.

Mr. BOND. I yield the floor.